

not come through the right channel. Is he prepared to repudiate the good that he believed himself to be already in possession? Is he to say that he was not regenerated, because it was outside of the Church that he first knew Christ to be a personal Saviour? Is he to tell the world that what he was convinced was a new life in Christ was no more than external excitement, an unreality, a deception, because it was in an irregular, unauthorized way that he thought he came to union with Christ in a saving way? May the thought not occur to him that his case is very similar to that of those converted by the instrumentality of the Apostle Paul, and when, as they thought, they were safe in Christ, there came along men who said to them: "Except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses ye cannot be saved!" He may think within himself that he is already free and he is not going back to the beggarly elements. He may hear sounding in his ears such words as: Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. He has had sweet fellowship, it may be with men and women who are not of the alleged one true Church, and he shrinks back in disgust from being a member in a Church that declares to be no Church an organization in which, as he knows, are the excellent of the earth. As he thinks and reasons in this way, the voice of the siren that would fain have wooed him into the arms of the only true Church on earth loses its charm, he ceases to be carried away with the sweetness of it, it is opposed to reason as it is opposed to the essence of Christian charity.

We can imagine Thomas Smith reasoning in this way with himself, and who is there that will blame him if his thoughts ran in that channel? I was a Christian, a believer, as I am fully convinced; my sins were pardoned before I was a member of any Church. I cannot connect myself with a Church whose principles ignore that fact, which is a fact in my experience, and that fact in my experience has its counterpart in the progress of the plans of the eternal God. The Church that I will join will not be one that places organization in the visible sense first in the order of importance, and spiritual life second. I cannot bring myself to respect and honour such a Church as that. In my experience spiritual life came first in order of time, and it is certainly first in order of importance as well. In the age whose events are recorded in the inspired book of the Acts of the Apostles, I see the same order, both in time and in importance as was in my life. I see first of all, and most important of all, men converted, turned from the old sinful life to a new holy life, from heathenism or from Pharisaic Judaism to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then when a number in any community are gathered out of the world they are organized and elders are chosen as officebearers, these elders are called bishops as well as elders. In the missionary operations of the present day I see the same order to be followed. I conclude, therefore, that the office-bearers exist for the Church, not the Church for the office-bearers. The Church that I shall join, if such a Church can be found, is one that will look at spiritual life in that way. It shall be one that teaches Apostolic doctrine, and, as far as may be, conformed to the polity that I find traces of in the Acts and in the Epistles. I want, moreover, more than dead orthodoxy, than a decent uniformity, I want to see signs of life and growth, signs of progress, signs of aggression, signs of breaking out on the right hand and on the left. I want to see the members of the Church holding out helping, sympathetic hands to all that are in need, that are capable of being helped, and showing in the life that is lived that purity is honoured and promoted. I want to see a Church that when it is needed a testimony will be lifted up clear and distinct against political corruptions, against commercial immoralities, against social wrongs and impurities, a Church that will in no way, even by silence, compromise itself with that which is in any way hurtful to the good of mankind. In such a Church I can be at home, I can help and be helped, my life can be promoted, and in company with others I can grow in grace and in the knowledge of my God and Saviour Jesus Christ. That in any case is my ideal, and I cannot believe that such a Church is not to be found.

If Thomas Smith has the ordinary amount of sanctified discernment, if he uses his intelligence in a sensible way, and studies the Word of God to any good purpose, he will find such a Church as he is in search of, and he need not have far to seek. It is possible that the one to which he is drawn may not have such functionaries as Lord Bishops, but there are no officers of that name in the N. T., whether the Church which he joins his bishops at all in ordinary language does not matter, he sees that the Christian minister is a bishop in the N. T. sense of the word. He is an overseer set over the flock, therefore he is a bishop. He has oversight over the flock committed to his care. He is a presbyter or elder because he acts as an elderly man is expected to act, gravely, respectfully, wisely. He finds this bishop or presbyter preaching the Word of God, the truths set forth in that Word, as Paul enjoined Timothy to do. He sees the sacraments to be administered, after the manner set forth in the Scriptures. He finds a sphere for work in the Sunday School and in the young men's meetings, and in other ways as well. In the teaching that is given and received, in the work that is done and accepted, there is growth in knowledge and growth in patience. His sanctification is promoted, young Smith helps and is helped at the same time. More than that, he finds much joy as well as profit in the work and in the sanctified social world of which he becomes a part. Friendships are

