

MINUTE OF SYNOD ON BAPTISM.

Appointed to be read by all Ministers and Ministers, to their Congregations on an early Sabbath.

The Synod having had their attention directed to the subject of Baptism, and the relation in which this initiatory Sacrament of the Church of Christ, stands to the other Sacrament of the New Testament; also to the question of public or private administration of the initiatory ordinance, *Declare and Resolve*—

That, as is already in our excellent subordinate standards set forth, a Sacrament is an Holy Ordinance instituted by Christ, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to distinguish them from those who are without; and to oblige the partakers of such ordinances to obedience.

That Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him; but infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized.

That, adhering to these principles, the Synod earnestly urge on all ministers and sessions, to be careful, in administering Baptism, that they who receive this privilege at their hands, be such only of whom there is good reason to believe that they are consistently professing the name of Christ, and obedience to him; and inasmuch as one appointed method of solemnly confessing the Saviour, and acknowledging ourselves to be in communion with his followers, is by commemorating his love and death in the holy ordinance of the Supper; they shall satisfy themselves that parents receiving baptism for their children be not neglecting this command of Christ, but that at the least they be equally in the intention, as God may afford opportunity, to comply with both ordinances, and giving token of this by willingly waiting on such instructions as it may be judged necessary to impart to them on the nature and design of the Sacraments. Parties soliciting the privilege should be informed that as every one taking on himself the baptismal vow, or seeking Baptism for another, does thereby say, I am the Lord's, and does profess to value the blood and spirit of Christ, signified in the waters of Baptism, they ought to know that in receiving this seal and token of spiritual cleansing, they do as truly declare their acceptance of Christ and fellowship with him, as in the ordinance of the Supper;—so a declining or evading of this latter ordinance by any, being adults, who have received the privilege of the initiatory Sacrament for themselves and their children, is, except good cause be shown for the neglect, in circumstances not under their control,—presumptive evidence either of an imperfect apprehension of the design of the Sacraments, or of an inexcusable unwillingness to follow the Lord fully: Therefore Ministers and Kirk Sessions are warranted to decline, except on good and special cause shown, the administration of Baptism to the children of such as are living in the neglect of the Lord's Supper, or do not avail themselves of instructions offered towards a right preparing of them for its observance.

That while due tenderness is recommended to be used in dealing with individuals who, withhold themselves from the Table of the Lord, rather from misapprehension and solemn awe, than from blameworthy indifference towards an appointed means of Grace, diligence should be used to counteract superstitious misconceptions of the nature of the ordinance; and, especially if these be accompanied with an undervaluing estimate of the solemnity of Baptism, that the parties concerned be reminded of the equality of the two Sacraments—as regards their sacred authority, their common reference to the same covenant, and the like necessity both for faith and resolutions of holy living, to the right observance of both.

The Synod do anxiously caution against a too easy or indiscriminate admission to the Baptismal ordinance. And both as tending the better to ensure purity of communion, and as required by a regard to the design of Baptism as a seal of fellowship in the Church, as well as of engrafting into Christ, the Synod recommend as much as possible that the Ordinance be dispensed publicly;—not precluding cases in which it may be judged necessary to baptize in dwelling houses, or cases in which attendance at the ordinary place of public worship may be greatly inconvenient. But the Synod earnestly advise, that as rarely as possible, the privilege be given without public notification from the pulpit, and never without the word of exhortation or exposition.—That if at any time application be made for the administration so slowly and hastily of the ordinance of Baptism, the circumstances be well considered; and care exercised mildly and faithfully to distinguish what is essential from what may be desirable—between the relation of Baptism to salvation and to church fellowship; explaining where it may be necessary so to explain, that as the privilege of Baptism is not to be without good reason neglected, so neither is its administration indispensable where God in his providence has not afforded opportunity for observing it in due order, or in a manner edifying to the individual or to the Church in general. And if in peculiar circumstances of locality or otherwise, it shall be judged for edification to administer this Seal of the Covenant without a session having had regular opportunity to confer with the parties applying, or formally to receive them into the fellowship of any particular congregation, that the minister so receiving to Baptism shall, at the earliest opportunity, report the case to his Session, and that the individuals or families thus recognized shall be duly enrolled, and considered as within the range of the inspection of the pastor and elders, and as being *bona fide* members of the congregation, in connection with which the privilege has been received, (generally—it may be presumed—that which is nearest in locality;—although precluded by distance, or other lawful cause, from a very regular attendance on the weekly ministrations of the Sanctuary: This participation in the privileges of the Church being always understood to imply also the obligation to conform to the ordinary rules of the Church, and responsibility to its tribunals.

