

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY REV. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER XV.

PASTORATE IN AYLESFORD AND WILMOT.

(No 14.)

In my Diary, May 23rd, 1864, occurs the following entry:—Having with much toil, and no little persuasion, obtained subscriptions for Acadia College to the amount of \$20, and hired \$8 for such as had not money now, I remitted \$22—including my own subscription of \$2—to the Treasurer.

It may be remarked, in explanation of this, that when our finances for the support of our College had become embarrassed, by reason of a heavy loss sustained, I recommended application by letter to our Churches, to make up the amount necessary to defray the current expenses. I was aware that it would be requisite for the Pastors to put forth strenuous efforts in order to raise the sum required. The importance of the object appeared to me to demand this of us. When therefore I was collecting in a time in which money was scarce in my field of labor, and persons alleged that they had none by them, I obviated the objection by proposing to obtain it for them, and to wait till they could pay it. This course followed by me for a number of years, has rarely subjected me to any ultimate loss. By such means one may materially aid in the furtherance of a good work, without any real inquiry to himself.

On the 2nd day of June I attended the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of Acadia College, and, by appointment, delivered an Address on the subject of "Educational Difficulties in former Times." Several good Addresses were delivered by others; and the season was one of interest. The Institution had struggled through many trials; but it had unquestionably been a means of much good.

June 11th, &c. it was my privilege to meet my brethren in the Western Association, at Paradise. As a serious disagreement, likely to do much harm, had unhappily arisen between some parties with reference to our French Mission. I urgently pressed the appointment of a Committee to adopt immediate measures for the settlement of it. By diligent efforts, and persuasive measures, we happily succeeded, through Divine goodness, in effecting a reconciliation. This was a source of much joy.

At our Eastern Association, held in Truro, July 2nd, &c. our beloved Bro. William Chipman, then in the 83rd year of his age, preached an able and excellent sermon from Eph. v. 25—27. Being a diffident man, he could rarely be induced to preach on any such special occasion; but in this instance he complied with the urgent request, and his discourse was highly appreciated by the assembled multitude.

At this Session Bro. Joseph F. Kempton offered himself as a Missionary to Burmah; and the proposal was cordially approved. He accompanied me on my return, to Amherst, Sackville, N. B., Parrsborough, &c. He appeared to me to be a man of the right stamp for a Missionary, as he labored earnestly for Christ and for souls, not only in the pulpit, but also in his private intercourse with the people.

At a Meeting of the Foreign Missionary Board, held in Aylesford, July 19th, he was unanimously accepted as our Missionary, subject to the approval of the Convention; and forthwith employed to travel and collect funds for the Mission. But when the matter was brought before the Convention in St. John, N. B., August 22nd, three approved medical men, whose opinion of the physical fitness of Bro. Kempton had been requested, decided that he was, "owing to organic disease, unqualified to go as a Missionary to a warm climate." Had their decision been different, the appointment by the Board would undoubtedly have been readily confirmed. The frustration of our hope was painful to Bro. K., myself, and many others; but, as all concerned indisputably did what they conscientiously regarded as right, no blame could be reasonably attached to any. Our beloved Brother has labored faithfully and usefully among the destitute in our own country; and has given tangible proof of his deep and abiding interest in the Burman Mission.

In the course of the year 1864, in which Mrs. Tupper's illness, though distressing, did not necessarily detain me at home as much as in some others, I travelled 2650 miles, preached 124 sermons, delivered 10 lectures for the benefit of

the Temperance cause, attended 44 conferences, and 78 other meetings—together 250—and made 508 family visits. I also wrote for the press, 14 columns for the *Christian Visitor*, 14 for the *Abstainer*, and 33 for the *Christian Messenger*. I likewise discharged the onerous duties of Secretary of the Foreign Missionary Board.

I had great cause of thankfulness for the measure of health and strength granted me, that so much work could be done by me in a year at the age of 70.

[The writer of the following had not seen the short article on the same subject in the C. M. of last week, when he wrote this. We may consequently with more confidence recommend the course suggested—a simultaneous collection for the Infirm Ministers' Fund on the last Lord's Day in April. Ed.]

For the Christian Messenger.

INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

Dear Bro. Selden,—

I am glad to perceive that this subject is receiving some increased attention of late. We have, indeed, for a number of years past had a Fund for the aid of Infirm Ministers; and the widows and children of deceased Ministers who do not leave means for their support. This Fund has, in various instances, afforded considerable relief in times of need; but it evidently requires to be greatly increased. Two cases especially under my immediate notice, show the desirableness of this. Our beloved Brethren T. L. Porter, Senr., and R. S. Morton have labored long and usefully in the gospel ministry, and have not accumulated property. The former has not been able for some years past to discharge the duties of a Pastor; and he is now reduced very low by painful disease. The latter, by a fall received on the 18th of September last, has become paralyzed in his lower limbs; and, though it is hoped that he is very slowly recovering, he remains helpless.

In compliance with my request, these Brethren have received some assistance, the former from the Western Infirm Ministers' Board, and the latter from the Central. The liberality of friends is also gratefully acknowledged. But the long-continued illness of these Ministers, and the scantiness of their own means, render additional aid requisite.

In order to the needful augmentation of our Infirm Ministers' Funds, I beg respectfully to suggest to our Churches the propriety of increasing the amounts of their contributions for this object of real benevolence; as also to persons in the possession of property to follow the noble example of our departed brethren Stevens of Rawdon, and Jacobs of Liverpool, by making bequests in its favor; or to aid by present donations.

In the mean time I hope the respective Boards will deem it consistent to grant the brethren named above some further aid; and that their numerous friends will cheerfully forward needful supplies. As in many cases it is not convenient for persons who would readily furnish articles useful in a family, to send them, it is desirable that individuals should, (as some kindly have done,) call on their friends, collect, and forward.

It gives me pleasure to be enabled to state, for the satisfaction of those interested in the welfare of these valued brethren, that I have recently visited them, and found them, in the midst of their tribulations, sustained by the consolations of that precious Gospel which they had preached to others.

Yours fraternally,

CHARLES TUPPER.

Aylesford, April 2, 1869.

For the Christian Messenger.

A. & F. BIBLE SOCIETY.

SACKVILLE, N. B., April 5, 1869.

Dear Messenger.—

Please insert the following account of moneys collected for the A. & F. Bible Society in my late tour through the Province:

Digby, \$3.00; Long Island, \$8.50; Brier Island, \$14.40; Little River and Sandy Cove, \$9.50; Beaver River, \$5.22; Hebron Baptist Church, \$9.50; Chegogin, \$1.50; Yarmouth, \$53.00; Western Association, \$3.97; Locke's Island, \$11.40; Milton, \$13.83; Liverpool, \$10.97; Bridgetown, \$4.86; Paradise, \$3.40; Wilmot, \$2.75; Aylesford, \$1.25; Wolfville, \$7.00; Hantsport, \$1.50; Falmouth, \$1.75; Windsor, \$14.89; Halifax, Granville Street Church, \$60.89; North Church, \$19.65; Truro Baptist Church, \$17.37. From the estate of the late Mrs. Elizabeth Higgins of Onslow, \$6.00; Londonderry, \$4.02; Amherst Baptist Church, \$34.39. Also a gold ring, supposed to be worth

\$3.00, from an aged sister. From other sources, \$20.00. Total, \$354.41, eighty nine dollars and 41 cents more than last year. Will the Clerks of the several Churches see that these sums are reported to the Associations and printed in the Minutes. If this is not done will the Clerks of the Associations attend to it.

S. BOOTHBY, Agent.

For the Christian Messenger.

DR. KITTO ON OATHS.

Dear Brother Selden,—

The following is the article from the able pen of Dr. Kitto, referred to in my last. It contains much valuable information on the subject of oath-taking, as well as calm sound reasoning, and cannot but be read with interest and profit. I should hope by many who take the *Messenger*. With this article I intend my communications on this important subject shall for the present come to a close.

Yours truly,

S. T. RAND.

Hantsport, March 23rd.

