

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By REV. CHARLES TOPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER VI.

RESIDENCE AT RIVER PHILIP.

(No. 5.)

On the 11th day of February, 1820, I visited a family that was in a lamentable state. At that time the free use of intoxicating drinks was prevalent. A drunken female, however, was not often seen in the country. Such a sight, when beheld, was peculiarly detestable. But to see a woman and her infant both actually dead through her intemperance was indeed shocking! While visiting the afflicted, such a sight I was called to witness. While these two corpses, the victims of alcohol, were lying in the house, the husband and father was manifestly in a state of intoxication! He staggered to a keg of rum, and turned out a quantity of it, to treat some persons that came in! The sound of the liquor, while being poured out, produced in me a most distressing sensation, which is still vivid in my recollection. Surely on such a melancholy scene comment is unnecessary.

During the winter I travelled extensively, frequently visiting the different parts of my large field of labor, going to the distant settlements of Parborough, and performing missionary service on the North Shore. In numerous instances I was exposed to severe storms, and twice was out nearly the whole night. My feeble constitution succumbed under such toils, hardships, and repeated colds taken. After being much indisposed for a length of time, on the 26th of April I was obliged to desist from my labors. The measures at first employed for my relief proved unavailing, and my illness increased. My system in general was evidently much disordered; and the pain in my head was violent. Friends became quite apprehensive that my dissolution was drawing near; and this seemed to me highly probable.

During the early stage of this illness my mind was in a depressed state. Conscious that the rod of chastisement was deserved and needed, though of course naturally desirous of its removal, yet I dreaded to have it removed before the desirable effect was produced, namely, humiliation, with near access to God, and increased devotion to His service. At length my mind became sweetly composed, with a delightful assurance that "the eternal God was my Refuge, and underneath were the everlasting arms." My will was swallowed up in that of JEHOVAH; so that whether He should send me ease or pain, life or death, I could cheerfully acquiesce.

Having thus graciously prepared me for the enduring of additional trials, He was pleased, in wisdom and faithfulness, to send them. On the 2nd day of May all the children with us, four in number, became ill. Especially the youngest son, George Low, a remarkably amiable child, much endeared to me, aged five years and six months, he was violently attacked with croup. His sufferings were extremely distressing. He requested to be taken to me, and that I should pray for him. This was done. Unable to arise, I offered earnest supplication on his behalf while lying on my bed. He subsequently appeared much more composed. Early the next morning, after having endured great agony about thirty six hours, sometimes in terrible convulsions, he expired. Mrs. Topper, though in feeble health, and ardently attached to the child, after a severe conflict, was enabled to resign him to the Divine disposal with extraordinary composure and submission, rejoicing in the God of her salvation. My heart had been brought into a state of such acquiescence in the arrangement of unerring wisdom, that this trial was borne with cheerful resignation.

Another followed in quick succession. Our youngest daughter—my only child—became very dangerously ill. She was supposed to be undoubtedly attacked with the same fatal disease that had taken away her brother. In this case, however, as in the others, we happily found that gracious promise verified, "As thy days so shall thy strength be." When our Heavenly Father had thus tried us, He was mercifully pleased to grant relief by the restoration of the child. It appeared that the disease was not croup, but a very hoarse cold, which produced symptoms quite similar to those that attend it.

My own illness, through Divine favor, yielded to medical treatment. Health began to be slowly restored.

One more trial, however, soon succeeded.

The house in which we lived was near some brush-wood that had been cut down, but not burned; and the season was remarkably dry. A fire having been kindled to the windward, was driven violently toward our house, and seemed morally certain to consume it. The people at hand were so intent on stopping its progress, if possible, that it could hardly be expected any would come to our aid for the saving of our effects until the building should be actually on fire; and then probably very little would be rescued from the flames. My mind, however, remained perfectly calm. The things of time appeared to me, as they always should, to be of comparatively very little moment. Aware that it was not in my power to afford any aid, I quietly awaited the order of Providence. By it the efforts of the people were rendered successful in staying the progress of the devouring element. My effects seemed, therefore, to be anew given me by the Lord.

While my sight continued to be so impaired that I could not read, a part of each day was usually devoted to repeating portions of Scripture which had been previously committed to memory.

Having been thus graciously preserved, and sustained through these repeated visitations of affliction, unquestionably sent for my good, so soon as my strength was in any considerable degree restored, I resumed my ministerial labors. My first and second texts, selected as appropriate to these circumstances, were Ps. xli. 1. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" and ex. 75. "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right; and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

For the Christian Messenger.

OUR NECESSITIES.

MR. EDITOR,

The Anniversaries of our Churches are all over for the year, their reports shew but little gain in the aggregate of numbers. The revision of some church records may, in part, account for this. The amount contributed for benevolent purposes shews a commendable improvement in the liberality of the churches, while the earnest call for extended efforts, in the various departments of christian enterprise is still far in advance of their labors.

