

PRESBYTERY OF LONDON.

The Presbytery of London met on the 11th of May, and continued its sitting for two days. The following is a short statement of the principal business transacted:—

The Rev. William Macalister having accepted of a call from Metis, Canada East, was released from his charge at Sarnia. The call was accepted by Mr Macalister, and his translation allowed to be prosecuted without opposition from the congregation at Sarnia, on account of his delicate state of health, which, according to the opinion of physicians, will be much improved by his residing near to the sea.

In compliance with a petition from the people at Tilbury, the connexion between the congregation there and that of Chatham was dissolved, in order that the former, by occupying the position of a separate station, might receive the regular services of a missionary, instead of one service in the month which had hitherto been given by Mr. McColl of Chatham.

The following reports were received respecting the Missionary Meetings appointed to be held during the winter. Mr. King reported for the Western section, that, owing to the delicate health of the two members who were appointed to join him, no meetings had been held, but that they purposed holding these meetings as soon as the season of settled weather had arrived. Mr. Scott reported for the Middle section, that meetings had been held at the time appointed at all the congregations and mission stations within their division, that the meetings had been largely attended, that all the members of Presbytery belonging to the section had been present at them, and that collections had been taken up to the amount of £25, which had been chiefly devoted to the Home Mission Fund,—and Mr. Ball reported for the Eastern section, that only one successful meeting had been held, that other two had been attempted, but that, in consequence of the stormy weather they had proved failures, and that, the weather still continuing very severe, the rest had been postponed.

The following distribution was made of the missionaries assigned to the Presbytery by the Synod's Home Missionary Committee. Mr. Peter Currie was appointed for the whole season to the three important Gaelic stations of Bruce, Kincairdine, and Ashfield; Mr. Ferguson to Caradoc North and South for two months, and afterwards to Bosanquet; Mr. Blain to Mitchell and Queen's Bush for two months, and afterwards to Sarnia; Mr. Straith for the whole season to Tilbury; Mr. Ball having expressed his willingness to visit Saugeen was appointed to spend four weeks at that station.

Mr. Straith having, at the urgent request of Mr. King, been allowed to remain for the whole season at Tilbury, Mr. King and Mr. McColl were appointed a committee to provide—either by their own services, or those of any other that they might obtain—eight weeks' supply to Wallaceburgh, before the ordinary meeting of Presbytery in October.

The Presbytery considering the sacred obligation of all the disciples of the Lord Jesus to commemorate his death according to his own appointment, and the duty of the office-bearers to see that all the professed people of God under their charge, having an opportunity of fulfilling their Saviour's command, resolved to have the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper dispensed at every vacant congregation and mission station within their bounds, at least once every year. The Presbytery, therefore, appointed that the ordinance of the Lord's Supper should be dispensed at the following places, and by the following members before the August meeting:—

At Kincairdine, in the month of July, by Messrs. McKenzie, L. McPherson, and Ross; at Thamesford, on the third Sabbath of June, by Messrs. McKenzie, Sutherland, and Fraser; at Mitchell, at the time found to be most convenient, by

Messrs. Graham and T. McPherson; and at Tilbury, on the second Sabbath of July, by Messrs. King and McColl.

The following additional appointments were also given to members of Presbytery. Mr. Ross was appointed to give a Sabbath to Waanosh, before the meeting of Synod; Mr. Wallace and Mr. McDiarmid were appointed to supply Mr. Ball's pulpit during his absence at Saugeen, and Mr. Allan was appointed to supply Fingal on the second and third Sabbath of July.

Mr. McLaren having accepted of the call from Amherstburgh, and Mr. Tolmie of that from Blandford, their trials for ordination were heard and sustained, and Mr. McLaren's ordination appointed to take place on Wednesday the 1st of June, and Mr. Tolmie's on Thursday the 2nd of the same month.*

The Presbytery agreed to apply at the approaching meeting of Synod, for leave to take Mr. W. Blain, student of Divinity, on trial for license.

The Presbytery having considered the proposal of the Synod's Home Mission Committee, for endeavouring to obtain a supply of suitable preachers from the Free Church of Scotland, cordially agreed to the proposal, and resolved to provide the amount for outfit, and the amount of salary mentioned to three such preachers.

JOHN SCOTT, Pres. Clerk.

