A Sketch of the Early Life and Labors of the Late Rev. Joseph Crandall

AS WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I was born in a place called Tiverton in Rhode Island. My parents Webber Crandall and Mercy Vaughan, emigrated from that country to Nova Scotia about one year before the revolution. The country was extremely poor, and but thinly settled; the inhabitants were poor and there were no schools there at that time. When I was ten or twelve years of age, I was sent from home. The woman with whom I lived taught me to spell a little. Afterwards I attended an evening school for about three months. I think the Holy Spirit moved on my mind when I was quite a young lad. One Sabbath morning, my mother called us all in and reproved us for being at play on the Lord's day; she read the Bible and wept and, although I cannot remember all she said, some of her words and her solemn looks were never erased from my mind.

When about thirteen years of age I was called to the death bed of my mother. I was much alarmed to see my beloved mother so pale and death-like. She said to me, "that she had sent for me to hear her last farewell"; she said "she was going to leave us all and go to her Saviour where she would be happy." After some time she looked earnestly at me and said, "Joseph the Lord has a great work for you to do, when I am dead and gone." I believe my dear mother was under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and is now with her precious Saviour in Heaven. I recollect one day a couple of strangers came to the house where I was living. They talked of a strange man that was preaching in Windsor and adjoining places; he preached in the night, and people were becoming crazy and talked about their souls. My father had heard this man preach and as he happened to be there at the time he explained to the strangers that this preacher Henry Allen, [Alline,] was a "New Light" and that the "New Lights" were the people of God for they were christians and that none could go to Heaven unless they were converted.

Some time after this Mr. John Sargent came to Chester, he was called a "New Light" preacher; then came Handly Chipman and Harris Harding. Their arrival was followed by a great excitement among the people; quite a number professed to be converted, among the number being the Vaughans, the Floyds, and many other families followed the new preacher. Some young people about my own age professed to be converted, and although I attended all the meetings and fully believed it was the Lord's work, yet my heart was hard and unmoved and I thought at the time that the Lord had left me to perish in my sins, and justly too, for I was one of the greatest sinners on earth. From that time I became more hardened in sin and was often in despair, sometimes I wished I had never been born. My parents were now both dead and I was left a poor orphan boy in an unfriendly world.

For five years I continued wandering down the broad road to ruin; with heedless feet I madly trod the path to endless woe, and would have sunk in fiery flames, but mercy interposed. In the midst of all my sinful career I always had a tender conscience. Two kinds of evil I detested, viz., drunkenness and thieving. And oh! how thankful I ought to be to the Lord who kept me back from even these heinous sins. The people with whom I lived told me that I had no soul, because I was not sprinkled in my infancy. I thought I ought to be like other people, so I went to a venerable old Presbyterian minister and he kindly performed the unscriptural act for me. I must have been nearly fourteen years of age when this took place, and I came home from the meeting house supposing I had done some wonderful deed. (This affair took place before the new ministers and reformation, previously mentioned came) otherwise I would have better understood my duty.

Some time after this I left Chester and went to Liverpool N. S., where I remained two years; was employed at this place in cod fishing. My life in Liverpool was exceedingly sinful. From Liverpool I returned to Chester, from there I went to Falmouth and then to Newport; was engaged for a time in freighting lumber from Shubenacadie to Windsor. About this time there was to be a meeting of the Christians from different parts of the country. David Vaughan had promised that the schooner in which I sailed should carry the pilgrims to Onslow. After some hesitation I consented that they should be carried with us, but my cousin John Vaughan refused to go. We left Newport on Friday and reached Onslow on Sabbath morning. The next week I collected a number of young men and we went down the bay to have a regular pleasure sail. We returned on Saturday and Sabbath morning. I went to the meeting which was held at the house of Mr. Philip Higgins. I cannot say that I had any great anxiety about the meetings, except my desire to see Harris Harding who was high in my esteem since the time of the reformation at Chester. When I entered the house, the meeting had commenced. I have no knowledge of anything that was said by any person in the meeting. The moment I entered the house, the glorious majesty of the Divine Being appeared to open before the eyes of my understanding (I beheld no object with my bodily eyes) and I saw myself justly condemned to endless misery. I saw no way of escape until suddenly a glorious light shone from the excellent majesty and I saw the way of salvation was God's work and not mine. I felt as I had never felt before; although amongst strangers I could not hold my peace. My hard heart was at last broken and I had such a view of a perishing world lying in ruins as I never could express. To the great surprise of all present I began to speak and try to tell what I felt and saw. My mind was completely absorbed in the solemn and marvellous scene. It appeared to me that the whole human race lay in open ruin and were altogether at the disposal of that Holy Being whose bright glory had so overwhelmed my soul. I saw mercy so connected with the justice of God, that they were both one; that what God had done in the person of Christ was alone sufficient to save all that came to God for mercy through Jesus Christ. I felt that the whole world ought to know what I felt and saw for indeed it appeared of more importance to me than the whole world. I continued speaking (as the people told me afterwards) for more than an hour, for I could not hold my peace, for it was a stream of living water flowing into my soul and then bursting forth like a stream from an overflowing fountain. The work of sinners lay before me, like a broad field to which I could see no end. When the scene had passed over and I looked around me, the two ministers, Joseph Dimock, and Harris Harding were weeping and many more were weeping with them.

