

The Record.

TORONTO, JUNE, 1859.

THE APPROACHING MEETING OF SYNOD.

The season of our annual meeting of Synod is now at hand, and it becomes the Ministers and Elders, who, in the good providence of God may soon meet together in solemn assembly, to be even now pondering the important questions to which their attention may be directed. As the Synod is the supreme court of appeal and review, it is of course impossible to know beforehand all the important questions which may be brought under discussion. But in our peculiar circumstances, there are certain matters which must, from year to year, occupy a large measure of our attention. Among these we may mention as of prime importance, our Home Mission operations, and our Theological Institution. The first of these, our Home Mission work, deserves our most serious consideration, just because it seems to be the great work to which we, as a Church, are called. We are placed in a new, a large, and a rapidly extending field. We have to aid in moulding the moral and religious character of a new community, that may in future generations have a most important part to act in connexion with the evangelization of the world. Every individual christian, and every separate portion of the christian church, has some special mission, some peculiar work, and it seems the great work to which our Church is called, to carry on, with vigour and efficiency, the work of Home Missionary operations in our own bounds. We say then, that this matter should receive a large share of our attention when we meet in Synod.

In close connexion with this stands our Theological College. We are by no means of opinion that frequent, or unnecessary changes are at all desirable in connexion with the College. On the contrary, we would deprecate frequent interference with it. Neither do we agree with these, who would expect to see such an institution as ours, as in every respect perfect all at once. It must grow up gradually to maturity and to perfect efficiency. But still, it is most desirable that it should be adapted, as far as possible, to our circumstances and to our wants, and made as efficient as means will allow. In connexion with this, we would express an opinion, based on pretty long and extensive observation and experience, that ere long some permanent provision,—we mean, some endowment, raised by the contributions of our people, must be contemplated. Wherever no such provision exists, perpetual difficulties are experienced, and a state of ceaseless uncertainty prevails. We do not of course mean that at the present time any thing can be done. But the matter must be kept in view. Our friends must view such a provision as not only desirable, but as almost necessary. In

ordinary times we have no doubt of the practicability of an effort in this direction. Were a few large-hearted members of the Church to take the matter in hand, we have no doubt of success, by the blessing of God. It has been attempted and in a great measure accomplished in Nova Scotia. It has been begun in England. The new College at Glasgow has been endowed through the munificence of an individual. Have we no Dr. Clark, or Mrs. Magee, to begin a work of such importance, not only to the present, but to succeeding generations?

The subject of union too must necessarily occupy a large share of attention at the Synod. In accordance with the instructions of last Synod, the Committee on Union, in co-operation with the Committee of the United Presbyterian Church, have drawn up a basis of union, which must now be submitted to the two Synods, which meet at the same time, and in the same city. Union, without mutual confidence, would of course be no benefit, but an injury. But it cannot be denied, that carried into effect with mutual confidence, and with a proper understanding, and with harmony of views, union would be a great blessing, and would be productive of the most beneficial results not only to presbyterians, but to the Province generally. In various quarters the tendency among Presbyterians is towards union. In Nova Scotia, union seems to be highly probable at no distant day. In Australia the probability is that union is already consummated. Committees are appointed in England. It is evident then that throughout the Presbyterian community in various lands, the feeling is in favour of union, if at all practicable on sound principles.

We trust that this and the other important questions will be discussed and decided in such a spirit and in such a way, as may be for the glory of God, and conducive to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Let our people pray that much of the Spirit and presence of the great Head of the Church may be with us at our meeting, and let all the Members come up with a resolution to seek the advancement of the Redeemer's glory, by the very spirit with which they shall enter into the business of the Synod. We do not say that Presbyterianism is put on its trial, when such meetings take place, but undoubtedly much is done, either to exalt, or to prejudice our system of ecclesiastical order, in the eyes of Christians generally, by the tone and spirit that may prevail amongst us.

We take it for granted that the attention of the Synod will be directed to the state of religion, and the desirableness, and necessity of revival. In other places there have been evidences of revival. At this very time, in many parts of Scotland and England, there are symptoms of increased attention to divine things, and of deep and earnest awakening. We fear that we are not sufficiently anxious about the matter, and there are not such yearnings of heart as there should be, and such earnest inquiries as to the

cause of our comparatively cold and backward state. It is true, God claims it as his own prerogative to grant the reviving influences of His Spirit. But if, while other quarters enjoy the refreshing showers of His grace, we are dry and parched, there must be a cause, and it becomes us to consider our state, and humble ourselves before God, and plead with him that he would bless us, even us also, and that he would pour out water on the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Such a subject should most appropriately engage the attention, and draw forth the earnest prayers of the brethren, when they come together in Synod.

We earnestly trust that there may be a large meeting of Ministers and Elders. To facilitate this, we feel that we are not going beyond the bounds of propriety, when we suggest the desirableness of each congregation making provision for meeting the expenses of Minister and Elder. The business of the Synod, is not private, but public, and it is but right that those whose benefit is sought to be promoted, should assist in bearing the burden.

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

We have often thought of the desirableness of collecting, in some systematic way, historical records of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. In the United States there is at least one society called the Presbyterian Historical Society, whose object is to collect information, publish old theological works and sermons, and otherwise to gather and preserve the interesting works and relics of the past. Lately an appeal has been made by this society to the various Sessions throughout the States. No doubt in answer to such an appeal, much interesting information will be received, and many important records contributed. We have no doubt that much good would result from the organization of such a society, either within our own church, or on a wider and more extended basis. In looking over the minutes of some of the earlier Synods of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connexion with the Church of Scotland, we find that an attempt was at one time made to obtain historical accounts of the several congregations. We do not know what progress was made in this matter. But we suspect that the effort was not very successful. Very soon so much business of a more purely ecclesiastical nature came before the Synod, as it met from time to time, that the matter must have been necessarily lost sight of. Still there must be many interesting incidents and many important records in connexion with the early planting of the Presbyterian church in these Provinces. We often listened, many years ago, when we were young in the ministry, with intense interest and pleasure, to the accounts of his labours and toils, as narrated by the venerable servant of the Lord, the late Rev. R. McDowell, whose parish embraced the greater part of the frontier of Upper Canada. He himself has now, many years ago, passed from the scene.