

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

By REV CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER XI.

THIRD RESIDENCE IN AMHERST.

(No. 3.)

Caution is very needful, and highly serviceable. It may, however, be carried to excess. An instance of this occurred in my case on the 27th day of June, 1836. Deeming it desirable to have my dwelling house enlarged by the addition of a kitchen, with a chimney in it, I was helping to put a large stone for one of the jambs on a drag: and remarked, that at the building of my house my back was lamed by an attempt to move a heavy stone; and added, 'Now I intend to be careful.' When the stone was about to fall on the drag, the thought suddenly crossed my mind, that it might break, and I made one effort to ease the fall by holding it back. By this means my left hand was caught, the fore finger severely bruised, the second crushed, and taken off at the first joint, and the third slightly hurt. It was done so suddenly that at first the pain was severely felt; but the hurt subsequently caused me much suffering.

Some favorers of Mormonism attributed this affliction to my opposition to that system; but if it were true, according to the sentence pronounced on me by one of its apostles, much heavier and more enduring sorrow must await me in the future state of existence.

My numerous duties had put it out of my power to spend much time of late in study; but on the 8th day of August I finished the third perusal of the Old Testament in Hebrew.

On my birth day, August 6th, being then 42 years of age, I determined (D. V.) to devote more time and attention to the visitation of families than had lately been so devoted.—School-teaching had unavoidably interfered with this part of my work. It was always regarded by me as a very important duty incumbent on Christian ministers. We must not be disheartened by some rebuffs in it. An instance of this occurs to mind in which, on my proposing to a man to engage with his family in religious exercises, as reading the Scriptures and prayer, he replied, "I don't want any such thing done in my house." No doubt he spoke the truth. In general, however, my visits were kindly received by persons of various denominations; and some instances of special usefulness afterwards became manifest.

In the beginning of October a series of meetings was held at River Philip by Brethren J. Dimock, S. McCully, S. T. Rand, and myself. The season was one of deep interest. It was to be regretted, however, that just when the prospect of the conversion of sinners became peculiarly encouraging, the ministers seemed to be obliged to separate, and the meetings were discontinued. In cases of this kind it is exceedingly desirable that as many as possible should remain, and the exercises be protracted by ministering brethren and others.

Toward the close of the same month our late talented and excellent Bro. Richard McLearn visited Cumberland, on an agency in favor of our useful Institution of learning in Wolfville. He tarried with us in Amherst over the Sabbath; and his labors were highly appreciated. It afforded me sincere pleasure to aid him in obtaining subscriptions to a considerable amount for this important object.

Till near the close of the year I had always stood wholly aloof from all political contests, and declined to vote at any election. Probably it would have been well to adhere to this course through life. My deviation from it, however, for a short space of time, was strictly conscientious. An ardent desire to aid in promoting the cause of Temperance, prompted me to vote for a man who professed an attachment to it, and an intention to employ his influence in its favor. As my vote was given near the close of the contest, when the candidates were nearly equal, it exposed me to peculiar rancor. Attacks were made upon me in a newspaper, charging me with having violated a promise never to vote. No such promise, however, was ever made by me; but merely an expression dropped in conversation, indicating a determination never to take an active part in any election. This determination was subsequently changed, not from any expectation of advantage to myself; for the incurring of worldly loss, displeasure, and obloquy were anticipated; but the belief that it was my duty, for the good

of my fellow men, induced me to make the sacrifice. With my present views, however, I should not do the same thing.

In the early part of the year 1837 the state of religion in Amherst and vicinity appeared encouraging. Several young persons who professed to have profited by my labors, either in public or in private, were received into the Church by baptism.

As our Magazine was succeeded by the *Christian Messenger* at the commencement of this year, and a large increase of original communications became desirable, in accordance with the wishes of the Editors, our valued brethren Nutting and Ferguson, I devoted such a portion of time as could be consistently spared from the discharge of other duties, to the preparing of articles, especially such as were adapted to elucidate obscure texts of Scripture, for insertion in it.

Though our Association was held in Yarmouth, about 240 miles from my place of residence, yet the satisfaction enjoyed in attending it, in the society of beloved Christian friends and in the formation of new acquaintances, including that of Rev. Adam Wilson, the talented Editor of *Zion's Advocate*, Portland, much more than counterbalanced the toil of the journey.

While passing through the extensive settlements of French people between Digby and Yarmouth, my heart was filled with grief in contemplation of their spiritual condition, and with earnest desire that the pure gospel might be faithfully proclaimed to them in their language. It is cheering to me to know, that considerable efforts have been subsequently put forth by our people for this purpose, and that the Divine blessing is manifestly attending them.

On my way home it was gratifying to me to visit a number of beloved relatives, including my justly venerated mother, whose mental faculties were retained in extraordinary vigor, and who was evidently ripening for glory. The remarkable coincidence may be here noted, that at the age of 83 years her descendants, besides 14 children, were—numbering the departed with the living—83 grandchildren, and 83 great-grandchildren. It was my privilege to aid in promoting the spiritual comfort by the delivery of a consolatory discourse, founded on Heb. iv 9., at the house of my brother Eliakim, where she was then living.