The next day we embarked for Newport where we arrived in safety. This was in July, 1795. I spent that summer in Newport, but O how changed the scene. The *world* had no charms for me now. There was no preaching in Newport that was in touch with my experience, excepting once in a great while Elder Manning came and preached and that was like cheering cordial to my despairing spirit, for I had no comfort unless I was praying or exhorting, which I did whenever opportunity offered. In the autumn of that year I returned to Chester and remained for sometime there. I united with the open communion church under the pastoral care of Elder Dimmock. My uncle Vaughan, with whom I was living, was deacon of the church. At this time my trials were great. Whenever I saw a number of people collected my heart would move within me. After the preaching I would pray and exhort, but this did not satisfy my mind. I was in great trouble at times. Some of the christians said I was called of God to preach, others said "That poor illiterate boy, preach indeed! It is a shame to think of such a thing." And I must confess that I thought at the time, that the ones who opposed it were about right in the matter. But I had no rest. I dare not go back to my former pleasures, they seemed like thorns to my soul. Later in the same year, I was lying in my bed one Sabbath morning, thinking deeply over a strange dream I had had in the night, part of which I will here relate. I dreamed that I was standing by a broad stream of smooth water, thousands of men and women were floating down the stream, in a standing position with their heads and shoulders above water. They seemed quite unconscious of their danger. I watched them until they reached the cataract below, when they suddenly disappeared. All below the rocky cataract was dense darkness. I also saw in the dream a man with a long pole and a bow on the end of it; he came to me and told me to wade in and save all the people I could. I thought in the dream that I did so and all that I could throw the bow over, I led to a delightful bank covered with green grass and beautiful flowers, and there they united in singing the praises of God in a delightful manner.

In musing on this strange dream the 28th chapter of Matthew came to my mind and when I came to the two last verses I was struck with a great surprise. Had I been present when John baptised the Saviour and stood on the bank of the Jordan and witnessed the whole scene, I could not have been more convinced from that time. I have never since had one doubt about my conversion nor mode of baptism. That same Sabbath day I was buried with my Lord in a watery grave by Elder Joseph Dimmock.

In November of that year Elder Harding came to Chester on his way to Liverpool and invited me to go with him. I went, thinking I might be of some use to help him convey his luggage. When we arrived at Liverpool, there was no small stir among the people when they heard of the professed conversion of that wayward boy, Joseph Crandall, and that he had come to exhort the young people to turn from their evil ways.

As it was early in the week when we arrived we held a number of meetings before the Lord's Day, but nothing special transpired. On the Sabbath we met in the meeting house, Elder Payzant preached in the morning and Harris Harding prayed and exhorted. In the afternoon Elder Harding preached, and when done called on me to pray. I had not expected to be called upon and felt much cast down in my mind, but I thought it would seem very unkind in me to refuse when invited to pray, besides I felt a great want in my own soul, it seemed as though a dark gloom of spiritual death surrounded me. But when I commenced to pray the scene changed, the light of heaven shone into my soul. How long I prayed, I knew not, but when I opened my eyes and looked around all was changed. The two ministers were weeping in the pulpit and the whole congregation seemed to be melted down under an awful sense of eternity.

From this time the work of the Lord commenced. The two ministers said I had a special call to preach and on the next Lord's Day they insisted on my ascending the pulpit. But oh! how I trembled, my great fear was that I was not called by God to the work of the ministry. But when I began my fears all left me for a time. I spent the winter in Liverpool, travelling on to the westward and in all the back settlements, until about the 1st of March, when I set out to return to Chester where I arrived about the middle of April. While in Liverpool I endeavored to persuade all to receive the gospel. Many professed religion, but how many were truly born of God I cannot tell.

On my return to Chester I went to the meeting on Lord's Day. As their preacher was not at home they made a practice of holding prayer meetings during his absence. They had heard of my preaching; some were offended and blamed Elder Harding; others were glad and the two deacons of the church were among the latter number. They finally decided to invite me to preach. Here I was among my old wicked companions. The trial was indeed great. But if the trial was great, the blessings were far greater, for at the close of the meeting those who had opposed my preaching, were the first to come forward and bid me God speed.

(*To be continued.*)

It is only by labor that thought can be made healthy, and only by thought that labor can be made happy; and the two can not be separated with impunity.—Ruskin.

