

with a smile, and said: "My son, I have been looking for this hour ever since you were born!" She then told me how she and my dying father, who left me an infant, consecrated me to God, and prayed that, if it were His will I might become a minister, and yet that mother had never dropped a word of intimation in my ear that she ever desired me to be a preacher. She believed so fully in the Divine call that she would not bias my mind with even suggestion of it in prayer.

That conversation settled my mind. Oh, what a blessing is a sainted mother! To-day I can feel her hands on my head, and I hear the intonation of her voice in prayer.—*Bishop Simpson.*

PASSAGES IN THE EARLY LIFE OF AN OLD PREACHER.*

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A HIGH ENTERPRISE IN MY YOUNG HEART.

It was the highest and noblest of all enterprises to which the human mind can aspire, but one of which I had never dreamed during all the castle-building of my aspiring unconverted life: I had cherished aspirations of amassing wealth, of commanding an army, but never of preaching the Gospel. But after I had tasted of the love of God in Christ there were scarcely five of my waking minutes at a time that I did not think of being a preacher. Had I been possessed of the idea of many other denominations, that it was necessary to have a liberal education and, perhaps, pass through college before I could mount the sacred desk, such an aspiration would have seemed preposterous, because the qualifications were beyond my reach. But from childhood, so far as I thought of the ministry at all, I possessed some sort of dim impression that the ministerial office or character was a divine creation, or at least due to some religious or spiritual experience or influence. So much was the result of the Quaker books, (the experience of Jonathan Edmunds for instance) and the experiences of the early Methodist preachers, both English and American, read before and after my conversion. Those unpretentious godly men little knew, when they penned their simple autobiographies, what a flame they were to kindle in the throbbing heart of an uncouth lad in the ends of the earth from them. If, however, I had never read their lives, I would still have felt a yearning desire for the conversion and salvation of those who were "wandering wide, far from the central point of bliss." I wished all mankind to share the love and happiness I felt. The language of the hymnist was that of my poor uncultured soul:

"Oh, for a trumpet's voice,
On all the world to call,
To bid their hearts rejoice,
In Him who died for all!"

And, indeed, I began to call upon all who came within my reach, whether old or young. I was especially successful with the latter. Perhaps I

have elsewhere told how many of these I brought to prayer and class-meeting, as also how many private meetings I sat up with them in barns, and fields, and woods, by day and by night, on Sundays and week-days. At these I was generally the leader of the meeting, the exercise being of reading the Scriptures and religious tracts, the singing of hymns and prayer. I also took a prominent though not a leading part for several years, in the Young People's Saturday Night Prayer-meetings.

As to the larger meetings for the Society in general, thinking by a mistake at first, that all who went there had to pray, I lifted up my voice in prayer the very first one I went to, and kept it up ever after, excepting for a few weeks at one time when being chidden for using the name of God so often, I became intimidated and kept silence; upon which the leader sent me a message that I was to be sure and pray whatever my blunders. In these public exercises, my own soul was always greatly blessed, and I received many encouraging messages and intimations that others were blessed by my instrumentality. I soon began to be called upon to pray by the bed-sides of poor sick outcasts who had not the assurance to send for a minister, or even older lay persons. So generally was this known, that I began to be called by those who knew not my name, or otherwise wished to distinguish me "The Praying Boy."

For, perhaps, up to a year and a-half after my conversion, though accustomed to speak very frequently in all sorts of experience meetings, I had not given a public exhortation. That first effort, as I have several times related in other connections in print, took place in the fall of 1825, in the house of Mr. Bartholomew Bull, in the vicinity of what is called Davenport, but then new and wild; and was laid upon me by my dear friend, William Fitzpatrick, of precious memory, whom I met there by appointment to aid him in sustaining a newly-appointed meeting for prayer and exhortation. I came from one direction and Fitzpatrick from another, and we met at the door of Mr. Bull. My friend clapped his hand upon my shoulder and said, "Brother, you have got to conduct the meeting." I did not dare to refuse, but opened with a hymn and prayer; then read the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and gave a five or six-minute address on Justification by Faith, and gave place to Brother Fitzpatrick, who was a ready and practical exhorter, who gave a much longer and more commanding address and, I think, conducted a class-meeting for all who were willing to remain—a number which steadily increased until when the circuit preachers took it a year after twenty-nine members were enrolled.

