

For the Christian Messenger.

## A DREAM, WITH A PROLOGUE, AND AN EPILOGUE.

BY S. T. RAND, MISSIONARY TO THE INDIANS.

MY DREAM.—Continued.

During this summer I was for the most part thoughtful and earnest. I had stated seasons for devotion. I took care to read the Bible every evening, and to kneel at my bedside morning and evening and pray. And I often tried to pray while at work in the fields, and to watch over my heart, and my mind was much occupied with the great question of salvation.

And one night I dreamed that I had started on "Pilgrimage." The fascinating story of the Pilgrim's Progress by the "Immortal Dreamer," would naturally enough suggest the outlines of the dream. I had been familiar with this story from childhood. An old shattered volume, belonging to my "Uncle Thomas," adorned with hideous wood cuts, which may have been for ought I know a copy of one of the first editions ever published, had been read and examined many a time. And I had seen other volumes, more modern in their type and pictures. All this would suggest the dream, and many of the incidents. But many of them were altogether unique, and different from the incidents of the Pilgrim's Progress. It was as follows:

Several boys about my own age, my playmates and school fellows, seemed to be commencing the pilgrim journey with me. And we seemed to understand distinctly that while we were literally setting out on a journey, the substance of the thing was spiritual—that it meant that we were to become christians, and lead a life of godliness and sobriety in the world.

The place of starting seemed to be near my father's house. This stood on the west bank of those fertile intervals, that adorn and enrich the County of Kings, to the west of Kentville, and through which flow those winding "streams from the North," which empty into and swell the waters of the Corwallis River—the Idgoitwick of the Micmacs,—in its onward course from the Carribou Bog in Aylesford, where it takes its rise to the Basin of Minus into which it flows. Near our house the brook—quite a large stream—swept in under the western bank, and was there spanned by what we were wont to call the "big bridge," while near the hill on the eastern side, was the "little bridge," which, before the days of ditching and draining, gave vent to the surplus waters, that collected during the freshets, on the low positions of meadow ground under that hill.—Between these two bridges, four or five of us boys were assembled, and were discussing the question whether we would go on Pilgrimage or not. All seemed at first strongly inclined to start. But alas, the Tempter, in the form of a black, ugly hump, about our own size, and looking for all the world like some of the pictures of Satan, as represented in the Pilgrim's Progress, made his appearance among us, and with great zeal and earnestness dissuaded us from our purpose. Oh how busy he was! He would go from one to another. He assured us in the smoothest and most enticing terms it was all nonsense; that should we go on we must give up all fun and frolic, all play, all comfort, and become moping and melancholy all our days.

It appeared to me that I resisted him stoutly, but that the others seemed strongly inclined to listen and yield to his insinuations. He had no power however to compel us, no power to injure, and none even to frighten us. But he argued, and urged and coaxed. And soon he had prevailed on all but myself and one more, to abandon the enterprise, and go back. "Charles" and "John" and others went back, but "Jim" and I went on.

The Tempter having apparently secured those he had drawn off, returned and plied all his wiles to draw my comrade from me. And he succeeded. Looking round I saw him going back, and I went back after him, and earnestly entreated him not to yield to the tempter. "Oh don't go back," I said, "with that wretched fellow." He turned short about and came after me again, but before I reached the hill, on looking round, I saw that he had again gone back with the Tempter. Away near the "big bridge" I saw them linked arm in arm, and engaged apparently in most earnest conversation and walking on. I felt sad and sick at the sight, but gave up my friend, and went on up the hill alone.

Hitherto the scenery seemed in my dream all natural. I was travelling eastward. The house of an uncle, my father's oldest brother, whom "every body" called "uncle Thomas," a Presbyterian, and a most excellent and exemplary christian man from youth to a good old age, stood on the right hand side of the road. Just at the top of the hill on the left hand side stood an old house, often untenanted, called the "Walter house," from the christian name of its first occupant. Just beyond a set of "bars" opened into a private road, which led to the "Walter barn," which stood some distance from the highway, on the north side of the road. Into this private road I turned, leaving the "highway," the "main road," and here it seemed my journey in the Pilgrim's path really commenced. And at this point the whole scenery was changed. Nothing appeared now natural or familiar; all was new and strange.

