

you may have abundant will. But this man consecrated all to the service of Christ; and his message to you, and to the men of every succeeding generation, is to go and do likewise. You may not attain to his world-wide and irreproachable renown, but you may attain to the same heavenly rest. And if, instead of giving heed to this gracious call, and going forth as the Saviour's freemen, you rather continue all your days to dig us degraded slaves in the mine of manum, know, that while out in the very stones of these walls God can raise up children unto Abraham, he may pass you by, without making you the children of his heavenly adoption. Nay, these very stones may witness against you, that Christ has often called, and ye have often refused—that he has stretched forth his hand, and none of you have regarded; and he may yet make your Sabbaths silent, and remove your candlestick out of its place, and laugh at your calumny, and mock when you fear cometh. If this is your character, and if this shall be your doom, how great is the contrast between you and this venerated man, of whose life and death we have this day sought to speak to you, in words of warning and remembrance. An angel from Heaven can preach to you no other gospel than we have preached. And now, what more can we say, than sound once more again in your ears these words of truth and soberness. "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?"

REPORT OF SYNODICAL VISITATIONS REGARDING THE STATE OF RELIGION IN CANADA.

In June, 1845, the Synod, when met at Colbourn, did, after much deliberation and prayer, unanimously come to the following resolutions: First,—That special thanks are due to God for permitting us to take the position of a Free Presbyterian Church, maintaining the great principles of the Headship of the Redeemer, and his exclusive rule in his own house; and seeking to follow out these principles practically as a Scripturally Presbyterian and Missionary Church in this land. Secondly,—That the low state of religion, both among office-bearers and members, is a cause of deep lamentation; and more especially the extensive prevalence of a cold, formal, and worldly-minded spirit, producing effects very injurious to the interests of vital Godliness. Thirdly,—That a special visitation of the Province shall be made, in order to ascertain the state of religion within the bounds, and to promote its revival.

A plan of visitation with this view having been organised by the Synod, and visitors appointed, the duty of drawing up the details, and of condensing the results into a general report, was intrusted to a special Committee of the members.

The Committee drew up a schedule embracing the following as the special subjects of enquiry, leaving, at the same time, some latitude to the visitors:—Public worship, and occasional meetings of congregations for religious objects—Celebration of ordinances, state of membership and of discipline—Special means of preparation of members for the Lord's supper—State of family religion, particularly as to worship and catechising—Pastoral visits, and visits to the sick—Sabbath Schools, and Bible classes—Prayer and fellowship meetings, public or more private—Hopeful appearances of revival of religion, especially among the young—State of the eldership; mode in which its duties are performed, and particularly where there is not a settled ministry—Interest of the congregation in missionary efforts both at home and abroad.

The visitors were instructed to assemble the people of each congregation, or mission, for public worship, and to address them and the office-bearers on their duties and responsibilities. Then followed the questionnaire exercises, which were all publicly conducted, after due intimation, and the results have been recorded in writing for the use of the Synod.

Following out the Synod's arrangement, the Eastern part of the Presbytery of Hamilton was visited by the Rev. Mr. Somerville, of Glasgow—Deputy from the Free Church of Scotland—Mr. Reid, of Grafton, and Mr. Roger, of Peterborough;

while Dr. Burns, of Toronto, visited some districts in the more Western part of it. The following were surveyed, in regard to their religious condition, and the particulars duly recorded:—Hamilton, Dundas and Ancaster, Saltfleet and Binbrook, Ayr, Pictou, Galt, Guelph, Fergus, Aldboro', Woodstock, London, St. Thomas, Zora, Kelbrid and Mass, Amherstburg, Port Sarina, Chatham, and Owen Sound. All the congregations within the Presbytery of Colbourn were visited by Mr. Somerville, and the state of each particularly entered in the record. Within the Presbytery of Kingston, (since divided into the Presbyteries of Kingston, Brockville and Perth), Mr. Bayne, Dr. Burns, and Mr. Stark, of Dundas, visited—Kingston City, both congregations, Belleville, Tyendinaga, Fredericksburgh, Bath, Newburgh, Brockville, Gananoque, Picton, Prescott, Perth, Bytown, Beckwith, Dilhouse and Sherbrooke, Middleton and Lanark, Ramsay, Osgoode, Bellamy's Mills, South Gower and Spencerville, Edwardsburgh, Demorestville, Oxford and Mountain. In the Presbytery of Toronto there have been visited by Messrs. Roger, of Peterborough, and Reid, of Grafton—the congregation of Knox's Church, Toronto, Streetsville, West Gwillimbury, York Mills, Vaughan and King, Norval and Union, Free Temple and East Chingawacousy, Acton and Nassagaweya, Esquimaux, Oakville and Trafalgar, Markham and Caledon. In the united Presbytery of Montreal and Quebec, the places visited by Messrs. Bayne, of Galt, and Alexander, of Colbourn, were—Gabriel Street congregation, Montreal, Cote Street Free Church, Montreal, and Laclaire, St. Eustache, St. Therese and Quebec. Although the district of Gengarry and Eastern Townships are not mentioned as having been visited, your Committee deem it proper to state that several of the deputies from Scotland have successively visited those districts, under the direction of the Missionary Association connected with the Presbytery of Montreal; and that, in fact, no part of the Province has been reported as in a more hopeful state in regard to religion.

