

Sabbath Schools and Bible classes, there are, in several congregations, libraries of religious books, and, in some cases, a congregational library also. These will become the proper object of attention to the pastor; but, in all cases where general or miscellaneous libraries are formed, or are forming, the Synod would do well to recommend to all pastors and missionaries the important duty of watching over these, to prevent the introduction of all books of a pernicious tendency. "The poison of a light and irreligious literature is pervading the land, and popery and impurity are forming their alliances.—We desire a well-informed and vigorous ministry, and depositories of good books and tracts, will form to pious pastors valuable helps.

The Committee close this part of the report with one or two additional recommendations. The one is, that in all congregations, particularly in cities and large towns, a week-day service—either in the way of a prayer meeting, meeting for missionary intelligence, or for expounding the shorter catechism, or for ordinary lecture—should be held. Such regular salutary interruptions to the constant pressure of the world, upon the hearts of men, have good effect, and the Committee are of opinion that such free will offerings of a portion of our time to God, have been, on many occasions, honored by him, and blessed to the conversion of men. In some places, particularly in the Gaelic congregations, it has been the practice to hold district prayer meetings of the members, specially for prayer on behalf of the minister, and for the success of the gospel in their own congregations. Of this, too much approval cannot be expressed. It cherishes the spirit of prayer, and it provides the means of making up, in some measure, for those spiritual deficiencies which the want of a settled ministry must necessarily occasion.—Another remark is, that the good old scriptural practice of collecting for religious purposes, at all meetings for public worship, might with advantage be revived.

In several instances, which it is unnecessary to particularise, omissions in regard to Elders and Deacons, Bible classes, and prayer meetings, which may have been noticed in the reports of the visits, your Committee rejoice to learn have since been supplied, or are in the way of being supplied. In other instances these matters, important as they are cannot be expected to be attended to until a regular pastoral charge has been formed, and the benefits of a regular ministry practically realised.

As specimens of a healthful development of the principles and advantages of well-conducted Sabbath Schools and Bible classes—male and female, juvenile and adult—the Committee refer specially to the reports from Montreal, Hamilton and Toronto. In noticing these, however, your Committee intend nothing invidious. It is in such situations as the above we might expect a successful application of such principles, and the pleasing manifestation of such benefits; and success in such cases will only stimulate to a happy rivalry.

II.—STATE OF DISCIPLINE, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT.

Your Committee would respectfully remind their brethren that the true prosperity of a church of Christ does not consist in numbers or in wealth, but in the piety and consistency of its members; and the impression on their minds, after a serious review of the whole reports, is, that in the present state of the church, the elevation of its standard and practice of discipline is what, above all other things, demands the deepest attention of the Synod and of the Church Courts. "The Committee would recommend that as both the sealing ordinances, baptism and the Lord's supper, are of the same Divine authority, such as partake of one should partake of both; and the same religious qualifications that are required for the one should be required for the other. They also recommend that in no instance ought baptism to be dispensed without very serious private and spiritual communications with the applicants, on the part of the minister, or, in the want of a regular ministry, of the missionary, or catechist, and eldership.—The necessity and importance of frequently repeated conferences, with young persons and others, applying for admission as

members of the congregation, cannot be over estimated.

The Committee concur heartily in a remark made by Mr. Runtou, in the report from Streetsville, to the following effect: "Individuals on presenting certificates are generally admitted to privileges; but the minister feels that it might be better to examine them." The Committee would add, that the certificates are often of old dates, and they sometimes come from quarters rather questionable. Where sessions have it in their power to judge of the character and qualifications of applicants for themselves, the certificate should be viewed in no other light than simply as a recommendation of the individual to be taken under sessional and pastoral inspection, and by no means as in itself, and exclusively, a passport to sealing ordinances.

Wherever the visitors have gone, they have had reason to mark the melancholy results of the want of a regular and zealous ministry, and the painful effects which have followed from careless admission to sealing ordinances, and a low and relaxed discipline. The visitors have also had occasion to mourn over the neglect, or careless and irregular performance of family worship, and family catechising; and the disuse, in too many instances, of the Assembly's shorter catechism as a manual of instruction. To these causes mainly are they inclined to ascribe the fact that the religious views of even serious persons in this country, as compared with those in the mother country, are often found to be sadly deficient in systematic accuracy and scriptural clearness.

Your Committee cannot omit taking notice of the zealous and disinterested services of some of the Elders of our church in the duties of this visitation, and the more ordinary calls of their office. They would press it on the serious attention of the Synod that in connexion with the planting of a zealous ministry in the land, will be the elevation of the status of the eldership, and the giving of all due honour and encouragement to the men who, without fee or reward, and sometimes in the face of much opposition, discharge the duties of their divinely constituted office with zeal, "according to knowledge."

