

VI. PASTORAL LABORS.

To understand the nature of the work upon which Dr. Keir now entered, we must take a view of the extent of the congregation, the physical state of the country and the religious condition of the people at the time. Not only did his congregation include Princetown, but it embraced in addition, New London, the few families then residing at Cavendish, Bedeque, and the west side of Richmond Bay, including Lots sixteen and fourteen, what now embraces five congregations, and what will soon be six. "I find" said the Dr. "at his jubilee, that the call was subscribed by sixty-four persons, embracing nearly all the heads of families in Princetown Royalty, New London, Bedeque, and the west side of Richmond Bay. Of these sixty-four persons whose names are to the call, only fourteen remain alive unto this day." Yet for ten years Dr. Keir diligently and faithfully discharged all the duties of the pastoral office over this widely scattered field. He preached at Princetown one half of this time, while the other half was divided among the other settlements mentioned. But his labors were not confined to preaching the gospel. He regularly visited all the families of this scattered charge and regularly held diets of examination in every section.

To appreciate fully the toil which this involved, we must remember the position of the congregation and the physical state of the country. A large bay six miles across, separated between the principal sections, requiring either to be crossed in boats, or rendering necessary a circuit of twenty, or to some parts thirty miles, while smaller creeks and rivers divided other sections, and rendered intercourse between them difficult and fatiguing. Besides, there were scarcely any roads worthy of the name. The most of the travelling was along the shore, and much of it had to be performed on foot.—"There was no broad road" says the Rev. R. S. Patterson "upon which you could comfortably drive in your neat carriage. The best mode of travelling, open to your choice, was riding on horseback; and perhaps the roads might be such as not to admit of this, and the journey must be performed on foot. The wintry storm and the cold northern blast must often be encountered, without the defences which our Buffalo and seal fur coverings now afford us. And although the wearied guest received a cordial welcome, yet his accommodations were anything but comfortable. A hard couch, scantily covered, but ill defending him from the cold, was often his lot. But neither difficulty, nor even danger, to which he was sometimes exposed, could deter him from the faithful performance of the duties of his pastor—