The Record.

The Public Accounts occupy so much of our space, that we have been obliged to lay over much interesting matter.

The discrepancy between the Treasurer's Accounts and the Schedule, is occasioned by the former being made up when the Synod met, while the latter was kept open till its close. We hope to be able to present the Accounts in future in a more complete state, as, by direction of Synod, all Accounts are to be closed on the 31st of March.

The collections made by Mr. Black, for the French Canadian Mission, are not included. That list is therefore incomplete.

MEETING OF SYNOD.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada met in Knox's Church, Toronto, on the 5th June.

Dr. Willis, Moderator, preached from Matt. 28: 18, 19, 20. After Sermon, the Synod was constituted by prayer, and the Rev. William Reid, A. M., of Picton, unanimously elected Moderator for the ensuing year. The whole number of Members in attendance was 43 Minis-

ters and 28 Elders, in all 71. We regret that so many of our Congregations and organised Mission Stations neglected to send Elders. It is encouraging to observe that the attendance upon all our Church Courts is improving, manifesting as it does the increasing interest which the members of the Church take in her welfare. Perhaps the comparatively small attendance of Elders may be ascribed to the feeling, too prevalent, that Elders are allowed to interfere, to a very limited extent, in the discussions, and that they are permitted to speak, only by sufferance. We believe that our Presbyterianism will not be fully established until the ruling Elders take a much more decided interest in the business of the Church Courts. In consequence of the distance of some Congregations from the place where Synod meets, the ruling Elders cannot easily attend. It has been provided that Sessions may elect as their representative to Synod any Elder in good standing in any other Session of the Church. (See Minutes 1844, p. 25.) Were remote Congregations to avail themselves of this provision, it would tend greatly to increase the attendance at Synod, and would give additional weight to the acts of the Court.

We are compelled from want of space to give a very brief notice of the proceedings of Synod.

On Wednesday evening several Committees were appointed.

THURSDAY, June 6th.

The Synod took up an overture from the Presbytery of Kingston on the subject of a Book of Discipline. A Committee was appointed to report on Tuesday.

A conference was held on the support of the Ministry. After discussion it was moved by Dr. Willis; seconded by Mr. Roger:—

That, impressed with the urgent necessity of a Fund for the assisting of weaker congregations, a Committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the failure of the scheme lately attempted to be worked, and which was so far in operation for the sustentation of the Ministry among us; and to consider if a scheme, in its nature supplementary, might not with advantage be substituted. Also, whether a part of the late sustentation plan might not be retained in connection with a supplementary one.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Bayne,

That the matter be left in the hands of Presbyteries, according to the deliverance of last Synod.

The vote stood for motion 31. Amendment 18.

A Committee was appointed; viz.: Dr. Burns; Dr. Willis, Mr. Gale, Mr. Wightman, Mr. Roger, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Rintoul, Mr. Wardrop, Mr. Gregg, Ministers; Mr. Hall, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Elder, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Nicol, Elders.

It was agreed that next ordinary meeting of Synod be held in Kingston on the first Wednesday of June, 1851, to be opened with Sermon by the Moderator, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

FRIDAY, June 7th.

Messrs. Stark and Gregg, Ministers, and Messrs. Davidson, Ferrier and Blain were appointed a Committee on the accounts of the Church, to whom the Treasurers to the various funds were required to hand in their books and accounts.

The Synod appointed Dr. Willis, Mr. Stark, Mr. Bayne, Mr. McKenzie, Ministers; Messrs. McLellan, Burgess and Clark, Elders; a Commit-