formed that will never be severed, for although broken temporarily by death, they will be resumed in the eternal world. The Church becomes a home, an enlarged family, and it is that because apostolic doctrine is taught and apostolic practice is observed. True fellowship with the apostles is not dependent on an unbroken succession of men, we can stretch across the centuries and clasp hands with Peter and John and Paul, we can believe as they did, we can walk as they did, we can look forward to a heavenly home as they did. We can contend earnestly for the faith as they did, and we must if we are to follow in their footsteps. We can resist bondage of any kind as they did, there are times when we have to say we will not yield, no, not for an hour, to unfounded claims. We can refuse to bow to old wives' fables and endless genealogies, we can claim the freedom and privileges of the children of God. We can cherish and work out in reality that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. Such a Church, with such aims and ideals, such hopes and prospects, such realities even here and foretastes, Thomas Smith can find if he allows himself to be divinely guided. And so may any man, whether young or old, even were he but a boy, and we bless God that an honest search will be rewarded.

MEMORIES OF A CANADIAN MANSE.

BY KIMO.

Now through the mists of a few years it rises up before me, quiet and peaceful, far removed from the constant whirl and bustle of our city life.

A little apart from the sleepy village of C—it stood, surrounded by grand old trees which nodded and whispered in the sweet summer breeze, and moaned and tossed in the winds of winter, a plain and simple house, but grand in the eyes of the villagers in that it was of red brick and boasted a green verandah over which the vines climbed eagerly.

Quite close to it stood the large frame church, behind which within sight from the manse windows lay the quiet sleepers.

Side by side with God's acre, directly behind the manse, stretched the orchard with its long waving grass and its bending apple trees.

Such the dear old place as it stood out in the grey twilight of the cold October morning when the last good bye was said, and the last look given to the quiet resting-place of the old pastor and his young wife, who had slept quietly there for twenty years before he too lay down to rest. Bitter, O, how bitter, how sad, was that good-bye! For twenty-three years this had been home, we could think of no other. But death, God's messenger, had come, and laying his cold hand on the busy loving heart of father and pastor had stilled it into peace. To lose our father was sad, only those who knew him feel how sad. But home too must go, the manse, our dear old home must become home to others; for them the home-coming; for us the leave-taking. "So runs the busy world away."

Leaves from the life of our father we have gleaned, memories of home we have hoarded, and only to the eyes of the loving and gentle would we unfold our store, with the earnest hope that it may cheer them in sorrow and help them to more fully "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

Fifty years ago, a young heart in the highlands of Scotland, by his mother's knee, listened to the story of Jesus and His wonderful love, heard and loved, and soon in token of this love offered himself to the service of this Jesus. Being the son of a farmer, the means at his disposal were limited, but his courage and determination were not, and by dint of hard work and perseverance he at last entered Edinburgh University. While there the claims of many foreign fields were urged and his heart responded. He chose our well-loved Canada, and pushed his way into the backwoods of Western Ontario, not many miles from the shores of the Georgian Bay.

So boyish and handsome he was, so well and firmly built, with clear, kind blue eyes, and frank, ruddy countenance, we wonder not that as he passed from home to home on his faithful grey mare, he stole the hearts of the poor lone folk struggling with the weariness and wildness of a "backwoods life."

He came to them in all the freshness of his true and vigorous manhood, and he brought to them the "pearl of great price," which has transformed so many cabins into kings' palaces.

Can we wonder that they loved him with a wonderful love, that when in August, 1883, the news reached them that the King had sent for him, they came long weary miles to mingle their tears with ours as they tottered with us out to his narrow bed, and leaning on their staffs for very age, lingered round his new and narrow bed?

Few can now understand the work of the pioneer missionaries of Canada. We have to-day in some degree its privations and struggles in the life of our North-West missionary, but our country is so thoroughly pierced with civilization, so netted by railroads, that it is hard to imagine the seclusion and isolation of those who came to the country when there were no railroads within hundreds of miles of their homes, when carriages were rare and when most of the travelling from place to place was accomplished by long days in the saddle over rough and heavy roads.

The houses at best were very primitive: log shanties with "but and ben,"—very often no "ben." Not only were the houses primitive, but the covering was not unfrequently insufficient for the bitter cold of the long winter nights.

But the Master's command was urgent then as now, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Strong in obedience to this command, His servant travelled on, over many weary miles, forming here and there little "preaching stations," revisiting each at stated periods.

On one occasion he found a few settlers desirous of commemorating the Saviour's love at His table, and arrangements were made to dispense the sacrament. The only available building was a large barn, in which the new mown grain had been stored. Willing hands soon cleared a space on the floor of the barn, where rough boards placed on rougher blocks of wood served as seats, and erected a platform on which was placed a table bearing the elements.

