

Thus encouraged the young student learned to stand on the defensive and to fight his own battles, as well as to take up the cudgels in behalf of others more timid than himself. In Belfast he attended first Dr. Price's Academy, and afterward the Belfast Royal Academical Institution. These school-days proved to be the turning-point in his life, for when he had been about a year in Belfast, he was brought to feel the power of the Holy Spirit and was led to give his heart to the Lord. Very shortly after his conversion he began to cherish the idea of preparing himself for the ministry of the Gospel. In this his friends gave him little or no encouragement, but he had heard a voice which he dared not disregard: and when he was only about seventeen years of age he preached his first sermon.

All his early religious influences and associations had been in connection with the Presbyterian church. But while still quite a young man he began for himself a careful examination of the teaching of the Scriptures regarding the ordinances. And this independent study led him, as such study has led many an unprejudiced mind, to the conclusion that baptism meant immersion and immersion only. To break with early training, and to cut loose from the associations of years was no easy matter, but his convictions were strong and persistent, and led him to decisive action. Accordingly he went to Dr. Alexander Carson, of Tubbermore, and made known to him his views, and was by him baptized and received into church fellowship. Dr. Carson was not only one of the ablest thinkers of his age, but was also one of the most devoted and successful ministers of Christ. Dr. Crawford remarked some years ago that more men were raised up for the Gospel ministry in that church at Tubbermore than in any other church he had ever known. And he assigned as one of the chief reasons for this, the fact that Dr. Carson believed in lay effort, and always encouraged the members of his church to exercise their gifts. Mr. Crawford's association with this great and good man was very intimate, and had a marked influence upon his own intellectual and spiritual development. For two years, under the immediate advice and direction of this able pastor, and with the further assistance of a classical tutor, he applied himself to diligent and uninterrupted study. And here he acquired the habit which marked all his