OATH, (Heb. *Shebua*, and *Atah*) an appeal to God in attestation of the truth of what you say, or in confirmation of what you promise or undertake. The Latin term is *juramentum*, or *juramentum*. Cicero (*De Officiis* III. 20.) correctly terms an oath a religious affirmation; that is, an affirmation with a religious sanction. This appears from the words which he proceeds to employ: "Quod autem affirmate quasi Deo teste, promiseris, id tenendum est. Jam enim non ad hominem deum, quae nulla est, sed ad justitiam et ad fidem pertinet," which in effect means that an oath is an appeal to God; as the source and the vindicator of justice and fidelity. Hence it appears that there are two essential elements in an oath: first, the human, a declared intention of speaking the truth, or performing the action in a given case; secondly, the divine, an appeal to God, as a Being who knows all things and will punish guilt. According to usage, however, there is a third element in the idea which 'oath' commonly conveys, namely, that the oath is taken only on solemn, or, more especially on juridical occasions. The canon law gives all three elements when it represents *judicium, veritas, justitia*, as entering into the constitution of an oath—*judicium*, judgement or trial on the part of society, *veritas*, truth on the part of the oath-taker; *justitia*, justice on the part of God. An oath is accordingly a religious undertaking, either to say (*juramentum assertorium*), or to do (*juramentum promissorium*), something entered into voluntarily with the customary forms. Being a religious undertaking, the appeal will vary according to the religious opinions of the country in which the oath is taken. In some instances it will be an appeal immediately to God; in others to objects supposed to have divine power; and by a natural deduction, when men have left the true God, they may appeal in their oaths even to stocks and stones. Accordingly the Romans swore, 'per caput suum vel suorum fillorum, or, 'per genium principis; that is, by their own head, or that of their children, or by the genius of the emperor. We shall have by and by to notice similar errors and abuses among the Jews.

The essence of an oath lies obviously in the appeal which is thereby made to God or to divine knowledge or power. The customary form establishes this, "So help me God." The Latin words (known to have been used as early as the sixth century), whence our English form is taken, runs thus: *Sic me Deus adjuvet et haec sancta Evangelica; so may God and these holy Gospels help me; that is, as I say the truth.* The present custom of kissing a book containing the Gospels has in England taken place of the latter clause in the Latin formula.

If, then, an appeal to God is the essence of an oath, oath-taking is a practice which cannot be justified. Such an appeal is wrong, because it is a mere act of a creature's will, being unrequited and unauthenticated by God in a case in which God is made a party to a certain course, which course may or may not be agreeable to his mind because a wish on the part of the oath-taker for punishment, should he fail in his undertaking, or any part of the same, is an act unbecoming a frail man, unseemly in its very nature, and awful to think of when man's sinfulness and God's power are rightly apprehended; because it relaxes the general bonds of religion, and morality, and truth; (for in establishing an occasion when justice must be done, it authorizes the idea that its observance is not imperative on other occasions); and because it is founded on an essentially false view of religious obligation; for as God sees, knows, and governs all things, and as all things, so each thing, so man is bound universally to speak the truth and perform what he undertakes, bound as much in each and all the actions of life, as his dependance and God's sovereignty can bind a rational and accountable being; so that it is radically false to suppose that there is or can be any thing special in the obligation of an oath; the tendency of which falsity is not to raise but to degrade the character, to reduce the general standard of truth and rectitude, to weaken the moral sense, by encouraging the idea that on special occasions and of course on special occasions only truth is to be spoken and promises performed.

It is one among those numerous small accommodations, comparatively with the dictates of right reason which will be found to prevail in the Bible the more minutely it is investigated, and which, though now, after a revelation has enlightened the mind, are discoverable by the

mind, are yet so far beyond the reach of the mind, when left to its own resources that the practice of antiquity bears in an opposite direction. It is one of those very important accommodations with truth, that the Mosaic legislation is not answerable for the practice of taking oaths, which existed before the time of Moses. It is found as early as the days of Abraham, who made the oldest servant of his family swear he would select for Isaac a wife of his own kindred (*Gen. xxiv. 2, 3, 37.*) It is here observable that the oath is a private, not a judicial one: only that the rectoral authority of Abraham as patriarch, must be taken into account. The form observed is found in these words, 'Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh; and I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that, &c. An oath was sometimes a public and general bond, obliging the parties who took it to a certain course—a case in which it appears to have been spontaneous and voluntary; as when, in *Judges 21*; the men of Israel swore, saying, there shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife, (*comp. ver. 5.*) From *1 Kings xviii. 10*, it appears to have been customary to require on occasions of great concern a public oath embracing even an entire kingdom and nation; but whether taken individually or by some representative, we have no means of ascertaining. Such a custom, however, implying, as it does, a doubt of the public faith of a people, would hardly be submitted to, unless on the part of an inferior.

