

Autobiography of the Missionary of the London Missionary Society,

- FRIEDRICH GOTTLOB KAYSER

with further accounts of his experiences (facts) collected from his letters.

Autobiography of the Missionary Friedrich Gottlob Kayser.

I was born in the year 1801, on the 4th January at Neokhan, near
Tainio, of pious parents who were farmers. I was such a weakly
child that my mother was advised not to trouble herself much
about me as I should certainly not live long. My mother, however,
was not willing to follow this unchristian advice but did every-
thing in her power to preserve my life and to strengthen my
powers. My parents sent me to school at a very early age, and
as they were very anxious that I should learn something of law
I was very seldom allowed to miss my lessons and never un-
necessarily. In other respects my education was what was
usual in the case of a farmer. I was not kept under strict
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of this I soon became independent and my body gained develop-
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dangers and wandered about a great deal in the open after
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towards God: "Heavenly Father, how Thou dost glorify Thyself
towards weak children through Thy protecting and watchful Angels."
Several years before my confirmation - I believe in the ninth
year of my age - there arose in me a strong desire to be a
schoolmaster. At first my father was against this desire, but
he nevertheless allowed me to take lessons in piano playing.
My desire for knowledge awoke at about this time, so that I
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Autobiography of the Missionary Friedrich Gottlob Kasper.

I was born in the year 1800, on the 4th January at Hochau, near Leipzig, of pious parents who were farmers. I was such a weakly child that my mother was advised not to trouble herself much about me as I should certainly not live long. My mother, however, was not willing to follow this unchristian advice but did everything in her power to preserve my life and to strengthen my powers. My parents sent me to school at a very early age, and as they were very anxious that I should learn something of law I was very seldom allowed to miss my lessons and never unnecessarily. In other respects my education was what was usual in the case of a farmer. I was not kept under strict supervision but was left very much to myself, in consequence of this I soon became independent and my body gained development and hardening. Certainly I was thereby exposed to many dangers as I wandered about a great deal in the open after school, and I must even now when I look back exclaim with thanks towards God: "Heavenly Father, how Thou dost glorify Thyself towards weak children through Thy protecting and watchful angels." Several years before my confirmation - I believe in the ninth year of my age - there arose in me a strong desire to be a schoolmaster. At first my father was against this desire, but he nevertheless allowed me to take lessons in piano playing. My desire for knowledge awoke at about this time, so that I began to read with avidity all old books, and even single pages which I found or had lent to me. The result of this however was often more harmful than useful as no one troubled himself what I read, and therefore I earnestly beg teachers and parents to give strict attention to what their children read, especially those in whom an early love of reading shows itself; that misery

misery may not be reaped instead of blessing, when the enemy sows tares amongst the wheat in the child-heart.

My wish to be a schoolmaster was at the time of my confirmation supported by the newly-elected philanthropic minister, Mr. H. Sommer, who made the offer to my father to instruct me himself after his arrival and my confirmation, and to prepare me for that profession. This, then, was actually carried out by this man throughout three years with noble unselfishness and without charge. His instruction however went far beyond the purpose desired by me. He wished to make me capable of study, and I therefore also undertook other branches of knowledge than those adapted to the position of schoolmaster. Nevertheless I had in fact at that time much more inclination for the latter, and my people were against my undertaking study on account of our poverty. I consequently became at the beginning of the year 1818 (1819) a children's teacher at Zschottgan near Eilenburg, having been in fact chosen by lot. I did not however remain long at that place, but returned to my home at Wolphayn near Brandis, a village belonging to the parish of Beucha, at Easter 1819, where I was appointed schoolmaster. Here it was that I on the 1st January 1822 in the church of Beucha, for the first time heard something of mission work. The worthy Minister Mr. M. Stephani tried to arouse interest in this holy work, and read out some awakening missionary news from a book. This book - "The Blessed extension of Christendom in the most recent times" Dresden 1820, - I soon afterwards became possessed of, and it worked in me through the various moving descriptions of heathen misery, the thought: "How would it be if you should devote yourself to this holy work! For how few are here the labourers and how great the harvest!" This thought became ever more powerful in me, so much so that I could not by any means suppress it. Before however I asked anybody for advice, I prayed to my

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is only my own doing, put it away from me." Then I went to the worthy minister of my parish, Mr. M. Stephani and asked for his opinion. He decided nothing but referred me to the Missionary Society at Leipzig, from which I could obtain pamphlets which would give me more light on the subject, namely that I should apply to Mr. Tanshnitz Junr. who was at that time Secretary of the Society. I then set out with confidence and travelled to Leipzig, after I had beforehand acquainted my mother with my resolve and obtained her consent, for my father had already died in November 1818. At Leipzig I received through Mr. Tanshnitz's kindness gradually the separate copies of the "Basle Missionary News", and through reading these became more and more enthusiastic for the work. As however I did not wish to allow myself to be carried away by what was attractive only, but to act after full consideration of the matter, I interrupted the reading of these pamphlets for a time, and again took up my long neglected scholastic studies, namely Latin and Greek. I commenced both languages afresh, and found to my delight that my memory had retained most of what I had learned, and that it only required to be refreshed. As the harvest holidays just occurred at the time, I had the greater part of the day for this occupation; although almost all the friends to whom I communicated my decision at this time expressed themselves against it, their objections were nevertheless again outweighed by my reasons after quiet examination, and I was more and more confirmed in my purpose.

