

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

BROTHER "LUKE'S" ILLUSTRATIONS.

Mr. Editor,—

On any subject wherein brothers differ in their views, great care should be exercised by all who either speak or write with reference to it, to avoid all personality and unkindness. It affords me pleasure, therefore, to notice the mild and pacific spirit in which your correspondent "Luke" approaches the subject of Foreign Missions, on which it is highly important for us all to be united. Many of his remarks are well worthy of consideration. It does not seem to belong to me to reply to his arguments in general. His illustration, however, by a reference to Acadia College, appears to me so directly in point, and so perfectly conclusive, that I must beg leave to notice it briefly.

My earnest desire is, that the funds of our excellent Institution may be greatly increased. I would, however, in all kindness, put it to the common sense of every intelligent and unprejudiced person:—Would as much have been done by the Baptists of these Provinces as actually has been done by them, if it had been located in the United States, not dependent on our people for support, nor in any measure under their control or management? In that case would great numbers of our people have given their hundreds, in some instances thousands, of dollars to sustain it? Would men in limited circumstances have toiled, and strained every nerve, and, if they could not obtain money, given materials for building, labor, &c.? Would females whose means might allow it, have freely contributed large sums? Would those in the humble walks of life have cheerfully toiled in spinning yarn and knitting socks, &c. to aid in its establishment and support?

Surely no reasonable man can imagine, that a tithe of the amounts raised would have been realized had it not been, that the College is our own, located in our midst, dependent on us for support, and under our control and management. We naturally feel a direct interest in its success, and enjoy peculiar pleasure in witnessing the usefulness of the efforts which we have been enabled to make in its behalf. Every discerning person can easily perceive the application of this to our Foreign Mission.

In confirmation of Bro. "Luke's" illustration it may be remarked, that our Baptist brethren in England commenced a Mission in India above 20 years before one was begun by those in the United States; but certainly it did not excite general interest among the latter, nor draw forth their resources in aid. When, however, they come to have a Mission of their own, established among them, under their direction, and the responsibility of its support resting on them all they had no occasion to divide—an extensive, lively, and abiding interest was excited, and money was poured into their treasury with profusion. The happy results are widely known.

The Baptists of these Provinces, when they had no prospect of establishing a Foreign Mission of their own, did indeed furnish considerable sums in aid of the American Union. But when the late eminently pious, zealous, and amiable Richard E. Burpe offered to go out as our Missionary to labor for us, and under our control, and visited the Baptist Churches in these Provinces, and called their attention to the subject, it is well known that a greatly increased impulse was produced; and the means needed for outfit, transportation, and the establishment of a Mission, and its support, were obtained without difficulty. Let similar means be diligently and energetically employed, and undoubtedly similar results will follow.

Your in gospel bonds,
CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, March 1, 1870.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE MIRACLE OF THE POOL.

Mr. Editor,—

Among the subjects of interest lately discussed in the "Messenger" is that of Miracles. In the 5th Chap. of the Gospel by John there is an account of what is generally regarded as one of those supernatural events, which may be worthy of a brief investigation. In the narrative, as given by the sacred historian, and apparently as part of his words, we are informed that the multitude congregated at the pool of Bethesda were "waiting for the moving of the water;" and further, that the agitation which was a

matter of so much interest and anxiety to them, was occasioned by the agency of "an angel who, at a certain season, went down into the pool, and troubled the water." This last statement is a very remarkable one, and has been a source of great perplexity to commentators. It is the record of a miracle, and a miracle which differs so materially from all others of which we have an account in the sacred writings that it has ever arrested the attention of even the careless and the indifferent. We do not wonder then that those who have made the Scriptures the study of their life should peruse the words with thoughtful consideration. The celebrated Dr. Dodridge in his commentary upon the 4th verse says, that "it is the greatest of difficulties in the history of the Evangelists," and other eminent annotators have vainly perplexed themselves to give a satisfactory explanation of an occurrence which finds no parallel in the volume of inspiration. Nor has the narrative escaped the notice of a very different class of writers. Infidels have employed it to sharpen their weapons of ridicule, and with an "ab uno disce omnes," have attempted to disparage the entire testimony of Scripture.

To the age in which we live we are indebted for much that has elucidated the sacred writings, and removed difficulties hitherto inexplicable. Among the aids to the proper understanding of the Divine Oracles, the discovery of numerous very ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, in the original Greek, may be enumerated. Some of these are referred to the 5th and 4th Centuries, and as such must be of the very highest authority. Their value is illustrated in their bearing upon the passage now under review. None of the most ancient manuscripts which are known to exist, contain the 4th verse; and in two of them—the Sinaitic, and the Vatican—the last clause of the 3rd, is also wanting.

That later copies, and those which were in use when our present translation was effected, should differ more or less from older ones, is not remarkable, when we recollect that printing was unknown till a comparatively recent period; and that books existed only as they were copied by hand. In such a case it is not wonderful that there should sometimes be omissions, longer or shorter; or a substitution for one or more words for others similar in appearance or sound; or even an addition to the text which was being copied. The last mentioned change was in some instances the result of a note, or scholium, which a former copyist had placed in the margin for illustration or explanation, and which afterwards was inadvertently incorporated with the original. If we assume that we have here an example of such a change, as the most ancient manuscripts indicated; and that the 4th verse is an interpolation; we are led to inquire into the cause of the agitation of the water, which, according to the record, took place at recurring, and probably irregular intervals.