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"Lovest Thou Me?"

BY JOSEPH PARKER, D. D.

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"—a question you might put to a child; the deepest question of all. This was profound, because love carries everything; it is a fire that burns up all the roots; it is a furnace that purges the gold of all its dross; it is an enthusiasm which means prophetic insight and sympathetic identification with all things pure, true and lovely. This is the question which ought to be put to men in connection with church life—Lovest thou the Son of God?

We are not made theologians. The theologians can be but few in number, as the poet are, and the philosophers, but we can answer the question as to our love. Where there is love there will be no difficulty in the progress of the christian; love sees in the darkness, walks over the water, turns the wilderness into a glowing garden burning with flowers that are not consumed; love is cast down but not destroyed, persecuted but not forsaken, in continual peril, and yet in continual security. When there is more love there will be more progress. Love opens the door of every difficulty, and love makes christian education a daily delight.

This was gracious as well as profound, because it excited hope. We sometimes ask a question, and convey the answer in the very tone of the inquiry, so that the interrogation becomes its own affirmative. Everything depends upon the tone in which a question is asked. Who can tell the music of the inquiry as addressed to Peter, "Lovest thou me?" Hidden in that inquiry was the answer—I know what the reply will be, for thy great heart is just a child's simple, honest love.

To say to a man, "Understand what thou readest?" is to excite the hope that he may possibly understand it. Lovest thou the church of the living God? I have seen thee in the sanctuary sometimes; did thy being there signify that in thy poor heart there is some flame of love toward the Father? The very inquiry stirred the spirit into hopefulness. Give a man to understand that you despair of him, and he may despair of himself; but ask him a question which has the effect of opening a door and he might rise to the inquiry with a new energy and a new confidence.

This was practical as well as gracious and profound, because love is the true qualification for labor. A man cannot labor for Christ if he does not love Christ. When love fails service goes down. But the heart will not confess this; the heart is fertile in inventions and excuses for the lapses of life. Why do you forsake the sanctuary now? Then will come a list of lies—scoursed, unpardonable lies. Why do you not give so liberally now as you used to give? Then will come anything but a confession of the truth. What is the truth?—that love has gone down, the temperature of affection has rushed on its zero way.

When we fall in love we cannot attain to service; we cannot reply to christian appeals; we cannot co-operate with energetic men—we complain that they are too enthusiastic, and wish to go too quickly for us; and we begin to think that something of another kind is needed; and thus we lie, not unto man, but unto God. Could we say, "Our love has changed; we do not love the Cross as we did, we are not drawn towards the Son of God as we once were," we should have at least a statement made credible by its obvious truth.

Peter gave a great heart answer at the last, "Lord thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee," and his voice trembled when he said this. It was a noble voice, was Peter's, accustomed to speak out in the open sea, and to give orders whilst the wind was raging; but when this inquiry touched his heart all that great voice shrank into a tearful whisper, and he said, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Right away down in the soul there is a true affection for Thee; outwardly there are many things to disprove my affection, but in the centre and heart of things there is a real loyalty to Thee! Until we get a heart-testimony like that the church will hesitate and flounder, will aim at nothing, and will beat the air.—Preacher's Magazine.

You must speak to the heart if you would have the heart respond.

The Mountain Message.

BY REV. W. N. THOMAS.

It is not a new text that suggests the theme, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings." Like one of the pictures of one of the old masters, or like a gem of splendid size and lustrous colors, it not only keeps us turning back to it, but continually opens to us some new revelation.

How this gem sparkles from every facet and angle. It has a message of its own. Its imagery awakens our imagination. Its thought lifts us. Its poetry challenges our thought to soar. Its pictures plead with us to know the facts portrayed in this matchless imagery.

It says, look for a transforming power in the message carried. No one is separated from the message he bears. But who thinks of beauty of character residing in good tidings borne? Onward through the years goes the bearer of tidings to men, yet unmindful of the fact that we are constantly becoming in some degree like the facts we publish. Glad tidings brighten the bearer's own heart and weave into the life threads of worth and beauty.

"The truth that prophet, bard and sage,
Even in earth's cold and changeful clime
Plant for their deathless heritage
The fruits and flowers of time."

There is something in the very nature of tidings of good that must make themselves seen in tracings of beauty. We recognise beauty in the Christ even when clothed in the garments of great tribulations. But we know that he was the messenger of glad tidings. "All bare him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

This text joins the beauty to very lowly members. And yet in a very true sense is not the going of the feet an expression of one's walk and conduct and character? Surely here is room exceeding large in which lines of beauty may unfold. Good tidings bear a very close relation to the conduct of life. It is not possible for one to be the loving and constant bearer of good tidings without adding graces and virtues of a charming kind. Just call to your mind some soul whom you know to be deeply pledged to the publishing of good tidings; have you not looked upon a beauty of conduct and character, not to say of face, that has been an inspiration?

