

SELECTIONS FROM SYNOD MINUTES.

REPORT ON SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

To the Reverend the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland.

The Committee on Sabbath Observance beg to report that they forwarded to the several branches of the Legislature, during its last session, petitions setting forth the sacred character of the Sabbath as a Divine Institution, and praying for the abolition of labor on that day in all the Departments of Government, and in all the public works under its control.

Your Committee also, in course of the past year, addressed communications, in compliance with the instructions of last meeting of Synod, to the Directors of the following Railways, viz. the Grand Trunk, the Great Western, the Prescott and Ottawa, the Brockville and Ottawa, and also to the Directors of several of the Steamboat Companies, respectfully reminding them of the great power possessed by them in the providence of God, to contribute by the proper regulation of their business, to the right observance of the Sabbath, and of the obligations resting upon them to employ that power so as not to bring upon themselves, or others the guilt of de-ecrating that day which God, in his wisdom and grace, has authoritatively required all men to keep holy.

The Committee need not remind your Reverend Court of the importance to the best temporal and eternal interests of men, of the Scriptural observance of the Sabbath, feeling assured that the Synod is fully alive to this importance, and desirous also, in faithfulness to the obligations resting upon it as representing an important branch of the Church of Christ in this Province, to discharge the duty incumbent on it in this matter.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

In name and behalf of the Committee,

WM. BAIN,
Clerk.

REPORT OF FRENCH MISSION SCHEME.

To the Reverend the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland.

The Committee whom you have been pleased to charge with the management of your French Mission during the past year, do not require to submit a lengthened report. You will justify them in avoiding as much as possible a repetition of statements made on former occasions, and, remembering that it is the work of one man that constitutes the entire active operations of the Scheme, you will not expect from them a great deal of new matter respecting his labours. They are confident, moreover, that the missionary's words will be more interesting and acceptable than their own, and they therefore in a great measure give place to them. From these it will be seen, that besides professing to be animated by a commendable spirit, he speaks of progress, and is not without a cheerful hope as to the issue of his humble attempts at evangelization. Your Committee have reason to be satisfied with the abundance and faithfulness of his labours, and though he has been tried with sufferings of extraordinary severity,—having been called upon to attend first his wife, a woman of simple but sincere piety, and then three of his children, on their death-bed—he has not allowed himself to be forgetful of his position as an ambassador for Christ, and his devotedness, instead of relaxing, seems to have increased, through the laying on of the Lord's hand in blessed and sanctified trial. He spends the Lord's day in preaching, and every week day, weather permitting, in visiting the people from house to house, confirming those who have made a profession of the Protestant faith, and reasoning with those who have not yet done so. The majority of the people are unable to read, but there are exceptions, and these he supplies with Bibles or New Testaments, and tracts, as the circumstances suggest. Many of them are very poor, not having proper clothing and shoes, and this affects the attendance at his meetings. It would afford your Committee much gratification to be able to assist him in regard to this matter with money or materials, but the amount of the contributions sent them by the congregations of the Church is so small, that they are obliged to practise the most rigid economy, in order to make regular payment of his salary. For this and other objects, chiefly the extension of the Mission, your Committee have been desiring for a larger manifestation of liberality, and though they have been disappointed hitherto, they still urge the duty and wait for better results.

In a review of his labours of date 29th April last, Mr. Baridon says:—

"I would remind you that your field of operations embraces 3 parishes or townships across the Lakes, that is to say, at the extreme north of the counties of Columbia, New York, and Henningsford in Canada. These different territorial divisions extend from the limits of Canada, with a radius of 25 miles from east to west, following the Province Line, and stretching less from north to south, embracing a circle of about 36 miles.

"The Canadians compose about one-half of the population. They have 5 churches served by priests and French Jesuits, who are very active, sparing no pains in overseeing their people, scattered throughout the country. It is among that population more or less attached to the religion of Rome, that I labour in the work which your Society has intrusted to me.