REPORT OF SYNOD'S COMMITTEE ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

In taking a retrospect of the year that has elapsed since their last Report was submitted, your Committee feel that there is no small cause for gladness and gratitude. It is but a short time since a formal agitation on the Sabbath question commenced. At first its promoters were assailed with the shafts of ridicule. They had to cope with an opposition which ranged beneath its variegated banner, pecuniary interest, chilling indifference, established custom, and a withering latitudinarianism. They were denounced as a set of sanctimonious Puritans and Pharisaical brawlers. Any representations made by them were regarded as but an echo of what was politely styled by an eminent living historian, the "braying of Exeter Hall." Now, these venomous shafts have fallen powerless. The line of opposition originally followed has been changed, and the question formerly in the background, has assumed an air of practical importance, and asserted for itself its legitimate place amongst the great social-religious questions of the day.

The Pulpit occupied (as is its duty,) the foremost place. For three years past the third Sabbath in January has been specially devoted to the advocacy of the subject. To a very considerable extent this re-echo, originally emanating from the Society in Kingston, has been carried out. It is impossible to calculate the amount of good that may arise from the Gospel trumpet through the lips of every minister in the Province, giving forth at least once every year, no uncertain sound on this vitally important question.

It is a pleasing proof of progress during the past year, that the Press has lent its powerful aid to a greater extent than hitherto. Not to speak of professedly religious journals, (denominational and general,) whose support might be so far counted on, there are nearly a dozen purely secular and of various shades of politics, in which highly favorable articles have appeared. The *Quebec Gazette*, generally considered to be the English organ of the Government, at headquarters, is of the number. The opposition offered by the Press is scarcely worth speaking of; the objections brought forward and the arguments employed belong to the thread-bare, stereotyped class that have been repeatedly exploded.

* These ordinations have since taken place as appointed.

The Platform has joined in with the Pulpit and the Press. Lectures have been delivered, and organizations formed. In the presence of the Postmaster General, by the lips of prominent members of both our Legislative Halls, the cause has been eloquently pled.

In Toronto and Quebec, reform associations have sprung up; in Montreal and Kingston they have been in existence for some time. Should Hamilton and London follow in their footsteps, the chain extending along our border will be complete. With branches reaching into the back country, a network might be soon spread over the entire surface of our Province, which would secure an almost telegraphic communication and consequent unity and simultaneity of action in any emergency, as well as facilitate the establishment of a Grand Provincial Alliance.

To the subjects of the Post Office and the Canals, public attention has as yet been principally directed. The number of memorials to the Legislature last year amounted to 69. This year there were 196, showing an increase nearly threefold. These memorials have come from cities, towns, villages, municipalities in their Corporate capacity, individual Congregations, Ecclesiastical Courts, and Sabbath Societies. The movement in Parliament has been an extremely interesting and important one. The Parliamentary Committee have collected a mass of statistics which may prove of great practical advantage in the subsequent conducting of this contest. The Report is an able and elaborate document, logical in its development of principles and luminous in its arrangement of facts. The evidence, oral and documentary is conclusive on these three points—

1. That Sabbath labour is carried on to a lamentable extent in the Post Office and on the Canals.

2. That such labour is altogether unnecessary.

3. That it is positively injurious to those who are so employed, physically, mentally, morally, spiritually.

The Bill founded on this Report contains four distinct provisions fully carrying out the wishes of the memorialists, viz., that there should be no running of mails or delivery of letters, and that Canal Locks be closed from Saturday at midnight till Sabbath at midnight. This Bill came up for discussion last week, and was lost by a majority of one, there being 26 for and 27 against. This defeat we consider as equivalent to a victory. The measure introduced by Mr. Bell, ex-member for Lanark, was defeated by the very same number, but then it was very narrow in its basis and limited in its scope. It left the settlement of the question entirely to local Councils, and being discussed in Toronto, had a certain amount of Protestant influence brought to bear in its favor. This measure was sweeping in its provisions and universal in its application, and was moreover debated in the face of a rampant Priesthood, whose uniform practice it is to set an extinguisher on the Sabbath. It is therefore cause of surprise that there should have been such a large and respectable minority. Had it been left to Upper Canadian votes, it would have been carried almost unanimously, only two having been registered against it. We would not of course be considered as endorsing all the sentiments which the Report or the preamble of the Bill contain. The ground assumed is undoubtedly low and narrow. We desiderate the elevation of the question to the lofty platform of that commandment which is exceeding broad. We would have it advocated not because of its practical utility or physical necessity, or its being the birthright of every member of the human family in whose behalf protection may be legitimately sought, but because it was engraved on the solid tablets of Sinai, and comes within the sweep of that all pervading announcement—"Thus saith the Lord." The labours, however, of the Parliamentary committee merit our hearty thanks, prosecuted as they have been faithfully and energetically.