Having decided, on mature deliberation, to give my son Charles an education, in order that he might be prepared to enter the medical profession, on the 1st day of August, 1837, I sent him to our Educational Institution in Wolfville. It was not, of course, then anticipated that he was being thus qualified to occupy more important stations.

On New Year's day, 1838, the consideration that in the course of the preceding year upwards of fifty of my personal acquaintances, besides children, had passed into eternity, led me to ponder very seriously on the vast importance of being, in all respects, habitually prepared for that solemn event. My own physical infirmities, with several attacks of illness, were adapted to impress this reflection more deeply on my mind.

In the course of the preceding winter, by reason of exposure in a violent hail-storm, my left eye had been lastingly affected with an inflammatory disease, that frequently recurred, especially in cases of undue exertion, which were of common occurrence; and it often seemed likely to deprive me of the sight of that eye, and, by sympathy, of the other also. It subjected me to medical treatment of a painful kind; and at times obliged me to remain in a darkened room. Owing to my strong propensity to be actively engaged in laboring, reading, or writing, &c., this affliction was peculiarly trying, and hard to be endured. I knew, however, that all was ordered in faithfulness and kindness. In process of time—about a year and a half—through Divine goodness this trial was removed. Undoubtedly this, like other temporary privations of blessings formerly enjoyed without a sense of their value, or of my obligations to the Giver of them, led me to appreciate the blessings of sight more highly than it would otherwise have been prized.

For the Christian Messenger.

Remarks on Numbers xii. 3.

The observations copied from the *London Freeman*, (C. M. March 13th) with reference to apparent "discrepancies" in the Scriptures, suggesting the propriety of "offering hypotheses, on any of which they are reconcilable," are worthy of attention. They are, of course, applicable to other cases of obscurity or difficulty.

Some men who profess great reverence for the sacred Oracles, seem to think, that by exhibiting inaccuracies in the common English Translation, and also in the *received text* of the Greek Testament, they are subserving the interests of truth and godliness. Correction and improvement are evidently desirable; but in attempts to pluck up the tares, great care is requisite to avoid pulling up the wheat also. Mahomet acknowledged the truth of the ancient Scriptures, but alleged that they were corrupted; and so led his adherents to discard them. In like manner the Mormons maintain that Christ spoke obscurely to Jews, in the sayings recorded in the New Testament, but more plainly to the Nephites; and that these instructions are contained in the Book of Mormon, to which therefore they give the preference in a high degree. Abner Kneeland began with condemning the common English Translation, and rejecting, as spurious, considerable portions of the *received text* of the Greek New Testament, and proceeded to reject the whole Bible.

While some of Dean Alford's remarks appear to me incautious and objectionable, his proposal to have a "Commission of men learned in the Scriptures appointed, chosen from among our different Christian denominations, to make all needful corrections by mutual agreement, are evidently prudent and judicious. To me, however, it is manifest, that in the Greek text and the Translations the corrections really needed are few in comparison with the representations often made. They are, in my opinion, as compared with what is correct, like the small dust of the balance.

In a lecture delivered in my hearing some months since, the lecturer adduced Numbers xii. 3. ("Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.") as a gross and obvious error in the translation. He did not profess to rest his criticism upon philological ground; but maintained that Moses would not have been guilty of such arrogance as to make this statement respecting himself. But this objection may be obviated by one of two solutions. 1. It is certain that some brief additions were made to the books of Moses after his decease, (Deut. xxxiv. 5—12) and this remark may have been one of them? The fact stated, if it were as the lecturer would have it, that Moses was more "depressed" than any other man upon the earth, could not have been known otherwise than by immediate inspiration. As Moses, writing under Divine guidance, faithfully recorded his own faults, so he could not refuse to record what was dictated to him, if it was in commendation of him. (See verses 6—8.)

To determine beforehand what should have been said, is a very fallacious method of interpretation. Let, then, this case be considered, as all should be, in the light of philology. That the word here rendered *meek* has this meaning is unquestionable. (See Ps. xxv. 9., xxxvii. 11, lxxvi. 9.) It cannot be reasonably imagined that Moses was so exceedingly depressed on account of the insolence of Miriam and Aaron; but his extraordinary meekness, which deterred him from resenting it, and vindicating his own cause, might be naturally assigned as a reason why JEHOVAH interposed on his behalf. (See Dr. Gill on this text.) In my Hebrew Lexicon, which are those of Stackius, Parkhurst, and Gesenius, it is here uniformly defined by terms signifying *meek*. It is so rendered in the ancient Versions, as the Syriac, *Makik*, Greek Septuagint, *Prans*, and Latin Vulgate, *Mitissimus*. It is generally translated in the same way in modern Versions, as those of Junius and Tremellius, Diodati, Ostervald, Martin, Ferreira, and the Geneva English. The only exception which I find is that of Luther's German Version, in which it is rendered *Geplagt*, afflicted. But this is particularly noticed with disapprobation by Gesenius, unquestionably much more thoroughly skilled in Hebrew. See his *The-saurus*, p. 1049.