Oaths did not take their origin in any divine command. They were a part of that consuetudinary law which Moses found prevalent, and was bound to respect, since no small portion of the force of law lies in custom, and a legislator can neither abrogate nor institute a binding law of his own mere will. Accordingly, Moses made use of the sanction which an oath gave, but in that general manner, and apart from minute directions and express words of approval; which shows that he merely used, without intending to sanction, an instrument that he found in existence and could not safely dispense with. [See as illustrations of the sentiment here advanced the law regulating the "Avenger of Blood," *Num. xxxv. 5*, and the law of divorce, as commented upon by our blessed Lord (*Deut. xxiv. 1, Mat. xix. 8.*) Examples are found in *Exod. xxii. 11*, where an oath is ordered to be applied in the case of lost property, and here we first meet with what may strictly be called a judicial oath, (*Lev. vi. 3—5.*)

The forms of adjuration found in the scriptures are numerous. Saul swore unto Jonathan, 'As the Lord liveth,' (*1 Sam. xix. 6.*) 'A heap and a pillar' were for a witness between Laban and Jacob, with the ensuing for a sanction, 'The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, Judge betwixt us.' And Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. (*Gen. xxxi. 52, sq.*) A common formula is, 'The Lord do so to me and more also' (*Ruth. i. 17; 1 Sam. iv. 44.*) which approaches nearly to our modern form, 'So help me God,' and is obviously elliptical. Reference appears to be had to the ancient custom of slaying some animal in confirmation of a treaty or agreement. The animal thus slain and offered in a burnt-offering to God, became an image or type, betokening the fate which would attend that one of the two contracting parties who failed in his engagement, and the words just cited were intended to be a voluntary assumption of the liability thus foreshadowed on the side of those who joined in the covenant, subsequently the sacrifice was in ordinary cases omitted, and the form came in itself to have the force of a solemn asseveration.

An oath, making an appeal to the divine justice and power, is a recognition of the divinity of the being to whom the appeal is made. Hence to swear by an idol is to be convicted of idolatry. Such an act is accordingly given in Scripture as a proof of idolatry and a season of condign punishment. 'How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children have forsaken me and sworn by them that are no Gods.' (*Jer. v. 7. xii. 16. Amos viii. 14. Zeph. i. 5.*)

Other beings besides God are sometimes added in the form of an oath. Elijah said to Elisha, 'As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth' (*2 Kings xxii. 2. 1 Sam. xx. 3.*) The party addressed is frequently sworn by, especially if a prince. As thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman' &c. (*1 Sam. i. 26; xvii. 55; xxv. 26; 2 Sam. xi. 11.*) The Hebrews, as well as the Egyptians, swore also by the head or the life of an absent as well as a present prince: 'By the life of Pharaoh' (*Gen. xlii. 15.*) Hanway says that the most sacred oath among the Persians is 'by thy king's head.' Abel Ezer asserts that in his time (*A. D. 1170*) this oath was common in Egypt under the caliphs; death was the penalty of perjury. Selden, in his *Titles of Honour* p. 45, ascribes the practice to the custom of applying the name God to princes (*Rosenm. Morgenl. 1. 200 sq.; compare Strabo xii. p. 557; Herod. iv. 68; Tertull. Apol. c. 52.*)

The oath-taker swore sometimes by his own head. *Mat. v. 36*; see *Virg. Aen. 300. Ovid Trist. iv. 4, 45; Juven. vi. 17.*) or by some precious part of the body, as the eyes *Ovid, Amor. iii. 3, 13; Tibull. iii. 6, 47*; sometimes, but only in the case of the later Jews, by the earth, the heaven, and the sun. *Mat. v. 34, 35; Eurip. Hippol. 10, 29. Virgil Aen. xii. 176*; as well as by angels *Joseph. De bell. Jud. 10, 4*; by the temple (*Mat. xxiii. 16, comp. Lightfoot, p. 230*; and even by parts of the temple (*Mat. xxiii. 16*; *Westen.*) They also swore by Jerusalem, as the holy city, (*Mat. v. 35. Lightfoot p. 281.*) The Rabbinical writers indulge in much prolixity on the subject of oaths, entering into nice distinctions, and showing themselves exquisite casuists. A brief view of their disquisitions may be seen in *Othon Lex. p. 347. sqs.* Some oaths they declared invalid: 'If any one swear by heaven, earth, the sun, and such things, although there may be in his mind while using these words a reference to