

A Reminiscence

BR. AUSTIN:-Father [Nathaniel] Stacy's late visit to this State has suggested to my mind the following facts. In June 1806, the year of the great eclipse, my father and family resided in the town of Lee, Oneida co., and I was then a great ignorant boy, in my tenth year.- At that time Br. Stacy had an appointment to preach in the school house in the neighborhood. It was a very pleasant day—the vegetable world was dressed out in all its glory and beauty, the flowers were blooming fresh and pure as virgin innocence; the birds were chanting forth their most thrilling melody, and all nature gave the most convincing testimony of the existence and superintending care of a God of infinite wisdom, benevolence and power.

At an early hour my father and myself, with several of the neighbors, repaired to the school house. It was then a Methodist settlement, with but few exceptions; but the Wordens, the Uffords and the Peases, who had then but recently renounced the cruel dogmas of Methodism, and embraced the truth, were there, the first two but recently class leaders in the Methodist church.

Br. Stacy entered the desk. It was a log school house; a new, uncultivated neighborhood, possessing all the signs and tokens of a pioneer settlement. No church spire pointed far into the heavens; no aisles covered with rich and costly carpeting; no luxurious sofas and costly furniture--it was a rough, uncouth place, and the people ditto. But they had clean, valuable souls, and perceptive powers which could look beyond the trappings of pride and pomp and vanity, and see the beauty and glory of that truth which translates the soul from this world's darkness to the light and love of the Messiah's kingdom. He was then a young man, less than thirty years of age, and physically about as small as a man could well be.—But he held forth. His text I do not remember, but his subject was the universal paternity and love of God, made manifest to the world through the great Redeemer. He was then, as now, zealous in the great cause he had early espoused, fluent in speech, and learned in the Scriptures of divine truth—at all events, his discourses that day made an impression on my mind, young and ignorant as I was, that has never faded in the least up to the present moment.

At the close of the morning service, my father and two or three of the other men walked from the church to a neighbor's, for some chat and refreshment. I was on hand, eyes and ears wide open, and as we walked along I well recollect some thoughts that passed through my mind. First I looked at the little *great* man and thought him a *giant*, at least in intellect, and an angel in mind and soul. Secondly, I looked at him again and thought his was a calling above all price. Thirdly, I looked at him again, and made up my mind that if my life were spared I would, sooner or later, be a proclaimer of the great and free salvation. And although it was long before I was enabled to put this resolve into practice, yet it was never relinquished; and at about thirty-two years of age, I consummated my long-cherished desire, and stood before the world a happy, if not an able advocate for the truth, and soldier of the cross. And to this day, though my head is adorned with the frost of sixty-two winters; though my limbs are somewhat clumsy and my nerves weak and unsteady, I have never for a moment doubted the truth of that system of faith and practice which Br. Stacy, Paul, Peter, and Jesus Christ proclaimed, and rejoiced in this peace which is yielded through life's ever varying cares.

J. [Jacob] CHASE

Perrinton, July, 1858

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