

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY REV. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER XV.

PASTORATE IN AYLESFORD AND WILMOT.

(No 12.)

The year 1861 was a year of unusual affliction. Diphtheria continued to prevail; and, while many were called to part with objects of affection, it devolved on me to visit the sick extensively, and to sympathize with the bereaved. In these cases, with some others, I preached funeral sermons in connection with the deaths of 37 persons. My dear wife was a sufferer through the year; and much of the time in great distress. Such was her illness that during this, as also about six years more, we invariably kept a light burning in her room through the night; and much of the time it was needful to have a watcher with her. Numerous friends exercised much kindness in this particular; but as there were not many living near us who could thus wait on her, it was necessary for me to go for the watchers at night, and to take them home in the morning, especially during the winter. This subjected me to much additional travelling. When attending conference five miles from the place of my residence, where I had to preach the next morning, I was frequently obliged to return home for this purpose, and to go back again early on the day following. One instance is noted in my Diary, in which I was required to stay ten miles from home over Monday night, in order to attend a funeral there on Tuesday. Aware that I was expected to take home a watcher for the night, and that my failure to do so would expose my afflicted partner to an increase of suffering—the thought of this was too painful for me to endure—I travelled the extra 20 miles in bad roads and stormy weather.

Under such circumstances the reader can hardly be surprised to learn, that my own health suffered materially. The composure, however, with which my beloved companion was enabled to hear her distressing illness, and the gratitude expressed for kind attentions, tended to compensate for the toils and consequent indisposition endured. And now the assurance that her temporary sorrows are exchanged for endless bliss imparts strong consolation.

Domestic affliction did, indeed, deprive me of the privilege of making my accustomed annual visit to my relatives and Christian friends in Cumberland, as also of meeting with my brethren in our Association this session. While preparing our Letter, however, the statistics of the Church under my care afforded me encouragement and comfort. It appeared, on examination of the records, that during the ten years of my present pastorate there had been added by baptism 274, by letter, &c. 151, by restoration 10; dismissed 55, excluded 35, died 45. The net increase therefore was precisely 300; and consequently the average annual increase was just 30 members. (There were also 18 added by baptism to the Church in Upper Aylesford while I was laboring a portion of the time there.)

My general ministerial labors were somewhat diminished through detention at home; but the opportunity was improved to write more than ordinary for the press. My communications would, by estimation, have filled a 12mo. volume of about 130 pages. Of these there were 23 Letters to a young Preacher published in *C. M.* Aware that my ministry must be near its close, and desiring to afford some aid, from my experience and observation, to my junior ministering Brethren, I had commenced writing this series of Letters in the latter part of the year 1860, and completed it in 1862.

On the 20th day of February, 1862, my dear brother Nathan Tupper was removed by death, at the age of 65 years, in the full assurance of a blissful immortality. Of a family of 14 children, 11 of my brothers and sisters had now died; and of these only one attained to the age of 70 years.

As one of my Christian brethren kindly proposed to take me to the Association in Liverpool, in 1862, and to bring me back speedily, Mrs. Tupper, though very ill, acquiesced in the arrangement. We deemed it needful to obtain leave of absence on Monday noon. It was, however, pleasing to me to meet with my brethren for a short space of time. As my mind had been much exercised of late relative to the Sabbath, I preached on that subject; and was unanimously requested to furnish a copy of the Sermon for *C. M.* It was accordingly published in our paper, and also in pamphlet form.

By request of the Committee in Halifax, I likewise wrote an article on Prohibition, for the International Temperance and Prohibition Convention, held in London, Sept. 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1862, during the time of the Great Exhibition there. It was inserted in the valuable Report of their Proceedings. A note of thanks was sent me, with a kind invitation to take breakfast with the advocates of Temperance there assembled. If I mistake not, however, the breakfast was eaten one day before the invitation was received.

For the Christian Messenger.

ON SWEARING.

MY DEAR SIR,—The remarks "On Swearing" which appear in this week's impression of your paper are very timely; and I trust that the Lord's people may see the inconsistency of that species of swearing to which you allude. It is wrong in the ungodly; but especially improper in the saints, to whom is addressed the precept, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Col. iv. 6.

But in condemning this offence, do not let us overlook another. Is it lawful for a follower of Jesus to take a legal oath? The answer to this question must be sought not in the teachings of divines, nor in the laws of senates, nor in the customs of our fathers; but the only court of appeal for believers is the New Testament. Of course, swearing was allowed under the dispensation of Moses, for "ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths." Matt. v. 33. But what saith the new Lawgiver, from the new mountain, to the new, the spiritual, Israel? "I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne; nor by the earth; for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." Matt. v. 34—37. James goes even further, and speaks with strong emphasis; "Above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." James v. 12. Some affirm that these passages have no reference to oaths in courts of justice. What is their authority, for the assertion? Does not Jesus first refer to the legal oath performed unto the Lord, and in the next sentence forbid it in his disciples; and thus, as far as they are concerned, repeal the statute? "But," says one, "if we refused to take the oath we should be fined or imprisoned." Suppose that were the case, which is better, to suffer for the word of Christ, or to ensure freedom or favor by our disobedience. Let not our fear of man influence our faithfulness to God. Let us not so much enquire, What is the law of the realm? or, What will be the consequences if I refuse to conform? but let our first anxiety be, What is the mind of Christ?