Dr. Robinson, to whose travels and researches the christian world is so deeply indebted, gives us a graphic and most interesting narrative of his investigations on the spot. He informs us that the spring which supplies the pool is an intermittent one; or more accurately, one of irregular flow, being now comparatively insignificant, and again, at longer or shorter intervals, much more abundant—the change occurring very suddenly and with considerable violence. Such phenomena, it may be remarked, are not unusual in countries abounding with "brooks and fountains of water," and are readily accounted for on the principle of the siphon, so familiar to all pupils in Natural Philosophy. "The troubling of the water" would then signify this periodical and constantly recurring overflow of the fountain which supplied the pool, and would be explained on principles wholly irrespective of angelic or supernatural agency.

But if we take a step further, and omit also the last clause of the 3rd verse, it will be found, as before, that no objection can be urged on the ground that the continuity of the narrative is broken. An inquiry, however, naturally arises; "Why were the multitudes of sick, &c., congregated at Bethesda?" If there was no intervention of angels in their behalf, as appears on the surface to be taught, of what advantage would the waters be to them? The spring, Dr. Robinson informs us, is a mineral one, and like others of that class, might have been beneficial; and it might have been, and probably was, the popular impression, or the fact even that it possessed a peculiar virtue, and an additional efficacy, immediately after the troubling; and hence the hastening to the pool directly upon the appearance of the commotion of the waters.

But why object to the agency of angels in the case? Not certainly because, with the Sadducees, we hold that there are no such beings, or with

Hume, et hoc genus omne, that miracles are incredible, but because there is a simple and natural explanation of the phenomenon apart from any thing miraculous; and further that the unquestioned miracles of Scripture differ entirely in their character from the representation here presented. Such a miracle as what is here described would be meaningless. It would attest nothing. It would accomplish nothing but what might be, and constantly is, effected by natural agency.

If the above views are correct, and if there was no miracle in the case, but that afterwards performed by the Saviour, the passage which records one is not a portion of the inspired text, and consequently should be expunged. It furnishes one of many valid reasons adduced for a revision of the English translation of the Bible; which work, all who feel an interest in faithful versions, will desire to see accomplished with as little delay as possible.

R.

Wolffville, March 1, 1870.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Mr. Editor,—

I am much pleased to inform you of a donation which took place on the 17th Dec. at the pastor's residence at Hebron—the evening was so stormy that all hopes of it taking place was relinquished. Then suddenly to our astonishment, the people come pouring in from all quarters, so that the house was well filled. After the necessary preliminaries, and all had enjoyed from the abundance provided—the meeting was called to order. Very cheering and appropriate speeches were delivered by the Revs. Dr. Day Parker, Chipman, and Cogswell, Deacons Doty, and Crosby, and also a very touching address by Bro. Sims on the love and goodness of God. The whole combined was one of the most pleasant evenings I ever spent. Some days after the donation was over, a father and his two sons rolled into my house a barrel of flour each, as their donation, the whole amounting to a \$100, and also \$50, I received as a present from the church a few weeks before our Association at Hebron. It is justice to say, I never met with greater kindness from any people than has been manifested to me and my family by the Hebron Church and congregation. May God abundantly bless them, is my humble petition to the great Author of all our blessings. In consequence of 7 weeks of severe sickness I have been unable to give publicity to this donation before this time.

J. ROWE.

Hebron, Yarmouth Co., N. S., Feb. 22.
(Received on the 7th Inst.)

Dear Brother,—

At the close of 1869, my dear friends on the Neck, paid me a donation visit. After singing, speeches and prayers were offered, we were left to meditate on the sayings, doings and contributions of these firm friends. The amount contributed was in cash, \$41.00, valuable articles for family purposes \$55.00. The dear friends at Tiverton, Long Island, added \$20.00 to the above. Making in all the valuable present of one hundred and twenty-six dollars, \$126.00. May God reward them richly for their kindness to an unworthy servant of the Lord, is the prayer of their pastor.

J. C. MORSE.

IN MEMORIAM.

For the Christian Messenger.

ZENAS WATERMAN.

died at Pleasant River, Aug. 3rd, 1869, in the 81st year of his age. I believe that he was the last of the little band who formed the first congregation that ever met for public worship in the Northern district of Queen's County.

At that time, he was a smart, active, ambitious young man, but destitute of the fear of God, a stranger to the covenant of grace, and careless about the things of religion. His moral character was good, except that he was in the habit of using very profane language. The little meeting was held at Abner Hall's, Mr. Waterman left it with different thoughts, and feelings than he ever had before. By the close of the week, he and a number of his companions were rejoicing in the hope of everlasting life. It might have been said of him "that God had given him a new heart,—and he had been turned into another man." And his blasphemies were turned to praises.

