

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By REV. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER VII.

FIRST RESIDENCE IN AMHERST.

(No. 11.)

Having commenced writing communications for the press in the early part of the year 1825, at the age of 30, I prepared a considerable number before the close of it. Among these was one furnished for the American Baptist Magazine 'On the supplied Words in the English Translation of the Bible.'

On the 12th day of September I finished the perusal of the New Testament in Hebrew. This completed the reading of the whole Bible in three languages, namely, English, Greek, and Hebrew.

During this season a few persons were baptized by me, and added to the Church in Amherst. The prospect, however, of usefulness in my present field of labor seemed unpromising. This was the seventh year of my continued services in that region, with comparatively little fruit. This necessarily produced a severe trial in my mind; and led to serious self-examination, to ascertain if the fault was not principally in myself. No doubt could be entertained that there was cause for deep self-abasement on account of my want of zeal, devotion, and earnestness of effort. It seemed evident, however, that the labors of my faithful co-adjutor, and those of other good ministers of different denominations, were equally unsuccessful. A remark made to me by a Methodist preacher at an early stage of my labors there, often occurred to my mind, namely, "We do not know what God may do; but Amherst always seemed to me a very barren place." Moreover, my labors when abroad appeared to be more efficacious than in Amherst and adjacent places. Seeing therefore that I was not permanently settled in the pastoral office there, but Brother McCully held it alternately with me, and he could take the whole charge, while there were other important fields without any stated ministry, my mind became exercised with serious thoughts of removal. These were not concealed from my brethren and friends.

Under these circumstances, as the people in Fredericton and Kingsclear were in need of a pastor, had some acquaintance with me, and knew in a measure the state of my mind, they requested me to make them a visit, doubtless with the view of calling me to the pastorate, if the visit should be mutually satisfactory. On attentive and prayerful consideration, the invitation was accepted, and an appointment made.

A memorable event, however, transpired, which tended to interrupt the contemplated arrangement. In the early part of the month of October, the atmosphere became exceedingly smoky, and dismal in its appearance, and the sun presented a reddish hue; by which a general feeling of depression and alarm was produced, from the apprehension of extensive and destructive fires. Intelligence was not then communicated either by lightning or steam; nor was it conveyed by ordinary mail with any thing like its present frequency; but after about five days of melancholy suspense, the painful tidings reached us—confirmed two days afterwards—that a most disastrous fire had occurred in Miramichi, on the 7th day of the month, by which a great number of houses, a vast amount of property, and very many lives had been lost. The people in Amherst, as also in many other places, commendably determined to send relief to the suffering survivors. I readily aided in circulating a subscription, as well as by contributing, and by preaching a charity sermon—attended by all classes and denominations—founded on Eccles. xi. 2. "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." A considerable amount was raised for this object of benevolence.

But what especially affected my proposed arrangement was, that a great part of Fredericton, probably one-third of the city, was burned at the same time. It was a season of great drought and the wind blew with extreme violence. The fire, which had been raging in the woods for some days, first made its appearance in the city, on the premises of our venerable brother Jarvis Ring, who was then a leading member of the Baptist Church there, and a wealthy man, with a heart ready to every good work. He suffered heavy loss, as did also

others of our principal men. It seemed, therefore, improbable, that our people there would be able to support a minister. I determined, however, to visit them according to appointment, and to sympathize with them in their affliction.

Twenty days after the disastrous fire occurred, I arrived at Fredericton. Truly it presented a sad scene of desolation. Both there and at Kingsclear my visit was favorably received; and the people still expressed a desire for me to labor with them. This was congenial to my own views and feelings; but the fear that the support of my family would now impose an undue burden upon them, presented to me a serious obstacle. We therefore parted without coming to any decisive conclusion on the subject.

On the 21st of November, a letter came to my hand from the Baptist Church of St. John, N. B., informing me that their Pastor, who was absent, had written them, resigning his charge, and advising them to call me; and that they expressed a unanimous and earnest desire for me to accept the pastorate there. This placed me in a dilemma. In my reply I stated the facts of the case with candor, and made inquiries; and also wrote to Bro. Ring, in Fredericton, requesting information and advice.

In the mean time the people in Amherst and adjacent places, even where there had seemed to be some indifference when the subject of my removal was first named, now expressed an urgent desire for me to remain with them. Their importunity had almost prevailed on me to relinquish the idea of removing; but another letter from the Church in St. John, stating that there was no hope of the return and continuance of their former pastor, that they were perfectly united in calling me, and did not see any prospect of obtaining the services of another man, who would be equally acceptable, and urging the necessity of having that important post occupied, determined me to accede to their request.