The great work of the church is, beyond all doubt, either compromised or neglected in multitudes of cases. The self-denying labor of primitive christianity is too nearly withheld. Expediency and convenience are rapidly assuming dictation, and beyond these, authority is but little regarded. The aggressive work of christianity, in at least places of stated gospel privileges, is almost wholly neglected, the authoritative commands are too seldom heard, and the solemn warnings of God's word are too frequently withheld. It appears from the most favorable aspect that can be presented, that the plain old fashioned gospel has become, in the minds of many, obsolete.—It has not kept pace with the improvement of the day. Bars and hearts that once hailed the blessed tidings of salvation, because Christ crucified was in them, however plain the announcement, now only receive them, when presented in strains of human eloquence and power. Nor is the difficulty alone in the manner of presentation. The matter must be modified. To preach the doctrine, as it is sometimes expressed, "is not profitable." They are dry and uninteresting, and besides, there is such a great variety of opinions about them, and congregations are so mixed up, that some will be offended if their peculiar views are not respected. The practical duties of religion are no less repugnant to many on account of their tendency; and they must be handled with great caution, lest my friend over the way shall discover his prototype presented for the eye of the audience. As for experience, who would risk his reputation as preacher in delineating, through a whole sermon, the feelings of an awakened sinner, from his first inception of gospel truth, to his assurance of pardon through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? These remarks are of too general a character to be restricted in their application, to any one locality.

In order to a more steady and enlarged increase in numbers and efforts, we need first of all an out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, upon ministers and people. The Spirit's influence is the only sure and safe reliance of the child of God. "Without me" said the Saviour, "ye can do nothing." To supply this necessity His presence is promised: "Lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Without it how helpless the preacher! He may consecrate himself, he may dedicate himself with all necessary self-denial, he may fast, and pray

and labor, unless Christ is with him in the fulfilment of his promise, it is all in vain. He may mourn over the want of abilities, natural and acquired, and notwithstanding the necessity of these, the necessity of Christ in the soul, by the influence of His spirit, is infinitely greater.

This dependence on Christ lies at the very foundation of his strength. "When I am weak, then am I strong." "Through Christ I can do all things." To this influence must be ascribed the strength of the fathers in the ministry. By it their ambition, and every power and faculty were consecrated to this great end—the service of God and the best interests of their fellow men; and nothing but the consecrating influence of the same blessed spirit will ever make others alike useful.

We have a small host of young men, giving evidence of piety, and manifesting a praiseworthy desire in laboring for the salvation of sinners. Now what these young men need most of all is, the hand of God, the Holy Spirit upon them; that they may be His ministers, "burned" into the work, and the work "burned" into them, by the love of Christ; until they can say, with all their hearts, with Paul; "The love of Christ constraineth us."

But this influence is none the less necessary for the members of our churches. Let it begin with the ministers "as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion; let it also descend, until every soul is enriched by its heavenly graces then shall we have a membership, not merely begotten of the Spirit, that we professedly have, but a membership living in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, by the Spirit sanctified to every good word and work. Praying needs this; to revive christian intercourse this is necessary; alms giving would be enriched by this; the consecration and dedication of soul, body and spirit, with the yearly income of this world's goods; all need this consecrating work of the Spirit of God.

Next to this, a greater reverence for the word of God, especially as an authority is greatly needed. The length of this article suggests a delay for some future number.

Yours respectfully,

Wolville, Nov. 27th, 1865. REVERA.

For the Christian Messenger.

GOOD TEMPLARS.

To the Editor of the "Christian Messenger."

DEAR SIR,—I do not suppose you would knowingly misrepresent any organization instituted for the purpose of advancing temperance principles, much less one of such small proportions, and so little known in this Province as the Independent Order of Good Templars, but I am inclined to the belief the statements made in your editorial of the 8th inst., are better calculated to mislead the public mind, than to give a correct idea of the origin and progress of this Order.

I do not think its originators took Orange Lodges as their guide in its establishment, and by what I can learn from the history of the order, can hardly suppose that the Rev. Mr. Bristol, Dr. Miles or the Rev. Mr. Barnes would select any political organization as a model for a reformatory institution; which it was intended should open its doors to all classes of the human family, nor do I think the question "what would be preferable to the Sons" ever entered their minds. The statement, "that our pledge amounts to an oath," which I am aware did not originate with you, is but an assertion, circulated by parties of doubtful veracity.