The case now considered may be justly regarded as one instance put of many in which the common English Version is represented as erroneous, where thorough investigation would demonstrate its accuracy.

It is alleged, that where two different solutions of a difficulty are proposed, as in this case, both can not be right, and it may be that neither is; this is admitted. But under the circumstances in which we are placed with reference to the writers of the Scriptures, any one that is not obviously inadmissible, may satisfy an unprejudiced mind. Could we now have access to the writer of any passage and propose our inquiry to him personally, undoubtedly he would at once give a satisfactory explanation. An incident in my own experience may illustrate my view. On a certain occasion I called at the

house of a friend, and casually remarked, that I was going farther up the road; but, on going out, went immediately in the opposite direction. It is not probable that any person ever charged me with falsehood in this case; but had any one desired occasion, this circumstance would have afforded a pretext for it. In my absence a friend of mine, having full confidence in my veracity, might naturally have suggested, that perhaps my former purpose, truthfully expressed, was suddenly changed, or that my words might have been misunderstood. Either of these solutions ought to have been regarded as sufficient to exonerate me from censure; but the real one could be given only by myself, namely, that on going into the road, I saw the man with whom I had business to transact coming up, and therefore went no farther, but turned and met him on the way.

Where *certainly* cannot be attained, *probability* ought to satisfy. It seems to me, therefore, evidently inexpedient for men of piety and erudition to write in a way that is liable, though not so intended, to aid skeptics in the business of pointing out apparent contradictions and difficulties in the Scriptures, and then to blame others for sincerely proposing reasonable solutions of them. As suggested in the *Freeman*, these labors are evidently well intended. In many instances they tend to relieve the perplexities of pious persons, and to silence the cavils of gainsayers. Such labors of love obviously ought to be encouraged. The strong should be careful not to cast a stumbling-block before the weak, but should sedulously endeavor to aid them under their infirmities.

C. TUPPER.

Aylesford, March 28th, 1867.

Missionary Intelligence.

Chinese Mission.

LETTER FROM DR. DEAN.

A Chinese Prayer Meeting.—Bankok, Oct. 20, 1866.—Last evening we attended the prayer meeting at the gardens,—the services being all in Chinese; and four of the mission family and nine Chinese took part in the exercises. First, we sang a hymn. Next, old Pe Hien prayed. Then Chek Hi said he had been selling goods, and God had prospered his business and made him happy in his mind. Chek Liah said he had not been well for a few days, and his heart was heavy; still his hope was in Jesus, and he was happy in his service. Chek Kia, not a church member, said he knew but little of the doctrine, but wished to place himself under the instruction of the teachers. Chek Tung, not baptized, said he did not know what to say, but he was sure it was good to worship the true God, and he was determined to do it. Pe Put, eighty years old, said his mind was flowery, but his heart was clear, and his hope was sure of soon reaching his high home with Jesus. He then prayed in great simplicity and faith. Next, Fannie said: "I have been out reading from my Chinese Testament to the women this afternoon, and trying to explain to them the teachings of Jesus. I can do but little, and desire you to pray to God to help me to teach the people." Miss Fields said (in English) that she had seen many beautiful things in Bangkok; but this meeting was the most beautiful thing she had seen. Willie said he was glad to see so many Chinese wishing to become Christians, and that he wished to be a Christian himself. Pe Hien said God looked at the heart, and not at the face of man. If you wish to appear handsome to God, try to have the heart look well. Pua Sin Se said, when you pray, use the Lord's prayer, if you can use no other words. The pastor said, if your son desires to eat, he can say, "Father, I wish some rice, or I wish an orange, or I wish some fish. Now you can do the same if you want anything of God. He understands Chinese, and can hear you if you say to him, 'I wish a clean heart. I wish to be pardoned. I wish to know the doctrine. I wish to be delivered from the devil.'" Others spoke and prayed. Then we said, "Peace be with you," and walked home by moonlight, being made happier by the prayer meeting.

Next Sabbath I hope to baptize some Chinese who are waiting for the privilege.

LETTER FROM MR. E. O. STEVENS.

Opium-eating among Burmans.—Manoung, Nov. 20, 1865.—In the evening I sat down in the bungalow, which was very kindly furnished for our accommodation, heavy of heart. The question had been repeatedly asked on board the boat among ourselves, and after we landed, by those who extended their hospitalities upon our arrival, why it was that those eight oarsmen could not be made to put forth an average amount of strength in stemming the current and north-east monsoon. But it was not till dusk of that evening that the true cause came to my knowledge. Moug Company, the missionary to the Kyens, employed by the Convention, disclosed the fact, that every Burman that manned the boat, with the single exception of the owner himself, was addicted to the use of opium.

I had that very morning heard one of them laughingly speak to his fellow of the opium a comrade had taken, who was at the time lying motionless under cover, overpowered with heavy sleep. Hope almost died within me as I thought of