He was one of the three converts who went to Liverpool on horseback, soon after, rejoicing, and praising God in a loud voice as they went. The scene was so novel and extraordinary, that it created quite an excitement among the religious people in that town. Mrs. Gorham said when she saw Zenas standing in the singing seats of Old Zion the next day, and heard him tell what God had done for his soul, she felt just as sure of his salvation as if she had seen him in Heaven.

He was very happy at that time. He felt that "much had been forgiven, and he loved much." But a very trifling circumstance soon after, embittered the rest of his religious life. When Mr. Chipman came from Niagara, to baptise the candidates that had professed religion at Pleasant River, during the revival at Abner Hall's—Zenas was at Labrador. When he came home, and found that his companions had been baptised in his absence, he felt very much hurt.

He thought they should have waited until his return. The disappointment had such an effect on his mind, that he never got over it, nor went forward in that ordinance until some twenty years after, when he was baptised by Rev. Mr. Melvin, in the same river, near where his friends had been baptised by Mr. Chipman so many years before.

But, notwithstanding the cloud that rested on his religious enjoyment,—his own irritable disposition, and the many losses, crosses, and disappointments that he met with in his political life, his bow abode in strength. His faith, and confidence in God, was deep, strong, and unwavering. His zeal for religion was warm, active, and generous. And his conduct in every situation was consistent with the christian profession he made in early life.

In family worship, he read the Scriptures as if he was listening attentively to see what the Lord would say to him in his word. In prayer, he seemed to have a realising sense of being near to God, and filled with gratitude. He was a good man, I loved him much, and am now, his only surviving brother, and your humble, and obedient servant,

W. T. WATERMAN.

Annapolis Royal, Feb. 5, 1870.

Missionary Intelligence.

CHINA.—It is said that a native preacher a few weeks ago returned to Tungchow from a field where he had been laboring, and reported that there is much interest in the neighborhood. Ten men and three or four women have applied for the privilege of church membership, and twenty others openly express their desire to be Christians. There are several inquirers at Shinteen, where a new chapel has been built. At Hangchow there is a theological class. At Chefoo, twenty-five natives applied for admission to the church last year, of whom, however, only five were admitted.

At Ping Foo, where there are five native Christians, one of them has given a chapel for mission use. It is regularly opened on the Sabbath and on market days, and the native Christians generally serve as preachers. The leading man and first convert from this neighborhood, though not employed by the mission, labors with much zeal for Christ, and has been greatly blessed. During the summer, he brought in seven inquirers, of whom four have already joined the church. He is himself the fruit of native faithfulness.

In connection with the Christian work at Amoy is a Theological Seminary, a building of brick containing twelve rooms for students, and a lecture-room or chapel. A good example for christians in other countries is furnished by a native Chinese church at Chioh-be, which some time since set apart two weeks as a season of prayer for guidance in selecting a pastor.

TURKEY.—At the ordination of a preacher over a newly-formed church in Western Turkey, a crowded and deeply-interested and attentive audience attended the examination of the candidate—Armenians and Mohammedans seeming hardly less interested than the Christians. The examination lasted four hours, and every one seemed to regret that a whole day could not be given to it. The ordination was held in a garden, and every available spot was filled with hearers. A Moslem wept under the vivid presentation of the gospel; and when another reproved him, saying, "Why do you weep at the words of the infidels?" he replied, "These are not the words of infidels; they are God's words." The church contains but four or five families that can do much; nevertheless, they assume the entire burden of the pastor's support.

At the close of a term of study in the Theological Seminary at Harpoot, nineteen young men of promise received licence to preach.

THREE HUNDRED BAPTIZED.—Mr. Timpany, of Neillore, communicates thrilling information of the further triumphs of the gospel among the Teloogeois.

I presume that about three hundred have been baptized, hardly a third of what we asked; but I shall not give up expecting the thousand, until the last day of the year. There is a sound of much rain. As I write, the sound of song and prayer comes into my room from brother Jewett's. It is a midday meeting, and they come, young and old, as they are moved to pray for the arm of the Lord to be made bare. Thirteen were baptized last Sabbath here, and we go to the water next Sabbath. Yesterday I had a letter from brother Clough. He baptized thirteen also last Sabbath, and says, "We are praying day and night for the rest to come. They will come, must come, cannot help it," and I can only say, Amen. "Lord increase our faith."

A GLORIOUS SCENE.—The account given above, is confirmed and presented more in detail in a letter by Mrs. Clough, of Ongole.

On the seventh of this month we had a season glorious and glorious—far surpassing anything which I ever expected to behold in this long neglected land. I must say that my faith was rebuked, though I was expecting what I thought were great things, at the hand of the Lord. At our chapel services on that day 240 were present. Of this number 108 had come from near and from far, from all distances, from 10 to 150 miles on foot, bringing their rice upon their shoulders, to profess their faith in Jesus and ask for baptism. Does such a scene need a comment? How much we felt like crying out with Simeon of old; for did we not in verity behold the salvation of the Lord?—Nearly the whole day was spent in examination. In many instances; however, it was little more than form, the persons being known so well before, and their faith seen in their walk. But in other cases it was more searching.