

part of the people, considerate forbearance, sympathy, and a real desire to co-operate with the pastor in this important work. Where these are on the one part and on the other—where there are affectionate fidelity and diligence on the part of the minister, and kind sympathy and co-operation on the part of the people, the arduous work of visitation becomes a delightful duty, and may, under the blessing of God, be expected to do good to all concerned—to cheer and warm the heart of the pastor under his arduous toils and responsibilities, and to promote, in a high degree, the interests of personal and family religion among the people.

#### ANNUAL RETURNS OF BAPTISMS, &c.

We lately received a circular from the "Bureau of Agriculture and Statistics," calling attention to the Act 10, and 11 Vic., cap. 14, sec. 16, which requires all clergymen authorised by law to baptize, marry, or perform the funeral service, &c., to keep a registry of baptisms, &c., and forward returns at the end of each year to the Clerk of the Peace, or county, city, or town clerk. We received also from the Clerk of the Peace three blank schedules, headed, severally, list of "births," "marriages," and "deaths." Having no pastoral charge, we had no occasion for any of these schedules. But, we understand, documents of the same kind have been sent to all our ministers; and we observe that, in some Presbyteries, the matter has been taken up. We trust this Session of Parliament will not pass without some change having been made in this vexatious and absurd law. We are aware that our ministers, generally, have not acted in accordance with its requirements—not regarding it as applicable to them, inasmuch as they are not authorized by law to dispense the ordinance of baptism, or perform any funeral service. If it is really intended to apply to all ministers exercising their ministry in the country, it is most absurd and oppressive to make them public Registrars, to record not merely the marriages which they solemnize, (none would object to that,) but also births and deaths, and to do this not only without remuneration, but with a penalty hanging over their heads for neglect. In a statistical point of view, the Act, even if complied with, would be of very little use, as there are many children in some parts of the country who are not baptized at all, and many funerals at which no minister can be present. The Act, as it stands at present, contains other absurdities. For instance, in one clause, it makes certain provisions, in case there shall be no clergyman of any particular persuasion within a *reasonable distance* of a township or settlement. Where specific duties have to be discharged under a heavy penalty, there would require to be a more definite provision than this. We know some ministers who, in their zeal and activity, do not consider twenty miles any unreasonable distance, while others might regard it as not very reasonable to go half a dozen miles.

The whole matter of Registration and of Statistics is of great importance, deserving the attention of every enlightened government. But the present arrangements are perfectly useless. We

trust that every Presbytery, yea every congregation, will petition for the change and amendment of the law. Why should not the Township Clerk be appointed Registrar, with an addition to his present emoluments? Ministers would never object to give in returns of the marriages they solemnize. But it is absurd and vexatious to make them Registrars of births and deaths.

#### PETITION! PETITION! PETITION!

It is earnestly hoped that the Synod's recommendation to Presbyteries, Sessions, and Congregations, as to memorializing Government on the subject of Sabbath Desecration in the Public Departments, may be carried out *immediately*. There is no time for delay, if we really wish the object accomplished. Those not finding time to draw up a longer petition, might adopt some such brief form as the following:—

*To the Honourable the Legislative Assembly, (or the Legislative Council, or to His Excellency, &c., in Council.)*

*The Petition of*

*RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH—*

That your Petitioners feel deeply grieved on account of the continued Sabbath Desecration in the Post Office, on the St. Lawrence Canals; and in connexion with certain of our Railways.

They therefore earnestly implore your Honourable House, (or your Excellency, as the case may be), to adopt such measures as to your wisdom may seem meet for the immediate abolition of this great and growing evil, &c.

Copies of Memorials to be forwarded to the Provincial Secretary for transmission to the Governor General, and to some member of either House belonging to the locality whence the memorials come, if he is known to be favourable—otherwise they may be addressed to the care of "GEORGE BROWN, ESQ., M. P. P.," with "Petition" inscribed on the outside.

The trouble required in the preparation of these memorials is so slight, we feel persuaded, none who have the interests of the question truly at heart, will feel unwilling at once to take it.

ROBERT F. BURNS,

*Convener of Synod's Com. on Sab.*

**MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.**—As Parliament has now assembled, no time should be lost in forwarding petitions for a Prohibitory Liquor Law, as well as for the stoppage of Sabbath mails, and Sabbath trains, &c.

**REV. S. O. DODS, OF MAYBOLE.**—The late papers have brought intelligence of the death of this excellent and highly esteemed minister in the 42nd year of his age, and the 17th of his ministry.

**KNOX'S CHURCH, TORONTO.—PRESENTATION TO DR. BURNS.**—A number of the members and adherents of Knox's Church, lately waited as a deputation on the Rev. Dr. Burns, and, in testimony of esteem and attachment to him as their pastor, presented him with a purse of one hundred and twenty pounds, as an addition to his regular salary.

A memorial to the Synod has also been adopted, expressive of attachment to Dr. Burns, and of a desire for a continuance of the present relation between pastor and people.

**AYR.**—The Rev. D. McRuar was lately presented by the members of his congregation with a handsome and substantial Cutter. We rejoice to hear of the prosperity of the Congregation, and of the attachment existing between Pastor and people.

**SECOND CONGREGATION, TORONTO.**—The members and adherents of this congregation, being still destitute of a fixed Pastor, have united in a cordial and unanimous call to the Rev. Robert Knox of Belfast. We trust they will be successful in obtaining an able and devoted minister.

**PROSPECTS OF PEACE.**—It would appear that Russia is now sincerely desirous of peace, and of having the negotiations speedily concluded.—Lord Clarendon is the English Plenipotentiary. There is a rumour to the effect that the Emperor of Russia and the Emperor of Austria will visit Paris during the conferences.

**KNOX'S CHURCH, OTTAWA.—ANNUAL REPORT.**—We lately received a copy of the Annual Report of the Financial affairs of Knox's Church.—We purposed publishing it either wholly or in part, but have accidentally mislaid it.

We are gratified by observing that notwithstanding the very depressed state of the lumber business, which affects more or less all classes in that part of the country, the revenue of Knox's Church has been very little affected. Indeed there has been an increase in the amount raised for the various missionary schemes of the church.

#### NOTICES OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

**NOT A MINUTE TO SPARE.** By S. C. T. Nelson & Sons: London, Edinburgh, New York and Toronto.

This little volume presents to the readers of it some fragments of thought, suggested by a few casual remarks in a circle of friends. The thoughts here presented are calculated to be most useful to all who will seek to ponder and practise them. The object of the writer is to point out the deception which many practise upon themselves, by thinking and saying that they have "not a minute to spare," and to give some hints for enabling all to have a minute to spare. We subjoin one or two of these practical hints:—

"When you have many duties before you, take in hand but one at a time, and do not suffer your mind to rest upon any but that one. Whilst fretting about the other things, or even thinking of them, the work in hand is sadly retarded, and time is lost. In such cases it will, in general, be found best to commence with those which require the least time and attention. Released from these, the mind will be left more free for the greater: unless, as sometimes occurs, one duty may claim more immediate attention than another. In these things we must be guided partly by circumstances, and partly by the tone of our own minds."

"Accustom yourself, without loss of time and temper, to go from one duty to another, and to allow yourself to be called off, if need be, however intent you may have been on your original plan. Our own happiness, as well as usefulness,