On the Sabbath morning a noble congregation assembled, sunburnt men in their shirt sleeves, tired women in their clean print frocks and snowy bonnets, their infants in their arms. Young men and maidens too, all for miles around came to this feast spread for them in the wilderness.

The good old psalms were sung, the sermon preached, and in the peculiarly solemn Scottish fashion, the table was "fenced," when as they were about to gather round, a hen which had been busy in the straw above, proclaimed aloud her achievement, and was instantly applauded to the echo by her brothers and sisters. For a time all were still, waiting for the outburst to subside: but one old man, more valiant than discreet, becoming impatient, rose and endeavoured to catch and forcibly expel the peace-breaker, whereupon the clamour became more deafening, and the frightened fowls, content before with their voices, took to their wings, and flying hither and thither over the heads of the audience, raised not only dust in the eyes, but alarm in the hearts of the little ones, who added their quota to the confusion. The preacher quietly waited while the valiant man took again to his seat, and with the others breathed softly until quietness once more reigned, when the service proceeded, characterized, notwithstanding this disturbance, by a deep solemnity, a holy fragrance enveloping the day in the memories of the preacher and people, who forgot all, save the joy of meeting once more with their Master around His table.

Who can compute the results from that solemn service? Who dare scoff at the humble, earnest faith that clasps the Master's hand in the weariest waste, and goes on strong in His strength? God grant usm ore of this earnest, loving faith.

Something of the work necessary may be learned from a letter to one who afterwards became his wife and joined him in his work:—

"Here I am writing from Oro, and just to amuse you I will tell you how I came here. On reaching Barrie I just had time to call on Mrs. — in passing, and see his wife and my old favourite, little Maggie. Took a comfortable dinner at the inn while the stage was being prepared. We started with other four passengers, drawn by two stout horses. The roads were in a very bad condition; unless you have travelled by stage in the spring, and in Canada, you can form no idea of the mud and of the jolts. After eighteen miles of such riding I reached the end of my journey. Several individuals gave me that hearty welcome so peculiar to Highlanders. I had no less than several invitations for the Sabbath afternoon and evening, but was resolved to push on to Mrs. —, two miles distant. At length I started, not however, till a lad was found to accompany me to carry my knapsack. I reached Mrs. — about dusk, Saturday evening, having travelled about sixty miles by rail, eighteen by stage, and two on foot. I found Mrs. — and her house all that I could expect or perhaps wish for in a country place, a good old Scotch woman of the best type, two smart girls, her daughters, three granddaughters, a dog, and two large black cats. That was the family. I got the rocking chair and was soon nearly asleep. I long for some one to bear me company when exiled from my friends. Mrs. — made me tea and we cracked for a little, then I was shown my little room upstairs with a table and chairs, and a feather bed with sheets as white as the driven snow. What a sleep! I awoke on a beautiful Sabbath morning with the sun shining bright into my room. Got a nice horse to ride on and set out. I preached in Gaelic, from "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Church much thinner than when I was here last. Matters are in a very strange state; they could not be worse. The people had promised better things. After sermon I thought it would be good to point out their great error. After forenoon sermon rode eight miles to preach another. Not being accustomed to the saddle felt very wearied, but in a few days will feel quite at home in it. A Canadian minister must spend a great part of his time in the summer riding. Had an evening sermon, then rode home, arriving about eight o'clock. What would I not give for some one to meet me on my return? There is here a wide field, 130 families (Gaelic) owning land, ten settled in houses and thirty English-speaking, in all 170. My present appointment is only four Sabbaths."

From another we extract:—

"Last Sabbath I dived into the bush deeper than on any former occasion. Three of us started about eight o'clock. Our way lay through the forest, wild as trod by the Indian only, now and then a path made by the cattle. We came to three or four settlements, that is, a piece, say twenty acres cut right out of the bush and shut out from the world by a wall of green woods. After nearly three hours hard travelling through swamps, over logs, across creeks, we sighted the meeting place. It was nearly eleven o'clock and the people had assembled. I rested for about five minutes. We had services in both languages. After service we started home again, and turned aside about four o'clock into a house in this wild region where we got a cup of tea, of which I felt the benefit having tasted nothing since seven o'clock in the morning. I can give you not a particle of news regarding our family, as for the past month I have been shut out from corresponding with them, and have not had a line from any of them in that time. I find this hard to bear, especially being anxious about a good many things. My only peace is casting all on God."

But battling bravely he won his reward. In about three years three settlements united and extended to him a call. His district, about twenty-six miles square, his salary from the three congregations about \$600 per annum.

(To be continued.)