"Our work among that people, I repeat, is not that of party spirit, not that of mere anti-Roman Catholics, having for aim only to make a noise, or to beat down the Catholic in order to uplift the Protestant. Your aim is more noble and more Christian than that. If I have well understood my commission, it is that your aim is to cause to penetrate among these people and at their own homes, the knowledge of salvation as it is taught in the Word of God, that is to say, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that we are saved by grace through faith and not by works." This sweet message is unknown even to the best instructed Roman Catholic. The old man who has passed his life in the schooling of the priests, and the youth who receives his first lessons, are equally plunged in total ignorance, as to the good news of salvation by grace. The word which instructs and which sanctifies, has never reached their ears, and has never rejoiced their hearts by its message of peace. It is, then, among these souls truly unfortunate, spiritually speaking, that we have to work as servants of God. Whilst I have suffered great afflictions during the year, by the loss of my children, I have nevertheless been most fortunate in my labours among these people, as I have had free access to them. Of all the visits I have paid to Catholics, to the number of upwards of 100 families, I have never once been unkindly received. I have been able to read with them the Word of God, to speak to them and to answer peaceably their objections, and even among some of them, to end my visits with prayer, and receive an invitation to return. Such receptions appear to me to be significant, and seem to teach us that where we can enter with the Bible in our hands, there God also is passing by, and has prepared some hearts to receive instruction from His Word.

"The districts embraced in our field have for chief towns or centres, Chazy, Champlain, Perry's Mills, Sciota, Centreville, and Moers. These principal places, with their vicinages, comprehend the greater number of the families who have passed from the Romish Church to that of the Bible. Other families, equally Protestant, are scattered at long distances in the woods, and make, with the first mentioned, a total of 60 families at least, without counting those who are neither Catholics nor Protestants. These last listen, nevertheless, to the word of God, and prefer my visits to those of the priest. It is, then, among this mixture of Protestants, and Catholics, and unbelievers, that I hold from place to place, and by turns, as often as I can, little meetings in which I read to them the Word of God, pray with them, and instruct them in the truths which the Bible teaches. In consequence of their distance from each other, it is not easy to unite them in great numbers at once, but 10, 15, and 20 persons are often thus assembled. They are poor, living mostly from hand to mouth. The children, and often the parents, object that they are neither clothed nor shod in a proper way to come to the meetings. This state of things is an obstacle, and tries the patience of the Missionary. The bad state of the roads in the woods has to be endured, and long journeys have to be undertaken in view of the salvation of souls, and in obedience to the will of God. Go feed my sheep who wander, is a condition which ought to be fulfilled in our work at present, and cannot be dispensed with. The order of the Master to His messengers was, "Go, I send you as sheep among wolves," and this command will be of permanent obligation, so long as there are sinners perishing without God and without hope in the world.

"I have visited several families in the environs of Henningsford, in Canada, and propose returning as soon as I can, after which I will write to you. I have informed you in my monthly reports, that the American Baptist Society, to whom the chapel at Sciota belongs, have again taken possession of it, and support there an Evangelist of their communion. The Wesleyans have also commissioned a preacher to the Canadians. Let us hope that each of them will have for his aim the glory of God, and the salvation of souls.

"Although the priests do all that is in their power to warn the people against me, yet we are gaining some little ground among the Romish population. Much especially among the youth, who go neither to confession nor to mass. The commandments of the Church are unknown to them, and one might consider them rather as Protestants than Catholics. I was a few days ago in a family nominally Roman Catholic, at the mid-day repast. It was a Friday; their dinner was pork and vegetables, and I asked why they ate meat on that day, when their religion forbade it. They answered me from the Bible, "that it is not that which enters the stomach which defiles a man," and that they did not trouble themselves with the priest. The number of those who thus act and speak, is very great among the Catholics of this country.

"I regret that our work in the States, for the satisfaction of those who would have more heart in it if it were in Canada, but for all that it is no less according to the Word of God.

"It is evident that souls are everywhere in the field which is the world, and that everywhere the Gospel ought to be preached. I will visit