As no definite call was received from the Church in Fredericton, it had been naturally inferred, that they did not now consider themselves able to support a minister. But soon after my acceptance of that from St. John had been signified, a letter from Fredericton, which had been carried past Amherst to Halifax, some days before, came to hand, urgently inviting me to remove thither, and proposing to give me a salary considerably higher, while there would be opportunity to reside a little way out in the country, where the situation would probably be more healthy, and the expenses of living materially less. As my engagement, however, with the Church in St. John was now made, these considerations were not allowed to have any weight with me.

On the completion of seven years' labor in Cumberland and adjacent parts of Westmoreland, N. B., at the close of 1825, there was a general expression of regret at my departure, and of desire for my return, and the renewal of my labors in that region.

December 26th, a son, born twenty days before, whom we named James, was called from us. We felt the bereavement keenly; but were enabled to acquiesce and say, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD."

For the Christian Messenger.

CANADA CORRESPONDENCE.

MONTREAL, June 26, 1866.

Dear Brother,—

This great city is still increasing.\* Public and private buildings, numerous, and distinguished by elegance or massiveness, according to the tastes of the owners or the various purposes for which they are erected, are continually rising up. Several new churches have been built since I was here two years ago, the congregations having disposed of the places where they formerly worshipped, and provided themselves with larger and more commodious edifices in the western part of the city, which is now becoming quite populous. The new American Presbyterian Church was opened for worship last Lord's day. It is a large and costly building, outwardly unattractive, but in the interior remarkably well arranged and elegantly fitted up. The sermons at the opening were preached by the Rev. J. B. Bonar, the pastor, in the morning; the Rev. Dr. Fisher, President of Hamilton College, New York, in the afternoon; and the Rev. T. L. Cuyler, of Brooklyn, in the evening. I heard the last mentioned gentleman. Such an opportunity rarely occurs. The text was Deut. xxxii. 11, 12, and the discourse was

\*Perhaps few cities have increased more rapidly than Montreal. An increase of 1800 houses in two years is good ground for the above remark.—E. C. M.]

at once instructive, powerful, and pathetic. The illustrations were singularly felicitous. It was a fine specimen of genuine evangelical oratory.

The Baptist Church is still prosperous, under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. Alexander. It is a working, liberal Church, and that will account for its success. God blesses active benevolence.

Our Temperance gathering has been successful. One hundred and twenty-two delegates attended the Session of the National Division. They represented the following States and Provinces, viz.:—New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Ohio, Delaware, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Rhode Island, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Vermont, Prince Edward Island, Canada West, Canada East, District of Columbia, and Virginia.

The Session was generally harmonious, and some important business was transacted. The position of the coloured people furnished a theme for animated discussion. Theories and plans varied exceedingly. At length a resolution proposed by Representative Hastings of Massachusetts was carried. Here is a copy:—

"Resolved, That the decision of all questions involved in the connection of coloured persons with this Order be left to the Grand Divisions, respectively in their several jurisdictions, subject to the review and control of the National Division at its annual sessions; and that Grand Divisions are hereby requested and enjoined to adopt the most practical and effective plans for the promotion of our principles among such of this class of our people as are found within the sphere of our operations."

The admission of females to full membership was also carried, with the following limitation, viz.:—"Provided that females shall not be admitted to membership within the jurisdiction of any Grand Division, unless permission be first granted by a two-third vote of the Grand Division; nor in any Subordinate Division, unless the Division shall so decide, by a two-thirds vote, after two weeks' notice." This permission will not be acted on, I suppose, in the British Provinces.

The funds of the National Division proving insufficient to meet the necessary expenditure, it was resolved to increase the per capita tax on the members to three cents each.

Efforts are to be made to revive the Order in the South.

The next annual session of the National Division is to be held at Wilmington, Delaware.

Yesterday the Thermometer stood at 90° in the shade. To day it is 84°. It is too hot to write a long letter.

Yours truly,  
J. M. CRAMP.

For the Christian Messenger.

Abstract or Theoretical Preaching.

By REV. N. CYR.

There is a kind of preaching, found mostly where ministers are in the habit of reading their sermons, which we here designate by the terms abstract or theoretical preaching. It may be very orthodox and entirely faultless, so far as order and style are concerned, but being dry and stiff it leaves the heart unmoved, and consequently fails in producing upon the hearers the effect we are authorized to expect from the promulgation of the truths of the gospel. The reason of this is simple; men need not only to hear the truth, but to have it presented to them in such a way as to meet their spiritual wants. I have met with some very good remarks on this subject in a French Evangelical publication, from which I have translated freely for the readers of this paper, adding thereto a few remarks of my own.