Yours very truly,

TIMOTHY HARLEY.

St. John, N. B., Jan. 8th, 1869.

For the Christian Messenger.

A SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

A few years ago, when residing in the State of Massachusetts, I was provisionally directed, on a fine evening in the month of June, to change my accustomed walk for exercise. In my walk I was accosted by an interesting child, who enquired if I were not one of the Sunday School teachers. On hearing my affirmative answer, she observed that she had long been anxious to attend the Sunday School, but her parents had forbidden her. I asked the reasons of her parents' objections; she wept profusely, and said her father was intemperate, and her mother so wicked, that when she asked to go to the Sunday School, they would chastise her for it, and on the Sabbath would make her work all day. "O!" said she, "If my parents were willing, how glad should I be!" I said, "Will you direct me, my child, to your home? I will have some conversation with your parents, respecting your coming to Sunday School." "O! yes!" she replied, "and I will thank you too."

On entering this mansion of paternal cruelty, I breathed a short prayer to God, that He would cause this visit to be long remembered by me, and all its inmates. The child introduced me as one of the teachers in the Sunday School, who wished to have some conversation with her father

on the subject of permitting her to become a scholar in the school. "You wretch!" he exclaimed, "have not I forbidden your going to such places?" he then called for a rod to chastise her. I felt I was in a delicate situation; and, amazed at such unnatural cruelty, observed to the man, that I hoped he would not punish a child so promising, and particularly that he would not do so on this occasion, as I was the cause of exciting his anger. I remarked, "Your little daughter, Sir, is kind and obedient to all your commands, is she not?" He answered, "Yes; who are you?" "I am your friend," I replied; "and wish to have a little conversation with you, if you please." "Well," said he, "talk on." I hoped he would not correct his child on account of my calling to see him, as I was pleased on meeting her with the simplicity of her conversation, and thought I should like to see her father. "Sir," he answered, "I will take your advice." After conversing with him for nearly three hours, on the subject of Sunday Schools and the propriety of his consenting to let Jane go, he partly promised he might. "What say you, mother, to our Jane going to the Sunday School?" The mother refused with an oath; and my heart began to despair. When I thought I had succeeded, I was disappointed from a quarter that I did not expect. I continued my entreaties for a short time, but to no purpose, and promised I would call again.

On the following day I bent my way to this unnatural and unfeeling family; and after the usual salutations, I renewed the subject, and after three hours' painful and laborious conversation gained the consent of the father and mother that Jane might become a Sunday Scholar. The next Sunday, with grateful feelings to God, I had the pleasure of introducing Jane into the school; she was furnished with suitable books, and admitted a member of Miss D—'s class, who was one of the most faithful teachers. Jane had not been long a scholar, before it was manifest that she was the subject of gracious feelings; and her placid countenance, a few Sundays after, indicated a change too visible to be unnoticed. At the close of the school one morning, Miss D— asked me to remain, as she wished me to have some conversation with Jane, she retired after the school was closed, and I returned to the girl, who said, "Oh Mr. —, you have been the kindest of friends in this world.—You have by bringing me to this school, taught me to worship God. Before I came here, I used to feel bad, but could not help it. Miss D— has told me that sin is the cause of all bad feelings—that we are all sinners in the sight of God. I have also heard in this school that we must pray to God, that he would forgive our sins. O! dear Sir, a few Sunday's since I thought and felt that there was no peace to my poor soul, and said if I should then die I must go to hell with the wicked. On leaving the school I resolved to pray to God for a new heart, to love and serve Him, to obey my parents, and to love everybody; and, dear sir, you really cannot know what a weight my sins were to me; I could not sleep on account of my sins, and I have longed, sir, for the last few days to see you. I have had such new feelings—my load is removed—that I could scarcely wait for Sunday to come, that I might tell you what a dear Saviour I have found. I trust I have given myself entirely to God. I feel something in my heart which I cannot express. O, how thankful I am to God, for your care and attention, for Miss D—'s instruction, for ever coming to this school—for here I found the Saviour who loves me, and who hath said to me, Seek me early and you shall find me. Will you pray for me, pray for my father, mother, brothers, and sisters, I have prayed for them; I will continue to do so." This account was almost too much for me: I have related it in her own language as near as I could. Little Jane was only thirteen years of age; she was not only happy herself in the enjoyment of religion, but it was her heart's desire that all her father's family might enjoy the same, and she did not forget to pray for them; she often introduced topics in conversation to interest them in religion.

