

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By Rev. Charles Tupper, D. D.

CHAPTER V.

LABORS WHILE AN EVANGELIST.

(No. 1.)

This chapter is designed to embrace the period extending from the time of my ordination, July 17th, 1817, to the commencement of my pastoral labors, January 1st, 1819.

My duties and responsibilities being now increased, some distressing apprehensions assailed me, that a dreadful fall from this very public and important position would render me a reproach to the cause of Christ. This led to earnest supplication for upholding and preserving grace, to keep me from the evils in the world.

On Lord's day, July 20th, I assisted Elder Manning in preaching and administering the Lord's supper. It was a season of consolation.

After returning to Parrsborough, and visiting several places, I held a conference at Advocate Harbor. Two persons, Mrs. K. and Mrs. S. who had recently obtained hope, each gave a satisfactory account of a work of grace, and expressed a conviction that it was their duty to be baptized, and a readiness to obey the Saviour's command. Though there were no Baptists in the place, yet some religious people met with us, and freely avowed their persuasion of the sincerity and true piety of the candidates. One man said, in effect, that he heartily fellowshiped them, and would, in the event of our forming a Church, readily unite with us; but that, as to baptism, he had been sprinkled in his infancy, and he thought that sufficient. Another maintained that people ought to act in accordance with the impressions on their minds. He believed the candidates were regenerated persons, and were doing perfectly right. He would cheerfully join them in Church fellowship; but he had never been baptized in any way, and he did not wish to be; as it had never been impressed upon his mind. Of course there was only one consistent way before me, namely, to baptize those disciples who were disposed to follow the Redeemer in this ordinance, and who saw their duty in a scriptural light. Accordingly, these pious women, who were the first fruits of my labors in that place, were, on Lord's day, August 3rd, in obedience to Christ's command, "Buried with Him in baptism." It was a solemn season.

The next day on my overtaking an elderly man, and inquiring after his health, he replied, "I am well, and I am not well; for I am troubled in my soul." When asked the cause of his trouble, he answered, "There was not a man in the world that I respected more than you; and when I saw you baptize the people yesterday, I could freely have been baptized myself, it looked to me so solemn, and I know you had the Scripture: but it grieved me to hear you say, 'No one could be saved but a Baptist.'" So grossly do people frequently misunderstand. It is well known that every form of expression adapted to convey such an idea, has invariably been strongly disapproved by me. The sentiment enunciated, which occasioned such disquietude, was, that a believer is the only proper subject of baptism, and immersion the only right mode. This does by no means imply, that none but Baptists will be saved. By one, however, who erroneously regards baptism as the door of admission into a state of acceptance with God, such an inference may, indeed, be drawn. But a few words of explanation happily quieted the perturbed spirit of my friend.

On the next Sabbath I baptized two men at Five Islands. The first man whom I led forward in this ordinance was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. Having received sufficient education to enable him to read the Scriptures intelligently, he had been led to regard them as the only safe guide, had obtained a steadfast hope in the Saviour, from the teaching of the living Oracles—had embraced Baptist sentiments, and now joyfully confessed his beloved Redeemer.

The immersing of persons on a profession of faith, in a place where it had never been done before, naturally excited opposition. One absurd report circulated against me, and first mentioned to me by a Pedobaptist lady, was, that a wicked man called to me in the night, and bade me go and preach the gospel; and that I supposed the voice to be from heaven, and on that authority commenced preaching!

I told her that this was the first I ever heard of the "voice." Doubtless the man who fabricated this story was "a wicked man," but not very shrewd; for it could not be reasonably expected to obtain credence among people of common sense that had any knowledge of me.

On Saturday, the 16th, in a Conference held at West Brook, brother E. T. his wife, and two sisters-in-law requested baptism, and gave satisfactory relations of a work of grace. With this kind Christian family much spiritual consolation was subsequently enjoyed. On Lord's day, the 17th, these four candidates were baptized in Half-way-River, in the presence of a serious congregation.

Of the eight persons baptized by me in the course of the first month after my ordination, I believe Deacon T. is the only survivor. The others, having persevered in the ways of godliness to the termination of their earthly course, undoubtedly have entered the blest mansions prepared for the faithful followers of Christ.

About the close of this month I was led to consider very seriously the subject of fasting. This scriptural practice appears now to have fallen greatly into disuse. For persons whose constitutions can well endure it, occasional fasting is evidently proper. In some cases it may be beneficial both spiritually and physically. Undoubtedly, however, it may be carried to an extreme. For some time prior to this I had fasted frequently and vigorously, under a sense of my sinfulness, and with the hope of promoting my spiritual welfare. But I clearly perceived that this was injurious to my health, which was feeble, and usually suffered even from any irregularity in the reception of my meals. There was also another consideration which had weight with me. It was my desire, in accordance with the Saviour's direction, (Matth. vi. 16-18.) to fast with as much secrecy as possible. This led me in travelling frequently to pass by families which it was my duty to visit for their good, because they would probably invite and urge me to eat, and I could neither use any deception, nor consistently assign the true cause of my declining to accept their kindness. Under these circumstances, upon mature consideration, I conscientiously concluded that it was my duty at least to diminish my former frequency and length of fasts, while it was attended with consequences so manifestly detrimental to my health and usefulness.

