

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BY REV. CHARLES TUPPER, D. D.

CHAPTER XV.

PASTORATE IN AYLESFORD AND WILMOT.

(No 18.)

Through the long-suffering and gracious care of the Most High, my life has been preserved to this day—August 6th, 1869—on which it has attained to 75 years. My advanced age and increasing infirmities give unmistakable indications that "the time of my departure is at hand." In reviewing the portion of my life that is past, I see abundant cause of thanksgiving for numberless mercies received from God; and much reason for humiliation on account of my numerous sins, and great deficiencies with reference to love to Him, zeal for His glory, and efforts for the benefit of my fellow men. Through the riches of His grace, however, I do humbly trust that, upon the whole, the world is, in no respect the worse, but in some small measure the better for my having lived 75 years in it.

While I trust there are none who will affirm, that I ever attempted to defraud them, to draw them into any of the paths of vice, or intentionally to injure them in any respect, it has been my privilege to aid in promoting, to some extent, the interests of education, of temperance, and of morality in general. A portion of my time has been devoted to labors among the destitute as a domestic missionary, and a large share of it to the pastoral care of Churches. Imperfectly as these labors have been performed, and small as has been the measure of my success, undoubtedly some benefits have, through the Divine blessing, resulted from them, in the edification and comfort of believers, their excitement to Christian love and obedience, the reclaiming of backsliders, and the conversion and salvation of crushing sinners. *To God alone be all the praise!*

It has also been my endeavor to promote human weal by the pen and the press, as well as by the tongue in the pulpit, from the platform, and by family visitation and private intercourse. Before we had any religious periodical in these Provinces, I wrote communications for the *American Baptist Magazine*, and the *Christian Watchman*. During my editorship of the *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, from the commencement of the year 1827 to the close of 1832, it devolved on me to be the principal writer for its columns. Besides writing numerous articles for other periodicals, I have contributed a large share of the original communications which have appeared in the *Christian Messenger*. As there has been a change of Editors, and numbers of the early contributors to its pages have, in the course of nearly 33 years since its commencement, been removed by death, and others have begun to write for it more recently, doubtless my communications inserted in its columns exceed in extent those of any other writer. Those who have perused them attentively are aware, that they embrace a great variety of subjects. It is not to be supposed that every idea expressed is correct; but I trust unprejudiced readers will give me the credit of having sincerely aimed at right. It cannot be consistently doubted, that, to some extent, these communications have been useful. On the whole I do not regret that they have been written and published; nor that much toil and many hardships have been endured by me in efforts to sustain this valuable Periodical. The expressions and substantial proofs of the gratitude of the esteemed Editors have been highly cheering to me.

From my birth-day at the age of 75, I can look back 70 years, and remember distinctly events that occurred, and thoughts that passed through my mind, on the day in which I attained the age of 5 years. (Prior scenes are remembered; but the exact dates cannot be given.) Though multitudinous events that have subsequently transpired within my knowledge, and very much that has been learned by me, have been forgotten, yet the anniversary of my fifth day has always been remembered.

In some cases people express surprise at my forgetfulness of things that must have been known to me, and in others at the retentiveness of my memory. The fact is, however, that things which have transpired around me, or have come to my knowledge, whether long since or recently, and have made a deep impression on my mind, are usually remembered, while others are soon forgotten. I have, indeed, endeavored in some measure to follow Dilworth's advice—

"Whatever worthy thy remark thou seest, With care remember, and forget the rest."

But there have long been two remarkable defects in my memory. Though I can usually remember texts of Scripture quite well, and recite them readily, yet when I wish to select a hymn that is in general well known to me, I frequently find it difficult to recollect the first lines. So also with regard to persons with whom I am acquainted, and whose countenances are familiar to me, I have often during life been greatly perplexed through inability to call their names.

I have long since noticed, also—what is probably not peculiar to me—that if a matter demanding prompt attention is named, and is not attended to at once, it is very apt to be overlooked altogether. I have therefore found it desirable, if possible, to have important business despatched when it is first mentioned.

