

ELDER DONALD CRAWFORD.

The July CHRISTIAN promised that a sketch of my life and labors in the Maritime Provinces would appear in the August number, and to furnish such I am now seated. The request to do this took me by surprise, and my first thought was to decline, but the second thought, whether better or worse, was to comply. Without a journal or a person now living to assist me, much of this sketch must be entirely from memory, and though I cannot promise infallible accuracy, especially in dates, I feel pretty confident that even in this the narrative will be reasonably correct.

I was born on the Island of Arran, (Scotland) on the 31st of October 1820, and came with my father and family to Prince Edward Island in the summer of 1827.

About the year 1806 or 1807 James A. Haldane preached in Arran, and under his powerful preaching my parents were converted. My father had only one brother, Alexander, and three sisters, Mrs. McKillop, Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. MacMillan, mother of the publisher, of London. Each of these was converted about the same time, with a number of others.

My uncle, who was much given to study, and enjoyed the advantages of the parish schools, after his conversion studied at Robert Haldane's Seminary in Edinburgh, fully intent on preaching the gospel. While he was at the Seminary, James and Robert Haldane, with a great part of the church, after prayerful study of the subject, were immersed according to the example and command of Christ. My uncle was among the number. He visited his friends in Arran before leaving for America. He preached for a short time, and baptized my father and mother, his three sisters and a few others. Soon after he married and came to Nova Scotia, and finally to Prince Edward Island.

For a year or more after my uncle left Arran those persons continued to attend and support the Congregational church as they had done before their baptism, but as the minister continued his denunciations of them and of my uncle, whom he called Jeroboam, that caused Israel to sin, they considered it best to withdraw, and for years they met every Lord's day in my father's house for the breaking of bread and for prayers. My father was the leader in this little band.

Dugald Sinclair was the first Baptist minister this little company saw. His visit greatly cheered and edified them, and his intercourse with the Congregational minister had a happy effect in modifying his hostility.

My father first took a farm on short lease, with a verbal promise that another would be given on about the same terms. But after he had built houses and otherwise improved the property he could not obtain a new lease on such exorbitant terms that it was deemed best to lose his labor and leave all. This he resolved to do and leave Arran for America. With what he had in hand, the sale of sheep, cattle and movables realized a sum sufficient to secure a comfortable settlement in the New World. But while waiting for a passage he was seized with a sickness which seriously threatened to be fatal. Before his recovery scarlet fever entered and prostrated the family. My eldest sister died, the rest recovered. Thus detained for four or five years on expenses, scarcely enough remained to pay our passage to the Island. But

we arrived in safety, and met my uncle's family, greatly to the joy of all.

My uncle died in the following May at the age of 42, leaving a widow and young family to the care of the widow's God, whose promise has been signally fulfilled on their behalf. He was the first man who immersed a believer on this Island, the late John Stewart, grandfather of the esteemed preacher of Oxburg street church. His self-sacrificing labors and his success in the Master's cause will appear when Jesus comes. Though few remain who know him personally we have yet with us those who cannot forget the joy of their young hearts when they would meet him, and how he taught them to love and trust the Saviour.

After coming to the Island my father took an unimproved farm on lease, and after a few years of clearing, cropping and rent-paying we were comparatively comfortable.

During these years our parents were very anxious to see their children saved in Christ, and often



spoke to us on the subject. I often wondered after hearing my father's earnest pleading at the family altar for his family, and often wished that I could be a Christian. When I went to hear preachers they often gave good advice, and spoke feelingly of the love of Jesus, but I never remember one of them telling me the steps I was to take in coming to the Saviour. When I would come to this part it seemed like a hard and tangled knot. I thought it a mystery that no one could find out till a light, or a power, or a something came on me from heaven, and how gloomy were my prayers for that! Then at times I gave way to frivolity and sin.

In the summer of 1840, I think, Anthony Dimock, a young and ardent Baptist preacher from Nova Scotia, preached in different parts of this Island with great success. His preaching was new in these parts, declaring that men could believe the gospel and accept of Christ without waiting for an added power, and he affectionately urged men to come to Christ and be saved. He was quite successful in different places. That autumn all of our family except two were baptized (and these two within a year or so.) My father was delighted with the preaching, and seeing his children, as he believed, embrace the Saviour, and like old Simeon departed

in peace in the beginning of 1841. I felt much interest in Mr. Dimock's preaching, and also in that of Alexander McDonald, who by his earnestness and love for the Saviour, and also for the souls of men, persuaded many to be saved. Although I received much light from them, I still thought it impossible to be saved without something as a prerequisite, which, it seemed to me, Jesus was withholding from me, and I resolved to pray more earnestly than ever, but all in vain. If I could only get the feelings I once had I thought there would be hope, but these feelings would not come, and it appeared as if I had committed the unpardonable sin.

But I resolved, before I would give up all as lost, to read carefully all I could in the history of Christ, hoping I might learn something about Him I never yet understood. I was greatly surprised not to find Him turning any one away because they did not feel enough. But I read on, thinking I would soon come to the place, but found none.

He was always more ready to save than men were to be saved. In the meantime many passages in which God expressed His love for the lost touched my heart. I began to think it possible that I might be saved just I was; then it would appear too good news to be true. When I read of Jesus' death for my sins, I loved Him, and sincerely wished that I could come to Him. When I considered His last commission to the whole world, to every creature, I could see no reason to doubt. The apostles showed clearly how they understood the commission, and every one whose conversion is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles was saved just as Jesus had promised to save "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I believed Jesus with all my heart and was baptized, and believe Him still. Although unworthy of such grace then and unworthy still, I never from that day felt a lingering doubt of being saved. Should any ask, Why so confident? I point them to His cross and empty grave, and to His last commission, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." His word will stand when heaven and earth shall pass away.

There is certainly a great mistake in the mind of anxious enquirers in thinking that Jesus withholds His blessing from them, and requires much prayer from them and from Christians on their behalf to persuade Him to give that blessing; and it is pitiable to see ministers and others telling these enquirers to ask for the prayers of Christians instead of assuring them that no one but Jesus can do anything for them, and that He loves them more than any Christian can, and is most anxiously waiting to save them on His own plain and unchangeable terms. Surely if it were Jesus' plan to save anxious penitents by the prayers of Christians He would have told His apostles to do this, and the apostles would, when a man asked, What shall I do be saved? tell him that they would pray for him. But we have no hint of Jesus telling them the like or of their doing the like. No, no. They were men of great power, full of ardent and believing prayer, but they told enquirers of Jesus' death for them, and His great anxiety to save them from all their sins. If they would not believe them they could do nothing for them. If they did believe them they would come to Christ and enjoy His salvation. If they then continued in the apostles' teaching they would rejoice evermore and pray without ceasing, and