I was still pursued and persecuted by the unwearied foe, who appeared determined to thwart my purpose, and if he could not persuade me to go back, he would destroy me if possible before I should pass the "wicket gate." A large barn stood before me, not the "Walter barn," with the "big doors" and "little doors" open. I passed through this building and while

doing so, Satan made a furious assault upon me armed with a pitchfork. I evaded him, however, and escaped unhurt. I had the impression that the Lord was near me, protecting me, and guiding me, but doing so in a way that required me to put forth all my own energies in taking care of myself.

But immediately after escaping the peril just mentioned I was attacked more covertly and successfully. Stealing up softly behind me, as I was crossing a stream on a narrow plank, he smote a nail into my head, up to the head with a hammer, inflicting what would have been as it seemed to me, a mortal wound, had the nail not been instantly extracted by a hand divine, and the mortal wound healed. This was done without any effort on my part, and I was soothed, refreshed and encouraged by the healing hand, I felt my confidence in God strengthened, and hastened on my way.

Satan then left me, and I saw him no more. I soon reached a large, low, antique looking building, standing at the "head of the way." I passed in on the south side. The building was intersected by innumerable halls, and innumerable doors were arranged along the sides of these halls. Through one of these doors I would have to pass, but at first there seemed no means of ascertaining which was the right door. On careful examination, however, it seemed very clear which were the wrong ones. There would be several steps leading up to them, and, on approaching, I noticed a writing on every door, a warning not to enter. There were horrid pictures over this notice, like the "hobgoblins" of the "valley of the shadow of death," and then some words that I could not read or else did not remember on awaking; but I could distinctly read, and I remembered the sentence, "Destruction to all who enter here." I would shrink back from the fearful admonition, and continue my search for the right door. I soon found it. Going on north in one of the narrow halls, turning at right angles to the east, and then, after a few feet, turning square about again to the south, I saw two narrow doors, occupying the usual space of one, and closing the passage at the end of the hall. One of these doors was much narrower than the other. This was on the left side, and appeared so narrow that no one could pass through without supernatural aid. Nor could it be passed without the gracious permission of the keeper who in the form of a plain man, very plainly dressed, but with the authority of God, was at his station within, being seated just on the opposite side of the door from where I stood, all his person being usually concealed except from his knees downward as he sat. The door on the right hand side, though quite narrow, was considerably wider than the other, and could be passed without difficulty. There seemed to be no one to guard it.

I was immediately given to understand that the narrowest door was the right one, the one that led to "life." But a strong presumption seemed to prevail that it could not make much difference which of these two doors we entered, as they seemed so manifestly to open into one and the same passage beyond, and if so, they would of course, it was inferred, lead to the same place. There seemed now no lack of company, and every one was astir, arrivals and departures took place continually; and as the wider door could be passed with so much less difficulty than the other, and as it was itself quite a narrow one, thus seeming to answer to the Scriptural mark, and so general an impression prevailed, even among those who it might be presumed, ought to know, that it did not make much difference which of the two doors we chose, most of the pilgrims shunned the narrowest door, and entered at the other, and passed on.

But I learned soon that for the certainty that the wider door led into the same passage way beyond, there was no satisfactory authority. I was afraid to risk it. My fears were confirmed by a closer examination. As the doors opened I looked in. I saw a partition running on as far as eye could reach, partly as high as the heads of the people as they passed along, and completely separating them, though they could converse together, and did so, apparently in the most friendly manner, seeming to congratulate each other in their happy success in getting through the door "that stood at the head of the way." But they hastened on, and were soon out of sight, and their places were immediately occupied by others.

Notwithstanding this separating wall that extended as far as we could see, it was still by many taken for granted that the two paths would after a while merge into one, and far the greater number of the pilgrims chose to run the risk rather than be to the extra pains and trouble that an entrance at the narrowest door demanded. But some hesitated. They dreaded the consequences of being mistaken. I sided with the more cautious, and so "pondered the path of my feet." And since respecting the one door there was no doubt, and since there were grave doubts respecting the other, and since I could not endure the thoughts of being mistaken, I was determined to run no risk. I must pass, if possible, through the narrowest door. I could not resist the conviction that the two roads never came into one, but that they would get farther and farther apart forever. [And that is my conviction still.]