Brother Bull who had been a leader in Ireland, healed of his backslidings, was placed in charge of the class and in course of time filled almost every office in the gift of a circuit, and most acceptably exercised the gifts of a local preacher for forty years or more. Thenceforth I went there or somewhere else in an unauthorized way, almost every week until I was requested to go on a circuit. Four years after my conversion, I used to be so pressed in spirit to stand up in the street and warn the crowds of pleasure-seekers

and worse who congregated at various points that I passed in my evening walks, and was often self-condemned because I did not do it; and only obtained quiet of mind by promising that if the Lord would open my way into the ministry, I would go to the ends of the earth if He required it. A private house opened for meetings near what was then called the Blue-Bell, a group of houses near where the Toronto Lunatic Asylum is now placed, which received its name from a tavern with a sign having a blue-bell painted thereon, was another early labour. The only two times I spoke there, I did so with liberty and comfort. While at work at the scouring-table or something else, a text often applied itself to my mind, and I meditated a sermon thereon. Some of these delivered years afterwards, word for word as I had premeditated them, although at the time I studied them I was so unskilled in writing, that I was utterly unable to write them down. They were, however, not only imprinted, but, as it were, stereotyped on the tablet of my memory. One of these was on the text, "Quench not the Spirit," which had thus been lithographed on my mind for about a year, when spending a Sabbath in Scarborough, at my friend Fitzpatrick's, I was called on to address an assembly at the house of Mr. McGinn, near the present hamlet called Wexford. I pronounced, with comfort to myself and the approval of the people, my "tan-house" studied sermon.

I should, perhaps, have informed the reader that more modest efforts to be useful than those I have particularized began earlier and were prosecuted more constantly. These were in connection with Sabbath-school work. When the East York Sabbath-school began in the winter 1824-25, held in two several places before it settled down at the corner of Duke and Berkeley streets, I steadily taught a class of little boys; and the rule and habit of the teachers of constantly visiting absentees, in which we strengthened each other's hands by companionship, took into many irreligious families where our voices in prayer and admonition were the only religious care received. I never allowed myself to pass a knot of children on the street (or indeed a single child), without asking them if they attended Sabbath-school, and inviting them to attend if they did not. Were it not for fear of being too prolix many touching incidents might be narrated. I have something to tell of a unique Sabbath-school enterprise by some young men of our Church a little farther on.

There were plenty to tell me, both strangers accidentally meeting me and those who knew me well, that I was called to preach; but there were none to give me directions how to prepare for the work and to render me any efficient aid therein. Many years afterwards I learned that a company of Methodists, at dinner after the love-feast at which I had first spoken and joined the Church on trial, some person, it was said, of "strong faith," remarked, referring to my case, "John will be a preacher yet;" while others remarked, "Where will he ever learn what he requires to make him a preacher?" I was very narrow in my views, and afraid to turn my attention to many things within reach desirable for me to know; but then

I literally battled everything of a religious kind that came in my way; and I seldom left unfinished any book that I once began. I know that I mastered ten books for one now read by the greater part of the highly-privileged young professors of this day. And at that time I had a memory which retained all once entrusted to its care. I thoroughly learned the plan of salvation by reading Wesley's transparent sermons. Methodist preaching was then more methodical and doctrinal than now; and many, if not most of the sermons I heard, I carried away bodily, and substantially used them afterwards. Richardson, Wilson, Highland, were the sort of preachers remembered best. After I went out to preach, I was chidden by my first colleague for not having set down in writing the substance of the discourses of the very able preachers I had been favoured to hear. I might have pleaded that for the earlier part of my time, I knew not how to write, and after I had learned, I could not always possess myself of the material for writing and the time to perform the operation. But it was scarcely necessary, with my powers of retention to have done it. So that I was attending all the time a sort of divinity lecture for four years before entering the ministry. Sermons, moreover, were then more valued and discussed among religious friends than now. They were full of matter, and were seldom under an hour long. Seldom was there any of the painful complaints now heard about the length of sermons. If it were under an hour people would be rather more inclined to think they had been defrauded of their due than to complain of fatigue. The constant clamouring for short services is no promising indication of interest in divine things.

GOODBYE.

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

GOODBYE, proud world! I'm going home;
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roam;
A river-ark on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home.

Goodbye to Flattery's fawning face;
To Grandeur with his wide grumace;
To upstart Wealth's averted eye;
To supple Office, low and high;
To crowded halls, to court and street;
To frozen hearts and hasting feet;
To those who go, and those who come;
Goodbye, proud world! I'm going home.

I am going to my own hearth-stone,
Bosomed in yon green hills alone,—
A secret nook in a pleasant land,
Whose groves the frolic fairies planned;
Where arches green, the livelong day,
Echo the blackbird's roundelay,
And vulgar feet have never trod
A spot that is sacred to thought and God.

O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,

Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;

For what are they all in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?

Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thyself;
and our souls are restless till they return to Thee.—*Augustine.*

*Extracts from a forthcoming volume by the Rev. Dr. Carroll.