Your Committee would recommend to the Synod the importance of every minister being enjoined to instruct elders in their duties. There are many office-bearers who suppose that elders have nothing more to do than to assist at sacramental seasons, and exercise discipline in sessions; while others have even less spiritual and less practical views of the subject. They ought to be reminded that all matters affecting the state and progress of religion—the education of the young—the religious condition of families—the progress of truth and of error—and the best means of strengthening the hands of ministers, belong to them. A conscientious eldership is the glory of a church. Let them be encouraged to give attendance on all meetings of the Church Courts, where they conveniently can; and let them be called on to exercise their gifts in presiding over Prayer meetings, and Sabbath Schools, and Bible classes.

III.—PREVALENT SIN.

In almost every instance intemperance was found to be the proximate or direct cause of those sins which rendered the exercise of discipline necessary; and the Committee would strongly urge that, in any pastoral letter which the Synod may issue, the subject of intemperance should be very particularly dwelt upon, together with the kindred sin of Sabbath profanation. Your Committee would also notice the close connexion of habits of bodily indulgence and laxity in Sabbath observance, with the growth of infidel opinions and licentious practices. O how many young people are corrupted, to their utter ruin, by the vulgar ribaldry and the profane scoffs and jests, to be met with daily and hourly, in the well-known haunts of intemperance! Your Committee, however, observe, with pleasure and gratitude to our Heavenly Father, that, in several districts, the decline of intemperate habits is specially noticed, and particularly in connexion with what are called loggings or raisings. The Committee wish it were in their power to speak thus of the general state of the Province,

but their impression, from these reports, has been, that the sin of intemperance has been, of late, generally on the increase.

Among sins, which ought to be made the subjects of sessional procedure, your Committee would recommend that other offences, over and beside transgressions against the 7th commandment, should be included; such as neglect or careless and irregular performance of family worship, and other domestic duties; negligent or irregular attendance on public ordinances; and intemperance in all its degrees. Encouragement given in some instances, in the Lower Provinces particularly, to the adulterous practices of Popery, and all countenance given, from whatever motive, by subscription or otherwise, to the interests of the man of sin, ought to be brought within the same range of a godly and impartial discipline.

The Committee have observed, from many of these reports, that apathy and indifference seem to mark the aspect of many congregations and stations, and one of the most painful accompaniments of the visits of the deputies, was the non-attendance of the people on the opportunities of public worship afforded at these visits. This was the case in many instances, while in others, the reverse was the fact, thus demonstrating, as your Committee think, the importance of very plain and pointed preaching, and an incessant but affectionate appeal to the consciences of the people, together with more full and regular pastoral inspection and visitation.

IV.—REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

Your Committee look with greatest expectation to the settlement of a pious and active ministry in the land as the most likely means of securing what may be called a continuous and progressive revival. To this they look with greater hope than to any occasional and sudden awakenings. If a talented and vigorous ministry shall be reared in these lands; if a godly discipline shall be maintained in all our congregations; if a high-toned advocacy of eternal truth shall characterise our pulpits; and if our ministers and elders wear the stamp and the seal of living members of Christ, we may reasonably hope that the prayers of Jehovah's remembrancers shall be heard and answered, in a copious shower of blessed influences "to refresh the heritage of God."

In some districts, such as Perth and adjoining townships, the visitors report, as very apparent, the good effects which accompanied a revival of religion some six or seven years ago. Young men, now among the best supporters of the gospel in our congregations, acknowledged, with gratitude, the special goodness of God to them on those hallowed occasions, while the general interest in behalf of the cause of religion, contrasted affectingly with the apathy which characterized other districts.

Your Committee advert, with great pleasure, to the hopeful symptoms of revival in Glengary and the Eastern townships. This is not the place for entering into details; but the Synod will be rejoiced to hear that many symptoms of a genuine awakening have been presented, and that among the young more particularly, the appearances of real impressions having been made are numerous. It is matter of regret that our excellent friend and brother, Dr. McGillivray, has not been able to attend the Synod, as he would have had it in his power to communicate information which would have gladdened our hearts.

With the progress of revival, will run parallel the progress of missionary zeal. Your Committee recommend to ministers the laudable practice of monthly concerts for prayer and reading missionary intelligence. The spiritual wants of our own people may occupy, as they ought, the largest portion of attention at present; but your Committee are assured that to cherish a spirit in favor of the universal spread of the gospel, and to engage in efforts to help on the great missionary enterprise of the evangelical church, is one of the most likely means of cherishing the spirit of religion at home.

The importance of *lay agency*, especially in Gaelic districts, is repeatedly adverted to in the reports; and, in the absence of a regular ministry, your Committee think that what has been successfully done in Glengary, Salmon River, Notawasa and Johnstown, and some Gaelic districts in the West,