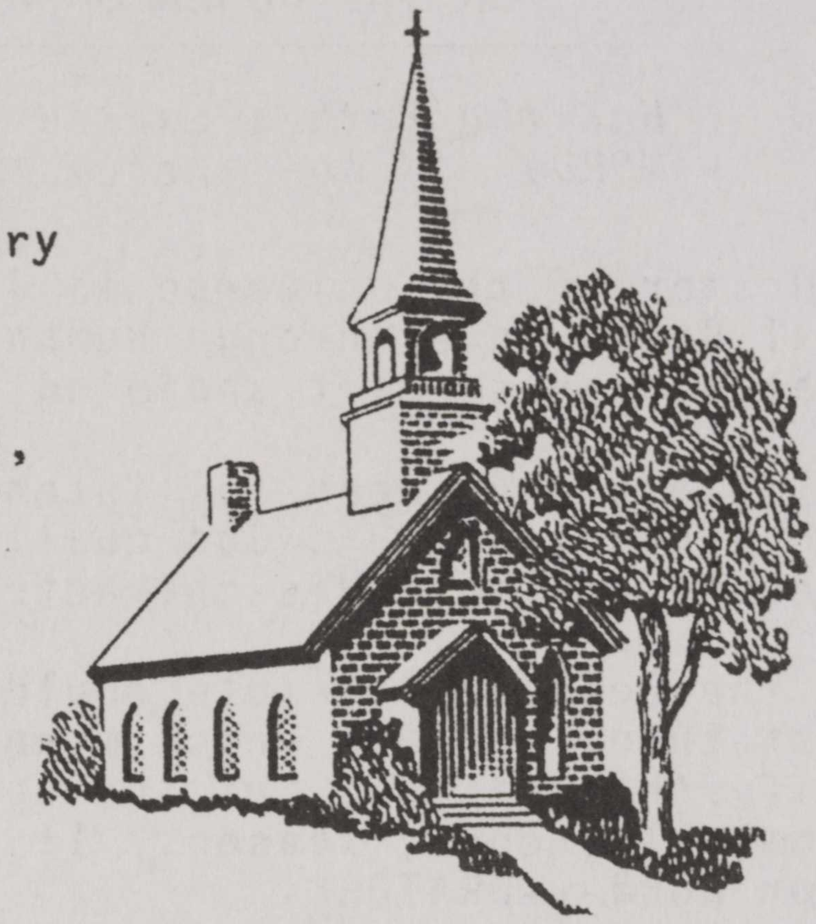
In our world...The Orator rules



It was one summer day, knee-deep in June as I travelled off the beaten path. My eye caught a cluster of cars---gathered round a little Country Church in a sunny dell. The Church bell was ringing, the scene peaceful---enchanting.

Devotion to my God alone should have stopped me, for my lamp needed trimming. But it was simple curiosity to take in the atmosphere. To see and to hear the rustic, backwoods preaching in this out of the way place---that drove me to stop and enter its wide open door.

I was kindly welcomed there...

Tired, like a bird to his nest I came, it was a place of sacredness, dignity and lovliness...

But I was struck by the non-descript appearance of the preacher. He was of Anglo-Saxon stock and heritage to the core. A tall and very spare old man---with shrivelled work worn hands and angular arms. He was clad in an old fashioned clerical suit, white shirt and black string tie. Upon his long black coat at the lapel...was pinned a choice red rose, all inter-twined with wild fern and neatly tied with a piece of string.

His head was large, with massive forehead; and, he was bald as an eagle. His voice trembled with feeling as he greeted the people. I noticed there were deep lines creasing his face. A few moments of observation showed me he was perfectly blind...

The first emotions which touched my breast were those of mingled pity and dread; veneration for this aged pilgrim stationed so far from the madding crowd...But Ah! Sacred God! How soon were all my feelings changed... so that as a Preacher, I felt sorry for myself! Not him! For I had darkened my counsel in words without knowledge.

He was a preacher of the old school!

That day I learned it is not the box that makes the jewel---nor the place that makes the man! The very mouth of Demosthenes is not worthy to be compared with the honeyed lips of that holy man. I tell you now...his tongue dropped down heavenly manna. His words were free-born. That day, for twice the space of half-an-hour, I was completely taken; overthrown--- transported through time and space. I have not been the same since.

His voice was a rich baritone; winning, penetrating to the quick. Instantly I saw his words were the voice of his heart. He had the power of concentrating a world of observation into a single line of expressive thought... that power; I knew instinctively had to come out a lifetime of experience. Yet, when he spoke...it came from the overflow.

What homage he did pay to truth---he used it!