In order to punctuality in answering letters, I have long been accustomed to label each letter when received, with the name of the writer, the date, and the time of its reception, and to put it in the place for *unanswered letters*. These are ordinarily examined with frequency; that none requiring an answer may be neglected. If a prompt reply be requested, it is—extraordinary cases excepted—answered at once.

Among my services of late, apart from direct ministerial labor, our Foreign Mission has occupied much of my time and attention. As the feeble state of my health in youth prevented me from devoting my life to this noble work, it has afforded me pleasure to serve the cause gratuitously, as a Secretary, during the last twelve years.

And now I would say, after laboring in the ministry upwards 53 years, I am not tired of the service, but desire to continue in it so long as it may please my gracious Master to grant me a sufficient measure of strength of body and mind to enable me to bear humble part in the promotion of His declarative glory, and the best interests of my fellow men. Beyond this point it is my sincere prayer that I may not attempt to continue in a work which will be marred through my infirmity.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE CONTROVERSY ON BAPTISM, &c.

Mr. Editor,—

In the present century the two words *believeth* and *is baptized* which our Lord used in his last commission, have occasioned more controversy in the so-called christian world than all the other words in the Bible. This, I think, will be generally conceded whether we can account for the fact or not. How much has been said and written on *belief* or *faith* and how strange and determined the efforts made to induce men to believe that they cannot believe the Saviour.

Again, on the word *baptize*. Who can imagine the debates and strifes about its meaning or count the volumes that have been written to gather mists and darkness around it—to make it uncertain what idea Jesus has given in this word, and to keep men from knowing when they have obeyed the Lord in this positive institution, and for what purpose? To say that Jesus, in his gracious charter of pardon to a condemned world, spoke in ambiguous words or used them in a doubtful sense, is to accuse Him who tasted death for every man of trifling with a world's salvation. Jesus spoke most plainly when he told men how he would save them. Whence then this controversy about the meaning of the commission? "An enemy hath done this," Satan leaves no scheme untried to keep men from Christ. If they are kept in darkness and doubt about the requirements of the gospel he will greatly accomplish his malicious designs. I doubt not that many well disposed men think they are doing a noble work while laboring to gather mists around the Lord's commission, little dreaming that the great adversary is behind the screen. Such men exhibit nothing for our belief. They prove nothing but stir up uncertainty and doubt. They create distrust of Christ's promise in the mind. They are the heroes of negation, the sturdy champions of perplexity and doubt.

I am very sorry to find Mr. Davis giving aid or encouragement to such men or their work. While so many are contemptuously opposing believer's immersion and pleading for infant sprinkling, it is pitiable to see Baptist ministers upholding their hands and joining to denounce this positive institution of the Son of God as a trifling non-essential, alleging that the one who breaks this command is as sure of heaven as he is who obeys it.

When I answered Mr. Davis' questions I distinctly declared that I agreed with him that the blood of Christ ALONE had virtue to take away sin, and that water had no such virtue. I stated

that baptism should be obeyed, because Jesus has commanded it, and that the man whose heart and life were changed by the Spirit of God, put on Christ in this institution and could claim the Saviour's promise in the commission. I showed that Mr. Davis would admit none to christian privileges till baptized, and that he held it to be a burial with Christ and a resurrection to a new life. I showed that *dead* and not *living* persons are buried and that the grave stood between *two* states, &c., &c. I was also shown that the Lord when he instituted baptism, located it *before* and not *after* salvation, and that the Apostles always placed it before and not after. I did this hoping that we might better understand each other, and though we might still differ on matters of opinion the positive statements of the Bible would be sufficiently authoritative to bind us both as those who were willing to "Let God speak and let the whole earth hear." But this hope was cut off when I opened Mr. Davis' letter and found him at the outset denouncing my "old baptismal fallacies." And what, kind reader, are these "baptismal fallacies?" Neither more nor less than declaring what "began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by them that heard them, God also bearing them witness both in signs and wonders, &c., &c."