The writer of the article referred to begins by asking himself the question: What do earnest hearers expect from their attendance on public worship and the hearing of sermons? After the anxieties of the week, he answers, they desire to be brought near to God, and as sin has mingled with their thoughts, feelings and action, to be led to the mercy seat; they expect to hear words which shall comfort them in their trial, and strengthen their faith, as well as appeals which shall awaken them from their moral torpor, and overcome the indecision of their souls. Never will these spiritual wants be satisfied with dissertations or essays. What their souls demand is a help in their difficulties. They wish, it is true, to be instructed, they do not object to being indoctrinated, but they expect this to be done with a certain regard for their weaknesses, expecting that their conscience and personal experience will be appealed to. They need to feel their sins sufficiently to seek the grace of God, whose blessed influence they have

already felt. They, therefore, wish the minister to speak to them of the Saviour, not as an absent one, whose laws must be learnt at a distance, but as He, who is ever present among his people, and in whose communion we are called to live, daily imbibing his Spirit, by a sweet experience.

How often do Christians and anxious inquirers come to the sanctuary, bowed down under the burden of their worldly avocations, deploring their coldness and spiritual indifference, thirsting after some of the life-giving truths of the gospel, and return home without having heard a single appeal to their consciences, nor a single word of consolation addressed to their fainting souls!

It is not the people alone who suffer from this kind of preaching; the ministers who practice it are themselves the first and greater sufferers. Whoever studies the christian system, ignoring its intimate connexion with life, must soon bring upon himself leanness and barrenness. What indeed are doctrines but the spiritual realities of the christian life? Sin and guilt, grace and reconciliation, the work of the Saviour, his regenerating and sanctifying power, his Divine nature, his glorious resurrection, with the other truths which are as the "bones and sinews" of the christian system, do they not all contain springs of spiritual life and meet the daily wants of the believer? Ah! science has no argument such as possessed by the sincere, though unlearned believer? Is there any thing better calculated to convince us of the divinity of Jesus Christ, than a few moments spent in his communion? Is there any thing better than prayer to give certainty to what is called the supernatural? These experiences and testimonies are as an anchor to the soul of the believer, however destitute he may be of this world's wisdom, while great minds are driven to and fro by their doubts or swallowed up in the unathomable abyss of their philosophy.

It is related of Vinet, the great French Swiss Christian philosopher, that when asked by a friend, when on the point of death, what he should pray for, he answered; for the elementary graces, by which he meant simple faith and love. And it seems to me that these elementary graces are the best subjects to be presented to the people, as their experimental possession is the best preparation for preaching the gospel with power.

What we need in the pulpits is not essays, theorists or dissectors of a lifeless body of divinity, but experimental christians, witnesses of what God has done for their souls, who feeling daily the saving and regenerating power of the gospel, can bring the same to bear upon the hearts of both saints and sinners.

For the Christian Messenger.

Letters on Revision.

LETTER X.—THE OBSOLETE WORDS.

In the fourteenth century, John Wickliffe, the English apostle of soul liberty, proclaimed in England, amid much opposition, the right of the people to possess God's word faithfully translated into their own tongue. Availing himself of the best means within his reach to carry out this great principle, he translated the entire Bible from the Latin Vulgate into the spoken language of the people; completing the arduous work in the year 1384. About a century and a half later, when portions of Wickliffe's Bible had become obscure or obsolete, William Tyndale, another champion of the people's right to the Bible, translated the New Testament from the original Greek into the spoken English of his day; and completed the printing of it in 1525, at the city of Worme, in Germany. In its main features, this admirable version of the New Testament has been passed down through the several revisions to our day. Assisted by John Frith, a young man who fell a martyr for the truth in England in 1533, Tyndale then engaged in translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew original. He himself suffered martyrdom for his fidelity to the truth, in 1536; and the following year his completed work, with W. T. in ornamental letters at the end of the Old Testament, was published by John Rogers, under the name of Matthew's Bible. Then followed Taverner's, Cramer's, the Geneva, the Bishops' Bible, and lastly, King James's, which was published in 1611.

From King James's day to the present time, the English language has undergone far less change than it did during the two centuries preceding. Yet some important changes have taken place; so that we now find in the Common Version several words and phrases that have become obsolete, some of them unintelligible to the ordinary reader.