

shore and are surrounded by a wall, the property of Franciscan monks. In places they are almost overgrown with weeds and brambles. Scarcely even in fancy can we picture the town as it was in the days of Christ. But as we look over the lake itself and out on the flowery plain of Gennesaret and the gentle, bounding hills, we feel that these are scenes on which His eyes often dwelt, little changed by all the passing centuries. Somehow, the meaning and reality of the whole sacred story is intensified to us with the beholding. And in this our impressions in Galilee differ from those made by Jerusalem, where the constant appeals to credulity seem almost to endanger the very power of belief.

—Mary S. Daniels

Glimpses from our Church History

By Rev. Professor James Ballantyne, D.D.

III. THE BEGINNINGS IN THE CANADIAN WEST

To emphasize the wondrous development of the Canadian West, its history is often spoken of as if it all belonged to the last decade or two. In reality it is just one hundred years since Presbyterianism was established in Manitoba. A Lowland Scotch nobleman, the Earl of Selkirk, was the first to conceive the idea of establishing a colony of Highlanders in the heart of this unknown country. During a journey through the Highlands of Scotland he was impressed by the poverty and wretchedness of the people and resolved to come to their relief. From the Hudson's Bay Company he purchased an immense tract of land in the valley of the Red River, and in 1812 the first company of settlers arrived. They were seventy in number, chiefly from Sutherlandshire, and reached their destination by way of York Factory on the shores of Hudson's Bay. Their arrival, however, was not agreeable to the other fur trading company of the West, The Great West Company. So, from the first, they met with bitter opposition, and almost perished for lack of food. Added to these discouragements were the terrors of frost and grasshoppers that frequently destroyed their scanty crops.

But the greatest disappointment of the new settlers had to do with their religious needs.

Religion was the very essence of their lives, and that religion was bound up with the beliefs and forms of worship of Presbyterianism. They would not have left the old home had they not been promised that a minister of their own Church would accompany them to the new. A young licentiate was appointed, but in the end he drew back. Meantime, until a minister could be sent, an elder, Mr. James Sutherland, was authorised to conduct their services and perform other ministerial duties. In a few years the hostile influences of the North West Company brought about the removal of Mr. Sutherland, and the devout Highlanders were left with no one to care for their souls. It must not be supposed, however, that they became indifferent to religion. They read and studied their Bibles, they sang the Psalms of David, and, regularly as the sun rose and set, observed family worship.

Now, it might be supposed that men who were singularly familiar with their Bibles and could pray in public would feel themselves independent of ministers. But such was their regard for the office, that, when no minister of their own persuasion came to them, they eagerly welcomed a missionary of the Church of England. And for thirty-two years their spiritual needs were met by the Church of England. Yet all this time they clung to the hope of seeing among them a minister of their own church. Petition after petition was sent to the Church of Scotland, but the mother church was deaf to their appeals. It would be difficult in all Church History to find a parallel to the devotion of these people to the church of their fathers, that no neglect or disappointment could chill.

Finally, the Canadian Presbyterian Church heard their cry, and in 1852 sent the Rev. John Black to minister to them. At last their hopes were realized, and in one day three hundred left the Episcopal Church, yet only with feelings of gratitude to the church that had cared for them when their own seemed to have forgotten their very existence. John Black did his work with rare zeal and success, and had the honor of laying the foundations of Presbyterianism in that new land.

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