



THE SCHOOLHOUSE AND HOME FOR THE CHILDREN :

Rev. Mr. Brick's son, Mr. Muller (the teacher), and Mr. White, of White Fish Lake mission, in the foreground ; part of the storehouse in background. (See p. 126)

FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE FIRST CENTURY.

IN the first century Foreign Missions and Home Missions were carried on side by side ; but it is easy to distinguish them, and the obstacles in the way of the former were greater than they are now. Preaching the Gospel to Gentiles was the primitive equivalent of Foreign Missions, as was preaching it to Jews of Home Missions.

The first obstacle was bitter opposition within what we may call the Church at home. Hebrew Christians were not unwilling that the heathen should be saved ; but they were slow to admit that they could be saved until they had been made Jews, a difficult task, which the Messiah Himself had discouraged. Such Christians were likely to say, " Let us evangelize the unbelieving masses of our own race before we try to make proselytes of doubtful sincerity among the heathen," and Foreign Missions as actually carried on by St. Paul and his associates, without requiring circumcision, were an abomination to men of this class. The only missionary work for Gentiles which we know of their undertaking was that of undoing what St. Paul did. They frequently succeeded, as did others who resisted him with the weapons of philosophy. His converts often became perverts, while very often they justified the bad opinion of the Jews by relapsing into heathen vices.

These facts pointed to another equally disheartening. The Gentile converts seldom

represented the best side of heathenism. It was the outcasts, the ignorant, the slaves, who received the Gospel soonest, so often to betray it ; and what was true of classes was in a degree true of races. The pure-blooded Greeks of Athens gave little heed to the preacher on Mars Hill ; it was rather the mongrel populations of commercial cities, like Corinth, or such races as the Cretans—" liars, evil beasts, slow bellies"—or the Phrygians, the scorn of antiquity, that the Christian teachers reached soonest. Many memoirs of the early Church were the worst of a bad stock.

What, as we look back, seems to make the case more desperate, and could not then have

been wholly concealed from Hebrew evangelists familiar with God's judgments upon nations, the communities in which Gentile Christianity was first planted were, as a rule, decaying communities. Indeed, the Roman Empire itself was doomed ; almost the whole civilization of the ancient world was dying at the roots ; and the one permanent race, the one alone destined to a long career, was the very one from which the Foreign missionaries of the first century seemed to be turning away, though perfectly aware that its inheritance in the future had not been forfeited (Romans xi.).

Judged by the favorite tests in use to-day, the Foreign Missions of the first century were a reckless and wicked waste of men and money. Evidently that council at Jerusalem made a great mistake in not stopping them. Only, had it done so, what should we have been, and what would the world have been in the nineteenth century? And, whatever results may be or seem to be now, as long as there are true-hearted men in the Christian Church, men of honor, to whom disobedience means disgrace, neither argument nor human authority will prevent the fulfilment of the Lord's command—" Preach the Gospel to every creature."—*Spirit of Missions.*

GIVE.

As God hath prospered thee, oh, give !
And help some other soul to live.
Since thou hast ever His dear word,
And all its tender bidding heard,
Some other soul in need will see,
And give as He hath prospered thee.