From continual dissipation the father brought on a disease which brought him near the gates of the grave. One morning on little Jane visiting him, while very ill, he asked if she thought he would recover, she replied with tears in her eyes, that she hoped he would; "but if it is God's will, dear father, that you should die, where will your soul be when you enter eternity?" He gazed at her in silence. She then asked him if he wished to have the good Sunday School Teacher call to see him! "He will pray for you, and with you." He then said "O, my child; will you pray for me? but do you think God will hear prayer for such a wicked wretch as I am." The child knelt by his bedside, and

breathed out her soul in earnest prayer to God, that He would pardon all her father's sins, and prepare him for eternity. The poor hardened sinner was melted down into deep contrition. He now prayed himself, and their united prayers were heard, God in mercy restored him to health, and he became a new man and a devout christian. Soon after his recovery he came to the school, and then before the teachers and scholars, confessed how much he felt on account of his past conduct, and begged them all to forgive what he had done and said. He is now an active teacher, in the fifty-eighth year of his age. The mother too, soon became serious. The brothers and sister all soon became earnest seekers of salvation. In a few months after Jane became a scholar in our Sunday School she came forward with her fruits. Her father, mother, four brothers, and our sister all entered into communion with the people of God. Thus was she instrumental in one summer, of the conversion of seven immortal souls. Where formerly oaths were heard from day to day, now the morning and evening prayers are offered on the family altar, and the Divine blessing supplicated upon all our Sabbath Schools, to which through God's blessing, eight souls in this now happy family ascribe their conversion.

Sunday School Teacher, be encouraged from this example to labour, and never, never forget to pray?

For the Christian Messenger.

THE DEPARTED.

Suggested by the sudden death of Mrs. E. O. Fitch, of Onslow.

"Like the somed trees o'rtorned by vernal storm,
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay."

The mourner's voice is heard, the broken-hearted,
O'er roscate cheeks, tears flow like streaming rain;
Again, the woven links of Love are parted,
Leaving but memories and a broken chain;
A blooming flower, has, in a moment, faded,
Though watchful care its Summer foliage shades.

Mourn for the lovely! let the lone one's pillow
Grow damp with tears; all vainly must it be;
Through the dark river, on the crested billow,
The loved has passed, to come no more to thee
Gone in a moment, to that viewless shore,
O'er the wild waters to return no more.

The home is lonely where her form was flitting;
The place is vacant by her chosen's side;
The hearth is cold where she was lately sitting,
Scarce two short years ago a happy bride;
And they, alas, are sadly weeping now,
Who saw the orange blossoms grace her brow.

They weep to think, the damp death-mould is
gath'ring,
O'er her bright face and in her sunny hair;
That her familiar form is hourly with'ring,
Who was so gentle, radiant, young and fair,
That she has passed, in her bright years of bloom,
To the deep silence of the lonely tomb.

Oft, where the glorious words of truth are spoken,
Her face was seen; there has she heard of One,
By whom the "dark bands" of the grave were
broken;
Who crieth ever: Weary sinner, come!
Perhaps she came to Jesus, humbled low,
Before the archer drew the fatal bow.

That arrow's course was marked, its path directed,
By a kind, merciful, unerring Guide;
And the dread stroke, so strangely unexpected,
That bore her o'er the swift, tempestuous tide,
Was given subservient to his great command,
Who holds Death's keys within his powerful hand.

He who hath twined the silver cord of being,
Who carrieth on the mysteries of life,
The great All-knowing and the blest All-seeing,
Could gird her spirit for the coming strife.
The strife with Death, the sudden, startling close,
Of Life's rich blessings and its varied woes.

The Saviour's love could free her deathless spirit,
From every worldly, every sinful chain,
And, grant her blessed meekness to inherit,
Eternal life, through his availing name,
Could cleanse her soul, from every stain and spot,
And yet,—the friends who loved her—know it not.

Yet, would'st thou wait, O sinner, for to-morrow,
Ere thou dost for eternity prepare?
Thou may'st be subject for the mourner's sorrow
Ere that hour comes; beyond the reach of prayer;
And the sad weeper in the weeds of gloom,
Be keeping vigil o'er thy heaped-up tomb.

Turn then, frail mortal, while the life-clock
beateth,
Thy onward march; to slighted mercy, turn!
Awake, while yet for thee, the spectre sleepeth,
And, from thy wand'ring, to the Saviour, turn!
And then, the 'God of Love' will barely spread
His blessed shadow o'er thy weary head.

Then, Death can harm thee not; what guise soever
He may assume; victorious and serene
Thy smile may be however or whenever
May come to thee the earth-path's closing scene.
The gloomy valley's deepest shades will flee
Before his smile, who lighteth it for thee.

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