You state, "subscription to a religious creed is necessary to membership," had you affirmed that none were eligible to become members but such as were willing to acknowledge the existence of a Divine Being, it would have been a truth that could not have been misconstrued, and lest your statement that "this order spread for a time with great rapidity," might lead your readers to suppose its being a new affair gave it popularity—for a time, permit me to say it has been in existence about fourteen years, its moral and numerical strength increasing with its age, and last year shewing a larger increase in membership than in any previous year; such facts warrant my expressing a hope that it will continue to spread with rapidity for a greater length of time.

You further state, "some of the leading members in Canada" separated and formed the "British American Order of Good Templars." That the originator of that order was suspended from the Independent Order, for violation of that solemn obligation to which you have referred—after he had been in membership about nine months—is well known to me, but that he was a leading member, or that any of the few

who may have followed him were leading members, I am not prepared to admit; recent events however, shew pretty plainly that with the exception of the loss of the property appropriated by these leading members, our order did not suffer any great loss.

It is quite probable Mr. Editor you may have obtained your information from a pamphlet styled a "History of the cause and origin of the B. A. Order of Good Templars." To those unacquainted with the facts this history may appear to be a plain statement of plain truths, but those who know the antecedents of the author, and his motives, place but little dependence in such a history, seeing that it lacks that important feature—the "essential element," which is required to give weight to any work, particularly to such as purport to be historical.

I am Dear Sir,

Yours respectfully,

J. WILLARD CRANE,

Prov. D. G. W. C. T.

Independent Order of Good Templars. Economy, Nov. 16th, 1865.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE POET YOUNG AGAIN.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.

DEAR SIR,—The following you may depend upon as being a genuine anecdote of the bard, "that wore the black gown," and, so far as I know, has never been in print. If acceptable, it is at your service.

December 1st, 1865.

J. S.

One evening, Dr. Young being on a visit to a friend's house, and while walking in the garden in company with his friends, two daughters, a message came that a gentleman wished to see him for a few minutes. The Dr. hesitated, and finally refused to be seen, in spite of all the entreaties, and persuasions of his fair friends to the contrary: the Poet was immovable.

The ladies at last,—finding all their efforts to be in vain—seizing him each by an arm, led him to the gate, and gently pushed him out. When thus forcibly ejected, and the gate shut, he turned round, and with much apparent sorrow, addressed them in the following lines:—

"Thus Adam looked when from the garden driven,  
And thus disputed orders sent from Heaven;  
Like Him I go, and yet to go am loathe,  
Like Him I go, for Angel's drove us both:  
Hard was his fate, yet mine still more unkind,  
His Eve went with him, but mine stays behind."

For the Christian Messenger.

OBITUARY NOTICES.

LYDIA DEWOLF.

Died at Wolville, on the 20th of Oct. last, Lydia, eldest daughter of Thomas L. DeWolf, Esq., aged eighteen years.

Our dear young friend was early in life the subject of religious impressions. The instructions received from early childhood in the Sabbath School, were not lost. The preaching of the Word, and the prayers and efforts of her friends, tended by the power of the Holy Spirit, to fix these instructions in her heart. In the winter of 1863, she was led to cast herself on the mercy of God in Christ. In the month of May, in that year she was baptized on a profession of faith, and united with the first Horton Church. Her course as a Church member was consistent and uniform. She was an active laborer in the Sabbath School and in the Church. In the family as an obedient helpful daughter, and loving sister, she will long be remembered. Her enjoyment of personal religion, seems to have been uninterrupted. A diary which she had kept unknown to her friends and which was found after her departure, contains most encouraging evidences of continued fellowship with God, enjoyment in prayer and delight in the services of the Sanctuary. Perhaps the following extract will not be out of place:

"How glad I am when the holy Sabbath comes. This pain in my side and weakness warns me that I have not long to remain on earth, but I shall go to be with Jesus." They are all away to day and I am alone, yet not alone nor unhappy: my Saviour is with me."

Though her health had been failing for some time her death was very sudden. On the following Lord's day morning she was carried to the grave. The assembled congregation were addressed by her pastor from the words of our Lord: "Be ye also ready."—Com.

MARGARET A. FULLER.

Died at Wolville, Oct. 29th, Margaret A. Fuller, wife of W. I. Fuller, Esq., of Wolville and daughter of Jeremiah Eagles, of Horton, in the 37th year of her age. Deceased had never made a public profession of religion. In early life she was brought under the power of religion and indulged a hope in Christ. During last winter this hope was strengthened, so that she resolved to own her Saviour before the world. Circumstances at the time seemed to prevent her carrying the purpose into effect. On the fifth day of September last, she was thrown from a waggon, in which she was driving, with such force that severe fractures and injuries of a complicated character were the result. She lingered some eight weeks, suffering the most intense pain. Her resignation and patience while in this condition were indeed wonderful. She frequently expressed her trust in Jesus, and her sense of his continued presence with her. By this sad dispensation her husband has been bereaved of a loving partner and five children, of an affectionate parent.—Com.