I noticed another thing that impressed me. There was an appearance of sadness, seriousness and humility, about those who entered the narrowest door, that did not seem to characterize the others. There was waiting too, and earnest praying, and fear and trembling, in their case. The others came in with a light and buoyant step, holding up their heads, and they scarcely paused in their course, but passed through the door, tripping along, nodding and smiling, seeming scarcely to dream of difficulty or delay, or to imagine the possibility of a fatal mistake. I was personally acquainted with some of

them, with two in particular, and remembered after I awoke how easily they and some others had seemed to get religion. Scarcely any pains had been taken according to their own account. Carelessly they had gone to meeting. Something that was said had awakened them. They had prayed a few times, had been brought out into liberty, spoke or prayed in meeting, offered themselves to the church, had been received and baptised, and were moving on joyously with neither doubts or fears, or if they were troubled with doubts, and a sense of their shortcomings, these were attributed to Satan, who was trying, as they believed, to make them think they were not christians; and, as older and riper christians complained of the same things, they were deemed evidences of real piety rather than otherwise. My dream gave me strong forebodings as to their future course. And, alas! my acquaintance with them in after life, never dissipated the doubts suggested by the dream.

But to return, I had no power to pass in without permission, or without help. It behoved to knock again and again, and to wait. There was no literal "knocking," however. The knocking was prayer, earnest, fervent, persevering prayer. Falling down on my knees near the door, I wept and supplicated and prayed. But my prayers and tears were apparently in vain. The keeper of the door would not even look at me, or if he did his look was cold and repulsive. After a while I got discouraged and careless. My emotions subsided. I arose from my knees and walked leisurely about examining the building, or stood looking at the passers by. Days and even weeks would seem to pass, and then my anxiety to be saved, would return again, and I would again kneel and pray and plead and weep. Then would follow another season of discouragement, coldness and forgetfulness followed by another season of anxiety and earnestness, bringing me back to the door, where I would kneel and pray and weep as before.

At length one day while wrestling with great earnestness, I succeeded in attracting the notice of the "Lord of the place," the "Keeper of the door." I had seen his "knees," before, and the "place of his feet." But he looked out upon me, and I saw his face. He spoke to me, but his words were cold and chilling. They seemed to have a deep mysterious meaning. They intimated that in order to be blessed a vigorous effort on my part to put away all sin must be made. If my filthy garments were to be cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, I must wash them myself. (Revelation vii. 14.) If I would be sanctified and saved, I must "use all diligence," must "cleanse myself" from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

I can never forget the very words he used, nor his stern, forbidding and yet encouraging manner. "You had better go and clean out your stables." These were the words. And they inspired me with hope. They conveyed to my mind the idea that there was some abominable sin, some "filth of the flesh," some accumulating mass of corruption, that I must make a vigorous effort to put away, or I could never obtain the blessing sought, but that as soon as this was done I would succeed. I had no very definite idea of what this particular sin was. But I need not to have been at a loss. All sin must be renounced, and put away, and this, while it is the work of God in us and by us, is also our own deliberate voluntary act. But now ye also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth." "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry." Each and every one of these sins must be abandoned, or the soul can never know peace. For because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. Col. v. 5-8. The figure impressed me, both during my dream, and after I awoke. My "trade had been about cattle" from my childhood, and it had generally fallen to my lot to "clean out the stables." The work was hard and unpleasant in every respect. But it had to be done. My heart was the stable that needed to be cleansed. And strength of mind and body, and care and soldierly behavior to be excited, with more than mortal might, that the abominable thing that God hates might be put away.

But at this stage of the dream, I was awakened. The master of the house had called me. It was broad daylight. It was time for me to be up and at my work. How disappointed and sad I felt! Oh, thought I, that I had entered that door! I lay for a moment pondering on all the wonders that had been passing before me. My eyes closed, and my dream went on. I was exactly where I was when the vision had been so suddenly and rudely broken. Nothing was changed. The dream had apparently not even been interrupted by my having been awakened.

