

alone to attend a Baptist meeting for the first time in my life. For a mile and a-half after leaving the settlement in which I lived, my way led through a dark pine wood. The gigantic pine trees, 150 feet high, and some of them three or four feet in diameter, interlocked their branches overhead and nearly excluded the light. The road was a mere path from which the sapplings and underbrush had been cleared away to the width of 10 or 12 feet; sections had been cut out of the trunks of the fallen trees to the same extent, when they lay across the path, and the sections rolled aside, so that a wagon could barely pass. The primitive road-makers were not careful to follow the direct line, or allowance for road made in Governor Simcoe's survey, but frequently deviated from it, to the right or left, either to pass around a cluster of great pines growing too close together to allow of a passage between them, or to avoid wet or soft ground. After getting through the pines, I passed the log houses of four comparatively recent settlers, each of which had a few acres of clearing around them, when I came to the place of meeting. It was a new school-house, set down exactly in the angle of a field or clearing containing perhaps 8 or 10 acres which had been recently blocked out of the dense forest. On two sides the tall trees, growing thickly together, approached within a few yards of the walls. The building had been constructed in a much better style than the average log school-house of the period. It had been erected since the formation of the church, and chiefly at the expense, or rather with the hands of its members, and had from the first been intended to serve equally as a church and school-house. The logs had been carefully selected, of pine or cedar, straight and straight. These had been carefully laid up and hewn down on the inside, i. e., after the logs were in place the inner surface had been flattened so as to make a smooth straight wall both vertically and laterally. The floor was of good, well jointed, but undressed planks, well nailed down. The ceiling was of dressed boards laid above the joists, which (the joists) were pine logs, nicely hewn four square. The fire place was of the primitive kind then usually seen, consisting of a straight stone wall, about eight feet long, and surmounted with the stick chimney. The furniture consisted of a few rough benches, a long writing desk fixed against the wall across one of the sides, a small pine table and a couple of chairs. The place was well lighted, as perfectly clean; the great open fire-place being lined with a profusion of cedar boughs.

I found the little church assembled when I arrived. The number was small,—under twenty; and now, calling up their names in memory, I find all have gone home except one, and what is a pleasing reflection, all congregate to "witness a good profession" through their whole lives. The survivor of that company was then a young English girl; she was shortly afterwards married to a deacon of a neighboring church and for forty years she faithfully discharged the duties of wife and mother, (to another woman's children, she had none of her own) and now having survived her husband and being freed from family cares, she pursues her Master's work with all the zeal and fervor of a first love. Known to all the poor, and knowing all the sick and the unfortunate over her wide district, her

gentle ministrations bring peace and hope to many a wounded heart. She is *Grandma* to every body.

But to return to the Covenant Meeting. Shortly after my arrival the services commenced and were conducted on this wise: There being no Elder present, the senior deacon presided. He gave out a hymn, which was sung in excellent style, nearly all the members being well instructed in church psalmody as then practised, one of their number being an able teacher of that art. After the hymn the same deacon led in prayer and then followed another hymn. He then called on the Church Clerk to read the Articles of Faith. This being done the members were requested to express their approval of, or continued belief in, the articles by rising; which they all did. The clerk was then directed to read the covenant, upon which the deacon declared the meeting open, and that the brothers and sisters would now proceed to "speak on their covenant." And now one after another each member rose and delivered a short address. As to the substance or matter of these addresses, they very much resembled each other, though in the manner of their delivery there was considerable variety. None of the speakers assumed the office of teacher in the slightest degree: very few even, ventured upon exhortations; but each appeared to "esteem others better than themselves." They generally commenced with a formal *renewing of their covenant* including renewed assurances of affection and fellowship to all the brethren. As to the rest they were chiefly made up of sketches of personal experience—for the most part—recent experience, since the last meeting. A few expressed the joy and measure in the service of the Lord, and the earnest desire they felt that all their friends and all men might taste and see how good He is. Several bemoaned their short-comings, the entanglements of the world, and the assaults of carnal desires, but expressed an unflinching determination to fight on, with the Divine help, and persevere to the end. Some alluded to the afflictions they had been called to pass through. One young married couple had lost their babe, their first born. The father touched upon the overpowering subject lightly—only a word or two, tremblingly pronounced, as though he dared not trust himself with the painful memory: but the mother, a young woman of interesting appearance, having once mentioned the *precious little* one so lately smiling upon her arm, seemed quite unable to repress the tide of tender thoughts, intermingled with crushed expectations, that pressed for utterance. The visitation, though so bitter, she knew must be intended in mercy, because it was the merciful Father who had made it, she knew it was her duty to submit and she "tried to be able to say from her heart, "Thy will be done." Of the safety and perfect happiness of her sweet babe she had no doubt; she seemed in fancy, to witness its arrival in the abodes of the blessed, and the affectionate attentions bestowed upon it by the inhabitants, and yet, had it been possible she would gladly have drawn it down from thence that she might, for a single moment press it to a mother's wounded heart. "But" she concluded in the language of the bereaved monarch, "he cannot come to me, but I shall go to him." This was all delivered in most fervid language, accompanied with abundant

tears. Every heart was touched, and answering tears on every side witnessed the sympathy of all present.

After all had spoken, the deacon turned to me and enquired if I had anything I wished to say to the church. I found it a much more difficult matter to rise and speak before this assembly than I had anticipated. Among children and young persons of my own age, I had generally found myself able to express my views with some degree of fluency, but to address an assembly (though small) of "wise and reverend seniors," for so they really seemed to me to be, was a very different thing. And besides there was the awe inspired by the consideration that I was to address a church of Christ, in which He was supposed to be present, and taking note of all I should say. These reflections nearly overwhelmed me with dismay. I succeeded however, in intimating to them in an imperfect manner, that I hoped that I had recently been brought to know the saving truth; that I was convinced of the duty of baptism as practised by them; and that if I could be received, I desired to become a member of the church. I was then told that the church would expect me to give a relation of my experience. I scarcely knew what that meant, but the deacon kindly explained that they desired me to relate to the church, what had been the Lord's dealing with my soul which had resulted in bringing me to the knowledge of the truth.

If the alarms, the admonitions and the demands of my conscience were to be regarded as the "Lord's dealings with my soul," the relations must include my whole life, as I could not remember the time when I was not the subject of deep religious impressions. It was true that recently I had been conscious of a great change both in my views and in my sensations. I had been brought to see my lost and helpless state as a sinner, to a degree that I had never before realized, and all my hopes which had been looking for a time, or for some change when, or on account of which I should be able, by a renewed life, to meet the requirement of the Divine Law, had been abandoned. Christ alone, the precious gift of God, and His perfect righteousness had been presented to me as the only and sufficient remedy for the present, and the assured hope for the future.

I know not in what language I made my statement to the church, but it proved satisfactory, and I was received by a unanimous vote, and some weeks after, when an *elder came round*, I was baptized.

Such was my first Covenant Meeting, but from my subsequent acquaintance with other churches I found that they were universally observed nearly in the same form. Indeed the Covenant Meeting was regarded as an institution of prime importance, quite on a level, in several respects, with the Sabbath itself; and I think that a member was more liable to fall under the censure of his church for absenting himself from the Covenant Meeting than for neglecting the Sabbath assembly. It, (the Covenant Meeting) was made an article of faith, or rather, was included in the same article that respected the Sabbath; which was couched in nearly the following terms:—

"We believe that the first day of every week ought to be observed as the Christian Sabbath, on which day no work ought to be done, except work of necessity and