

A Story for Boys.

The following account of the early life of our pastor was written by him, only after urgent request.—Ed.

I WAS born on the 16th of May, 1846. I need not tell you boys that I do not remember that day, and I do not believe I was either glad or sorrowful. Very likely others had more to say about me than I had about them. I have no doubt I received all the attention I deserved, and along that line the world is not my debtor. That is also true in the lives of most people, they usually receive as good treatment as they deserve. There was a way in which I should walk, but where that way should lead I knew not.

My good father was a farmer. He owned a nice farm not far from the Falls of Niagara. I could see the spray, and hear the roar of the falling waters at any hour of the day. Doubtless my parents had a strong desire, as all good parents have, to do well by their children. It was their desire to give them as favorable a chance as possible in running the race of life. When I was only a few years old, unexpected loss came to our home. One came forward and claimed that he was heir to an estate. A part of this estate was the farm upon which my father lived. The title deed, when examined, was found to be defective, and according to the law of our country, the property was given to another, and we were compelled to leave our home without any redress or compensation for the improvements which had been made.

It was very hard for my parents to begin again the struggle for a new home. My father was very much depressed. The loss which he sustained made a deep impression upon my young mind, and awakened much sympathy in my heart. I wished that I was a man, and not a boy, so that I might try to regain what was lost.

At that time I was no help and only a care to my parents. The village was close to our home, and when seven years of age I went to the Village school, both summer and winter, until I was ten years of age, after which I could only attend a few months in the winter.

When sixteen I was obliged to leave school, as I was required to assist my father in his struggles for a livelihood for himself and his family. I now know that what we called a misfortune, in the loss of our home, was in my own case a blessing in disguise, for I am confident I have been led by it to take a better view of life than I would have

done if I had never known adversity. I felt a strong determination, when but a child, to do what I could to assist my father to recover what he had lost. After twelve years of industry and economy, another farm was purchased, on which my father lived until the day of his death.

When past nineteen years of age, my father told me that inasmuch as he would not be able to assist me to start in business, he would permit me to leave home and secure for myself as great success as I could in life. I shall never forget that September day in the fall of 1865 when I went out from home into this wide world to battle for a name and place among my fellow men. I almost shrink to tell you that the amount of money I had in my pocket was less than one dollar, lest you might construe it as a reflection upon my worthy parents. It was no fault on their part. Had circumstances made it possible for them to have helped me, it would have been cheerfully done.

In my childhood and youth I had thirsted after a liberal education. The circumstances which surrounded me had so controlled my life that hope had ended in despair. When the time came for me to leave home, it seemed that I was too old to acquire what had been my cherished hope so long. Not knowing what else to do, I decided that I would learn a trade, and so entered upon a mechanical line of life. The term of apprenticeship was only two years, and the remuneration during that two years was very small, being little over one hundred dollars.

What I consider was the most important event of my life occurred within those two years. What to me is of such moment was the yielding of my heart to God, and uniting with the Christian church. Why I feel it of such great interest to me was because that decision caused the stream of my life to flow in another channel. From the hour of my conversion I strongly felt that my life work for the future should be that of the Christian ministry. This conviction was not alone with me, but was shared also by the church of which I was a humble member.

That church gave me my first authority to preach without any knowledge of the conflict I had in my mind as to what was my duty. Although strongly convinced that I should enter the work of the ministry, yet fearful, lest possibly I might be deceived, I was led to make a secret vow to God, that if Providence would open up my way I would not act the part of Jonah, but to that work I would devote my life. Soon after there happened what has always appeared to me