And it was somewhat remarkable that I usually arose instantly on being called. To fall asleep afterwards, and to be obliged to be called a second time, was a rare occurrence. In fact I cannot remember as it ever occurred during the summer except on that morning. Though, of course, I cannot be certain as to this. But on that morning it did occur. I was again kneeling near that narrow door and pouring out my soul in prayer, with strong crying and tears. And now I succeeded. I was admitted at the narrow door. The keeper arose and stopped out where I was and looked pleasantly upon me. He took me gently by the hand, raised me up, and passed me through the door. At that moment I was again called, and was broad awake in an instant. The vision had vanished. But I was safe! I had entered the narrow door, even the narrowest door, the right door, the door about which there was no doubt, and could be no mistake.—My hope that I would ultimately become a christian and be saved was strengthened. I did not

for a moment suppose that I was already converted; but I felt some degree of assurance that I would be. Such was my dream, I think I am justified in calling it a remarkable dream.

Conclusion in our next.

## Correspondence.

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## REVISION OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES.

No. 3.

The two great Bible Societies that largely rule the religious and missionary world in their particular department, in making the common English version the standard in translation and circulation, have committed a wrong against revealed truth and Christian principle. This will be made manifest by a presentation of the facts connected with that version.

It is not inspired.

It was made by fallible men.

These men, with few exceptions, were not distinguished for learning. Compared with eminent biblical scholars of the present day, the body of them would not rank very high. The work of the more learned, was, by the operation of the king's rules, deteriorated by the hands of inferior scholars.

The time occupied in the work (less than three years) was not sufficient to enable the best scholars to do it well. The most distinguished Hebraist connected with it, Edward Lively, died in May, 1605, the first year of the work.

The period in which the translation was made was not so favorable, as the present, for making a thorough and faithful version of the holy oracles into our language.

Biblical literature was in its infancy. Within this century, its resources have been largely developed. The knowledge of Greek and Hebrew has been enlarged. The grammar of those languages has been more accurately systematized, and is more thoroughly understood. Historical and geographical research has been greatly extended. The relations of languages to each other are much better comprehended.

On the particular department of the biblical translator, a flood of light has been thrown by the discovery of manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures.

When the Common version was made, in 1604-7, very few manuscripts of the sacred writings were known, even to the learned. Not more than twenty copies of the New Testament had been discovered, and none of them were perfect. The very best were comparatively modern, not dating earlier than the tenth century. In view of the manuscripts now consulted by scholars, not one of those known in 1607 is esteemed good authority.

The number of manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures, now known, approaches a thousand. Some of these are five or six hundred years older than any of those accessible to scholars in 1671. The oldest are generally the most reliable. They agree more uniformly with each other. They existed before the thorough establishment and universal corruption of the Greek and Roman hierarchies.

Various circumstances conduced to the injury and depreciation of later manuscripts. The Scriptures were not so highly valued, and less solicitude was felt to keep them pure. Additions were made to the words of the Holy Spirit. Priests wrote brief comments on the manuscripts, and supplied words to the portions used in public worship, which were incorporated in subsequent copies as parts of the original inspired text.

The book which King James's translators used and from which they translated was the Greek text collated by Erasmus. This was hastily prepared, and was unavoidably erroneous and defective, as it had been compiled from late and imperfect manuscripts, which now would not be cited by scholars as authoritative. He added to unavoidable faults, by making Greek to supply deficiencies in the manuscripts. This fact has been ascertained of late years by the discovery of the interpolations, made in his own handwriting, in the manuscript which he used.

In addition to these disadvantages, the translators of King James were restricted by rules imposed by the monarch, which precluded them from thoroughness and fidelity. "One of these 'The old ecclesiastical words to be retained, as the word 'church' not to be translated 'congregation.'" Early all the translators were Episcopalians. The work was designed to uphold the Church of England. In their dedication of the book to the monarch who employed them, they declare:

"And now at last, by the mercy of God, and