I then received a few weeks before Michaelmas an offer from the Venerable Missionary Society at Leipzig, to take a journey to Halle to introduce myself to the Missionary Administration there which had been previously informed of my intention. As at Halle only such Mission candidates as had already completed their full academical course in theological knowledge were usually more specially prepared for Mission work, the Leipzig Missionary Society

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several years and therefore recommended me to Dr. Knapp. To him I was introduced by Deacon Kosciel, and his amiable and friendly manner decided me at once to change my original inclination which had drawn me to Halle. He said to me "Think over your resolve earnestly in prayer before God, and what the Lord wills, will come to pass."

I returned on the following day, but a few days before Michaelmas I was summoned to the President of the Leipzig Society, Dr. Wittmann, who now asked me what I had definitely decided. I replied to him "I am firmly resolved to further pursue my way, to resign my post, and to go wherever I may be sent." I then received notice to arrange to arrive at Halle on the 20th October. I did so with great joy, as I saw myself drawn considerably nearer my goal. Already on Saturday I arrived at Halle and began my Academic course with the lectures of Dr. Knapp on the Pauline Epistles. I lived free of cost in his house during my three and three-quarter years' stay at Halle, and the West Indian Missionary Administration generously paid the expenses of my board and the cost of my books, whilst the Leipzig Missionary Society most kindly defrayed the cost of my other wants. The kindness of the Professors whose lectures I attended, exempted me from payment of any fees. Thus I heard gradually dogmatic, ecclesiastical history, exegetical and practical/homiletic lectures from Professors Kulo, Marks Sange and my fathers worthy friend Dr. Knapp, whose biblical teaching especially had the most blessed influence on the enlightenment of my mind and the education of my heart. How much I should have liked to hear the Old Testament in the original language! but my preliminary knowledge of this language was too slight to enable me to hear exegetic lectures on the Old Testament with any profit. On the other hand, I occupied myself with the study of medicine and physical science especially, and even made a

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I returned on the following day, but a few days before Michaelmas I was summoned to the President of the Leipzig Society, Dr. Tittmann, who now asked me what I had definitely decided. I replied to him "I am firmly resolved to further pursue my way, to resign my post, and to go wherever I may be sent." I then received notice to arrange to arrive at Halle on the 20th October. I did so with great joy, as I saw myself drawn considerably nearer my goal. Already on Saturday I arrived at Halle and began my Academic course with the lectures of Dr. Knapp on the Pauline Epistles. I lived free of cost in his house during my three and three-quarter years' stay at Halle, and the West Indian Missionary Administration generously paid the expenses of my board and the cost of my books, whilst the Leipzig Missionary Society most kindly defrayed the cost of my other wants. The kindness of the Professors whose lectures I attended, exempted me from payment of any fees. Thus I heard gradually dogmatic, ecclesiastical history, exegetical and practical/homiletic lectures from Professors Kule, Marks Stange and my fathers worthy friend Dr. Knapp, whose biblical teaching especially had the most blessed influence on the enlightenment of my mind and the education of my heart. How much I should have liked to study the Old Testament in the original language! but my preliminary knowledge of this language was too slight to enable me to hear exegetic lectures on the Old Testament with any profit. On the other hand, I occupied myself with the study of medicine and physical science especially, and even made a small beginning with surgery, which I deemed not useless for my future career amongst the heathen. I honour Professors

Schweigger, Nitsch and Weinheld as my teachers in these branches of knowledge. As I had not enjoyed any connected higher school instructions the repetition of all these lectures required a considerable time, nevertheless, I was able to give some lessons in the Girls' School of the Orphan House, to occupy myself with studying the English language, and to read some Latin authors under the direction of Deacon Henschel. Towards the end of my stay at Halle I also made some trials in preaching as member of the Homiletic Society of Professor Marks. My recreation consisted in the enjoyment of the delights of nature in lonely excursions on foot, and in pious conversations with several christian friends who assembled once a week in the house of Mr. Wagner, a wheelwright. Also I did not entirely neglect music. For the most part I enjoyed good health at Halle, and overcame some attacks of indisposition by strict diet and hard exercise. I also several times spent some days in my home circle, and myself preached the word of the Lord there.

I acknowledge with grateful emotion that my departed, ever dear, teacher, whom the Lord called to his everlasting Home on the 14th Oct. 1825, after he had arranged for my departure to London, was the instrument in God's hand in His mercy to bring me out of darkness into His marvellous light by the way of knowledge of my sins, repentance and faith. So I look forward with joy after Chancellor Heimeyer has interested himself in me with fatherly care, to the time when I shall be able to preach the Word of the Lord to my poor heathen brethren.

But in my state, my happiness and every good gift
An undeserved benefit!
Shield me my God, to whom I owe everything
From pride and arrogance.