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Proportion, a law of Nature.

What but proportion between those attractive and repulsive forces which cause the motion of the earth, keeps it in its orbit? As the top of the tree increases, so do its roots; and any great amputation of either, without a corresponding pruning of the other proves injurious. This law runs throughout the vegetable kingdom. It obtains equally in the animal economy. Nature requires and compels us to breathe the more, the more we exercise. Thus the more we use our muscles, as in working hard, walking fast, or up hill, running, lifting, and the like, the more we must breathe; the increase of respiration being exactly in proportion to that of muscular action. Of this all are witnesses every time they increase or diminish their exercise. Nor will nature allow us to breathe copiously without proportionate action of body or mind.

This law applies equally, though less obviously, to food. Who does not know that labour and all kinds of exertion, whether mental or physical, enhances the digestion as well as the appetite for food? Hence laborers eat more than those having sedentary occupations. Those who eat without taking exercise must suffer. This law cannot be broken with impunity. In fact, the broken constitutions of many who go from the farm and the work-shop to college, or to some sedentary occupation, are caused mainly by violating this law of proportion. They continue to eat as before, yet do not work; eat that food, and hence the head-aches, ennui, debility, nervousness, dyspepsia, and kindred diseases of the literary and sedentary classes. Study does not make them invalids, but is actually promotive of health and longevity. They are enabled by over-taxing their stomachs while they starve their muscles for want of action. Take the city belle, rendered delicate, nervous, sickly, miserable, by excessive nervous and cerebral derangement consequent on novel reading, parties, amusements, and all the excitement of fashionable city life. Medicine can never cure her, but work can. Her malady consists in a predominance of nerve over muscle, and her remedy in restoring the balance between them. She is doomed either to wear out a miserable existence, or else to exercise her muscles; nor

can the salvation of her constitution come from any other source. One of the great reasons why journeyings, visits to springs, voyages, and the like, often effect such astonishing cures is that they relieve the nervous system, and at the same time increase muscular and vital action. The same exercise taken at home, will cure quite as speedily and effectually by the same means—a restoration of proportion between their functions. Nine in every ten of the invalids of our land, are undoubtedly rendered feeble by this one cause, and can be cured by labour. How many thousands, so weakly and sickly that they begin to despair of life, finally give up their business and move upon a farm, and soon find themselves well. Exercise has often cured those who have been bed-ridden many years.

I once heard of a physician of some repute who resided in some part of the United States, who was called thirty miles in great haste, to see a sick woman, whose case had thus far baffled all medical treatment, and was regarded by all her friends as hopeless. All they expected was merely to mitigate a disease of long standing; recovery being considered out of the question. The doctor came, saw that she was very nervous, and had been dosed almost to death, and told her that if she would follow his directions implicitly, he could cure her; for he had one kind of medicine of great power, but which was useful in cases only like hers, in which it was an infallible cure. After telling her how often she must take it, he added, that she must get up and walk across the room the second day, and ride out the third. "Oh, that she could never do, for she had not been off her bed for many years, and was so very weak," etc. "Oh, but," said the doctor, "this medicine will give you so much strength that you will be able to do so, and it will prevent any injurious consequences arising therefrom; and, besides," he added, "the medicine will not operate unless you stir about some. Do just as I tell you, and you will be off your bed in ten days." She sent an express thirty miles, the medicine being so rare that he did not take it with him, after his bread bills rolled in aloe, to make them taste like medicine, and took them and the exercise as prescribed. On the third day she actually got into a carriage, and in ten days was able to leave her bed, and soon after was able to do her work, and lived to be a blessing to her family, and to pour upon the doctor a literal flood of gratitude for performing so wonderful a cure—a cure which none of the doctors had been able to effect, and which nothing but restoring the lost proportion between her nerves and muscles could have effected. Nor do I hesitate to affirm, as my deliberate conviction, that nineteen-twentieths of the invalids, especially females, of our land are rendered so mainly by excessive nervous and deficient muscular and vital action, and can be cured by banishing care, and taking exercise in the open air. I say in the open air, because many are rendered invalids, not by want of sufficient exercise; but by insufficient breath. Yet females, and those who work hard in doors perpetually, such as clerks in packing, unpacking, etc, often lose their health because they do not breathe in proportion to their exercise. That is they inhale rarified air, and thus do not obtain a supply of oxygen. But when, though we breathe copiously, we do not obtain a due supply of oxygen, the evil is analogous to a proportionate suspension of breath. Such should work less, and thus preserve the proportion between the consumption and the supply of oxygen.