Thus, with a few exceptions, the whole field has been surveyed, with greater or less care, and the results have been minutely entered in records kept for the purpose, and now the property of the Synod. Divine worship and the preaching of the gospel were the regular accompaniments of each visitation; and there cannot be a doubt that the effect of the visitations and accompanying exercises was highly salutary. There are a number of districts where no regular ministers have as yet been settled, and where, of course, the objects of the visitation could not be completely followed out.—Many of such places, however, have actually been visited; and your Committee are of opinion that, in any future visitations, such districts ought never to be omitted. The very circumstance of the want of a regular ministry, renders a visitation more necessary; and the influence of such a visitation on the congregations thus destitute cannot but be encouraging and salutary.

Your Committee have carefully gone over the numerous reports of your visitors, and they would recommend them to be faithfully preserved among the records of Synod, as furnishing useful information that may be turned to good account in any future visitations.

Your Committee have found it impracticable to reduce these voluminous reports into any thing approaching to a tabular form. As to mere statistics, this might have been done; but such a variety of accompanying explanatory notes would have been required, in order to do justice to all parties, that the real character of a statistical table would have been lost. Your Committee have, therefore, attempted nothing more than an examination of each of the reports, taking notes as they went along, and digesting these into something like a report of the state of religion within their bounds. Following out the arrangement of the original programme, but condensing a little more, they would call the attention of the Synod to the observations which have occurred to them, under four heads:—Public Worship, and the means of Grace;—State of Discipline, with suggestions for its improvement;—Prevalent Sin;—and the Revival of Religion.

I.—PUBLIC WORSHIP, AND THE MEANS OF GRACE.

It is pleasant to report that wherever there is established a settled ministry—a regular dispensation of ordinances—and a pious pastorate—there the attendance on public worship is regular and devout. In all the cities and towns there are, in all cases, two meetings for worship on the Sabbath, and generally a week-day service in addition. The forms customary in our Presbyterian church are observed, and the visitors have adverted to no innovations of any moment. In very many of the places visited, the people lamented the want of a regular pastoral inspection; and of their ability and willingness to see, on the gospel not a doubt was entertained. Nevertheless, the desirableness of a regular system of management, as to this matter, pressed itself strongly on the visitors.

In many instances where a settled ministry is enjoyed, the minister is obliged to take charge of two or more congregations, at lesser or greater distances. In some cases there may be four such charges under one pastorate—two of these being supplied every alternate Sabbath. Moreover, there are multitudes of settlements introduced to the notice of the visitors, in a state of entire destitution even of this partial supply. A sermon now and then, and that on a week-day, is all that they receive; and such new settlements as those of Owens' Sound, for instance, have hitherto received ministerial visits, which have resembled those of angels in this, at least, that they were "few and far between." Your visitors strongly recommend a scheme of regular missionary visitation; but this, if not succeeded by the setting up here and there of a fixed ministry, around which evangelistic labourers might successfully rally, and which would prove in each case the nucleus or centre of permanent organization,—would be comparatively inefficient.

Your Committee observe several things, in regard to public worship, which the Synod may think it proper to correct. The abuse of Bibles and Psalm books in the place of worship is one of these, and this applies, in many cases to family worship, where it is kept up more or less regularly—in many instances there being no large family Bible produced at worship; or if the remnants of better times and of holier habits are still to be seen, they are remnants only. The value of the Upper Canada Bible and Tract and Book Society cannot be too highly estimated as channels for circulating the Scriptures, and of approved means of religious instruction, at very moderate prices. The neglect of the culture of church music is another thing that is noticed in these reports, and, in some instances, the seeming reluctance of the congregation to join in this delightful part of the worship of God. In some places—Perth, Dalhousie, Carleton-place, for instance—the improvement in singing is specially noticed; and this is traced partly to skilful training, but chiefly to the appearance of an awakened spirit of late years on the subject of religion.

The custom, in some places, of the people going out and in, during the season of public worship, is a practice very unseemly, and yet it is one which, by a very little attention on the part of office-bearers, might easily be corrected. Your Committee are anxious that every part of public worship should be conducted with great solemnity and calmness; and hence, they notice with disapprobation all unseemly hurry in listening from the House of God—the want of reverent attention during the pronouncing of the blessing—and all movements of any kind during public prayer, or the dispensation of ordinances.

Next to the preaching of the word, your Committee are of opinion that Bible classes—for young men and young women—Sabbath Schools, and Prayer meetings, in districts, or other ways, are among the likeliest means, by the blessed influence of the Spirit, of awakening a concern about sacred things—cherishing and fostering more spiritual views of truth, and advancing the work of God in the land. Adult classes, for persons of both sexes, have, in several instances, been eminently blessed, and the Committee would earnestly recommend them to the serious attention of all ministers and office-bearers. Connected with