Mr. Davis does not deny that Baptism stands before salvation in the commission, and in the cases of conversion recorded in "the Acts of Apostles." He does not, he cannot, point to one case of salvation in the New Testament without baptism, since it was instituted. How then does he meet the case? By saying a number of hard things about me. First, I am like a Mr. Hodgson, who said certain things about baptism. Having never heard that gentleman, nor seen the sermon from which Mr. Davis quotes, I cannot say how far I agree with him. If, however, he believes that no one is a proper subject for baptism till he believes with all his heart on the Son of God and turns to his service, I cannot see anything radically wrong in what he quotes from his sermon. If he believes that one is a fit subject for baptism, who neither believes nor repents, then there is the distance of the poles between us.

He next denurs at comparing baptism to the marriage ceremony and asks, if a man is not in Christ till he is baptized into him, I will also ask him how a man can be in Christ before his baptism and still be baptized into him? When I spoke of baptism holding the same place as the marriage ceremony, I meant it as an illustration and not a proposition to be proved by Scripture. Will Mr. Davis tell us what he considers the ceremony in the marriage between Christ and his bride.

He speaks of the need of watchfulness against my error and recommends going to the law and to the testimony. I also would urge men to receive nothing from me but what I read to them and they can read for themselves in the Bible. The Searcher of hearts knows that all I want of men is to believe the testimony of God as they find it in his word, and obey him and be happy forever.

Again, I am uncharitable to good men who have not been baptized. Mr. Davis acknowledges baptism to be a positive command of Christ, but I am uncharitable for condemning good men who have broken that command. Have I said anything about these men? O no. But he can hunt them up to prove me false. His logic, if I understand him, is this, "It is false in Mr. Crawford to say 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, for good men who broke this command are saved' without it." Why bring up these dead men? Have I said anything against them? Not at all. Can his opinion or mine about them effect them in any way? Certainly not. It is the living we seek to influence and not the dead. Is it our duty to persuade the living that they are as sure of salvation and heaven in breaking this command of Jesus as in keeping it? Those who do so will verily have their reward—but it will be the flattery of the disobedient. Can it disprove the truth of God that it condemns so many? Did it in Noah's day? Did it in the case of Sodom? or in the Saviour's day when he was sneeringly asked "Are there few that be saved?" Why do so many otherwise good men persist in breaking this plain command of Christ? One reason is, they are persuaded that they are as safe in breaking as in keeping it.

As it respects those good men who have never obeyed Christ in baptism, if God in mercy forgive them, on the ground of ignorance, prejudice, or from whatever cause he certainly can do so, and who is he "that replieth against God?" No one would rejoice more than I in this gracious exercise of divine prerogative. But is it for us to use this supposed goodness of God as a weapon against his clearly revealed will? or a disparagement of his positive commands? Moses was a good man, but for sinning in one thing was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan, but we are not bound either to think lightly of his sin or doom him to eternal perdition.

He charges me with an unsuccessful attempt to make him inconsistent. My attempt was to make him *consistent*, but he refuses and persists in being *inconsistent*. He affirms that the unbaptized are saved, are children of God, are fit for heaven, and are to all intent and purposes christians, and still he will not allow the unbaptized to sit at the Lord's table, nor enjoy the privileges of the saved, or those who are fitted for heaven, or who are christians. This is CLEAR inconsistency.

Mr. Davis at length ventures to bring against me his grand charge, viz. I "insist upon the terms of the Commission, and upon some expressions in the book of Acts. Here no doubt lies the strength of his (my) case." Well, I do insist upon the terms of the last commission of the Son of God, in which he sent salvation to all mankind till the end of time. These terms I see confirmed and honored by the Holy Spirit, in the case of every one who was pardoned under