But there is an exaltation as well as a beauty to such work. "How beautiful upon the mountains," are the words of the prophet. Such a messenger shall surely tread a way that is a highway. You cannot separate the Christ from the message of glad tidings. A study of him reveals not only a life of beauty but also feet upon the mountains. In that bearer of tidings you look upon "a character of serener beauty than the stars, of sweeter fragrance than the flowers, and higher than the heavens in sublimity." Good tidings lift above the plains of life. They lift to lofty outlook and to lofty position. They train the feet to find pathways upon the rugged heights of truth. They who walk in the valleys are dependent for the loftiest message of life and the brightest hopes of the morning upon the word that comes crying down the mountains. Become a bearer of good tidings! Climb to the high places and hearing the glad words, give them to men.

"Watching on the hills of faith;
List'ning what the Spirit saith,
Of the dim seen light afar
Growing like a nearing star.

God's interpreter art thou,
To the waiting ones below;
'Twixt them and its light midway
Heralding the better day
Catching gleams of temple spires,
Hearing notes of angel choirs,
Where as yet unseen of them
Comes the new Jerusalem."

—*Standard.*

The Christian Life.

A second look he gave, which said,
"I freely all forgive;
This blood is for thy ransom paid,
I die, that thou mayest live."

I remember well how he told me that he had loved me with an everlasting love, and that he had given himself up to die for me. I can never forget his wondrous words, nor the effect they produced upon me; I wanted to shout "Hallelujah!" I wanted to borrow all the angels' harps, and set all heaven ringing with my Saviour's praise; I wanted all the stars to speak in his honor, and every voice in heaven and earth to be jubilant with thanksgiving unto him who had done such great things for me; and failing all that, I could only sit down and weep to the praise of the mercy I had found.

It was not long, however, before I began to tell others of my Lord's great love to me; and now I can truly say to him—

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

Ah, that it shall as long as I have a tongue to speak; but tell it all out, I none shall; and, sometimes, under a sense of his great goodness to me, I can sing, with good John Berridge:

"Then my tongue would fain express
All his love and loveliness;
But I lisp, and falter forth
Broken words, not half his worth.

"Vex'd, I try and try again,
Still my efforts all are vain;
Living tongues are dumb at best,
We must die to speak of Christ."

It must be so, my brethren; to speak of Christ as he deserves, is quite impossible while we are in the imperfect state.

I hope that none of you will ever be in the condition of "having nothing to say" in the presence of God the Judge of all. Recollect the man who came in to the marriage of the king's son without putting on a wedding garment; and when the king came in to see the guests, he said to him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. O, you who hear the gospel, but do not receive it; you who join us in the outward act of devotion, yet do not yield yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ; especially you who prefer the rags of your own righteousness to the perfect robe of the righteousness of Christ, you will not be able to say a word in self defence! Shame will tie your tongues, conscience will prevent your utterance of a single syllable, and the king will say to his servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness;" there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; and you will be driven from his presence forever. O my hearers, do not let it be so with any of you! May the Holy Spirit work in you, even now, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! God grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen.—Sword and Trowel.

ANGELS STOP TO LISTEN.—Rev. Dr. Drummond tells this pretty incident: A little girl once said to her father, "Papa, I want you to say something to God for me, something I want to tell him very much. I have such a little voice that I don't think he could hear it away up in heaven, but you have a great big man's voice, and he will be sure to hear you." The father took the little girl in his arms and told her that, even though God were surrounded by all his holy angels singing to him one of the grandest and sweetest songs of praise ever heard in heaven, he would say to them, "Hush! Stop singing for awhile. There's a little girl away down on the earth who wants to whisper something in my ear."—Christian Herald.

THE STEERING STAR.—On one time a party were crossing the Caspian Sea in a boat. One of the men kept looking up into the sky, and did not take his eyes from a certain star. One of the passengers in the boat asked him why he kept looking at the stars, and he said: "Do you see that star? If we lose sight of that one star we are lost. Because that is the only way we know in which direction to steer our boat." So if our eyes are not on Jesus, if we do not love Him, and if we love the wicked things in this world more than we love Him, then we are lost.—Sel.

An evil in the bud is easily crushed; when it has become full grown it is more difficult to contend with.

It is the height of unthankfulness to forget our hundreds of blessings to think of our two or three crosses.

How much happier our lives would be if we would adopt Mr. Moody's advice to pray more and worry less.

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With God as guide, the way is never hard.

No man fears God, who does not fear to sin.

Joy in the Lord exceeds all earthly pleasure.

Every man's life is a fairy tale, written by God's fingers.—Hans Christian Anderson.

Reason may carry a man far but not through it; it may light him along this world, but the damps of the shadow of death will put it out.—Dillwyn.

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