Consumptive families and patients furnish another illustration of this principle. Why consumptive? Because their brains and nerves predominate over their vital and muscular apparatus, as is evinced by the fact, that they are slim, sharp-featured, small chested, and have small muscles, great sensitiveness, intense feeling, clear heads, and fine feelings. This proportion of function constitutes their consumptive tendency. Restore the balance and you remove the tendency. Or thus, their lungs are too small for their brains. Apoplexy, gout, obesity, corpulency, and the like, are caused by the opposite extreme, and can be cured by eating less and working more. Precocious children and youth furnish another illustration of this doctrine. How frequent the expression "that child is too smart to live;" because general observation attests the premature death of many of the extraordinarily smart children. Hear that broken-hearted mother enumerate the virtues of her departed child—tell how fond of books, how quick to learn, how apt in remarks, how sweet-dispositioned and good, all produced by excessive cerebral action; and his death by the predominance of mind over body. Its head ate up its body. As the vital energies cannot be ex-

ended twice, and as an extremely active brain robs the muscles and vital apparatus, the latter cease to grow, become feeble, are attacked by disease, and die, and of course the brain also dies. And such parents, ignorant of the principle, too often ply such prodigies with books and mental stimulants, and thus aggravate the disproportion and hasten death, whereas they should pursue the opposite course—should use every exertion to restrain cerebral and promote muscular action.

Extra talented and lovely youth are also more mortal than others. The flower of youth unduly developed, of both sexes, are more liable to die young than those more coarsely organized—because of this same preponderance of cerebral over muscular and vital power. A large proportion of those who take the first college appointments, die soon after they graduate, because they have studied, night and day, year in and year out, thus keeping their brains continually on the stretch, yet using their muscles little more than to go to and from their meals and recitations. Is it any wonder that they pay the forfeit of impaired health, blighted prospects, and premature death? What an omission that their entire range of classical studies should not recognize so important a law as this.

The working classes furnish a converse illustration of this law. They exercise their muscles too much and brains too little. They labour, eat, and sleep, and that is about all. To those crowning pleasures of humanity, the exercise of mind, they are comparative strangers. Their muscles rob their brains as effectually as the heads of the literati rob their bodies. If they sit down to read, or listen to a speaker, they fall asleep. Their finer sensibilities become blunted by inaction, just as those of the fashionable classes become morbid by over action. Their minds are sluggish, thinking powers obtuse, feelings hard to rouse, and all their capabilities of enjoyment partially palsied, because most of their energies are directed to their muscles. Besides this loss of enjoyment, they are much more subject to actual disease than they would be if they labored less and studied more. Sedentary occupations, as shoe-making, drawing, sewing and the like, are generally rendered so by exercising only a portion of the system, and can be rendered salubrious by calling into vigorous exercise the dormant limbs and muscles an hour or two per day. To seamstresses this advice is particularly applicable and important. Sitting for months together in one posture, arched inwardly and their shoulders thrown forward, thus doubly impeding respiration, digestion, and all the vital functions, at the same time taking next to no exercise, no wonder that so many of them break down even while learning the business, and sew in misery for life. Let such walk at least two miles per day, and also sit upright while they sew, and it will not injure them. They should also restrict their diet.

But the institutions of society are unfavorable to this required proportion of muscular, vital, and mental action. As things now are, those who work at all, work excessively; and as labour is considered a disgrace,\* all who can, are straining every nerve to live without it. Society should be so constructed as to require laborers to work only about half a day, and allow them the balance for mental and moral cultivation, while the literary, sedentary, and fashionable classes, should labour several hours every day, if not for wages at least for health. The fullest measure of personal happiness requires that all should appropriate about eight hours in every twenty-four, to the vital apparatus—to sleep and food, or the supply of exhausted animal energy—about eight hours more to muscular exercise, mostly in the form of manual, productive labor, and about eight more to mental cultivation and moral improvement. "All work and no play," cuts off that vast range of pleasure designed and adapted to flow into the soul of man through the channel of mind. Continued mental application, by concentrating vitality in the brain, withdraws it from the muscles, stomach, and heart, thus impairing respiration, circulation and all the vital functions, and of course curtails talent and even life itself, while epicures, gentlemen and ladies of leisure, and all fashionable idlers rob both muscle and brain, so that all these classes fail to obtain the great end of life—happiness; whereas, if all would labour about eight hours per day, so as to promote all the animal functions and ensure health, they would thus furnish the brain and nervous system with an abundant supply of that animal energy so indispensable to mental power, \*We beg to deny this statement most emphatically. As a general rule labor is honorable, and is so considered by the sensible part of mankind.—Ed. C. M.