that commission. The book of Acts records these cases and hence its value. I have also all the allusions to baptism in the Apostle's letters to confirm the commission and the book of Acts. After admitting that I rest on the terms of the commission and on the book of Acts, he makes the following attempt to reason baptism out of those terms. "We do read in the Commission, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved' but we do not read 'He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned.'" From this he argues that damnation turns on want of belief and not on want of baptism. Certainly it turns on unbelief. Without faith it is impossible to please God in baptism or anything else. The reason men do not obey Jesus in this plain command is because they do not believe him. When he says "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, they choose to believe men who tell them they can and must be saved without it. Unbelief is sufficient to damn a man. If Jesus had said 'He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned, it would show that unbelief would not damn a man without he was baptized. That if a man were baptized, though an unbeliever, he would not be damned as it required both *unbelief* and *unbaptism* to damn him. But unbelief alone is sufficient and hence he does not mention unbaptism. Had he designed to offer salvation on the condition of belief alone he would not have mentioned baptism. One act may condemn a man though it may require several acts to save him.

If I am told that I shall gain a given point by taking two steps, but if I do not take the first I shall lose it. Will that prove that the second step is not necessary to gain the point? A king has subjects who rise in rebellion. He finds an honorable remedy by which he can pardon those who turn from their rebellion. He sends the news in a proclamation to them and declares that he who believes and takes the oath of allegiance shall be pardoned, but he that believes not shall be punished. Is he a wise and faithful man who would persuade the rebels that if they believe they shall be pardoned without taking the oath of allegiance, for although the king did say, 'He that believeth and taketh the oath shall be saved, he did not say he that believes not and does not take the oath shall be punished. Would a sensible man trust to such a teacher? No. It is pardon the rebel needs, and when he reads on what terms the king has promised pardon, he finds the oath of allegiance in these terms. Mr. Davis quotes the words of John the Baptist, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, &c." John here referred his disciples to Jesus, who spoke the words of God and had all the fulness of God. He that believes the Son sets to his seal that God is true. Now the Son in his final message to mankind told how he would save them. Can the man who believes part of this message and rejects the part that does not suit him, be said to believe on the Son? Is this setting to his seal that God is true?

Mr. Davis next labors to show that the remission of sins, Acts ii., and the washing away of sins, Acts xxii., was not associated with baptism, but with the name of Jesus Christ and calling on the name of the Lord. But his failure here is as complete as heretofore. We know very well that the power that saved these persons was in the name of the Lord and not in the waters of baptism. But how did they come to the name of the Lord? Suppose at Pentecost they had refused to be baptized in the name of Jesus would their sins be remitted? When Ananias said to Saul, Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord, if Saul had refused to be baptized, and began to call on the name of the Lord, could he wash away his sins? He had been praying most earnestly for three days already, but did he wash away his sins. So the remission of sins and the washing away of sins were associated with both baptism and calling on the name of the Lord. The waters of baptism are the same as any other place, except it be that Jesus has recorded his name there. He has most graciously allowed his name to be used at the baptism of every truly penitent believer.

But the finale of Mr. Davis' letter is not its least remarkable part. If I understand him he concludes as follows: That the law of pardon contained in Jesus' Commission, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, was all true and right in the Apostles' day, and will be true and right again by and by, but owing to the vast number of pious Pseudobaptists who now live and have lived that law is not true nor right now, nor has it been for a long time past. Now, if this conclusion is true, will he tell us how long the law of pardon continued to be true after the Apostles' death? And who introduced another law of pardon when Jesus' law ceased to be right? Can he be certain that the time has not come when Jesus' law will again be right? I understand the gospel to be as true now as it was in the Apostles' day, and the law of pardon to be as true now as at the beginning. I hold that the commission is to be in force till the end of time. If I sought to preach another gospel I could not tell where to find it or how to preach it.

Mr. Davis seems so troubled about pious Pseudobaptists that he must have a law of pardon with no baptism in it. He expressed sorrow when I said I had nothing newer on the subject than what I find in the New Testament. If he will be advised I would suggest that he hold fast, the gospel and law of pardon that Jesus gave, and do all in his power to persuade the living to believe and love and obey the Saviour, and if he succeed it will be well for him and them. Let his mind be at rest as touching the pious dead who were unbaptized. If it is Jesus' will that they are saved what is that to him, let him follow Christ.

Fraternally yours,

D. CRAWFORD,
New Glasgow, P. E. I., Aug. 20th, 1869.