

application to his peculiar duties. 2. As to the suppression of sine against the first table of the moral law, and especially against the law of the Sabbath. 3. As to the education of the young. 4. As to the promotion of religion, and especially as to the application of any portion of the public funds for the advancement of religion or in the endowment of the Church.

5. Sense in which certain statements in chap. xx. sec. 4, chap. xxiii. sec. 3, and chap. xxxi. sec. 2, of the Westminster Confession, are understood.

6. Views respecting existing establishments.

7. Relations of the Synods severally to other Churches.

A. GALE, Clerk.

Home Missions.

OWEN'S SOUND SETTLEMENTS.

Report of a Committee of the Presbytery of Hamilton, appointed to visit Sydenham and other parts of the Owen's Sound Settlements, to organize a Congregation there, ordain Elders and dispense ordinances.

On the morning of Tuesday, the 10th February, I left Fergus in company with Mr. Meldrum: we preached at Mr. Patterson's, on the fourth line in Arthur, at 12 o'clock, and again in the evening of the same day at Mr. Chesnut's, beyond the river Maitland; and after advancing a little further, halted for the night. Next morning we were forty miles from Sydenham: there had been a heavy fall of snow during night, and we had not proceeded far when we were told it was impossible for us to reach our destination that day: but having made an appointment to preach at Mr. Smith's, 19 miles from Sydenham, at 2 o'clock, and knowing that it is of the greatest importance for ministers to be punctual, both as a means of saving time to themselves when on a tour of this kind, and of teaching the people to assemble at the proper time, and not be disappointed, and so frustrate the object in view—we pushed forward and arrived at Mr. S's a little after the hour specified, but before the audience assembled. After preaching there and refreshing both ourselves and our horse, we started again in the evening, and by moonlight drove into Sydenham before the inhabitants had retired to rest. We had intimated our intention of being there if possible that evening, the 11th, and holding the following day, Thursday, as a fast, preparatory to the dispensation of the Lord's Supper; or if the state of the roads, or any other cause should prevent our travelling so expeditiously as we wished, of holding the fast on Friday. The leading persons concerned, in all the circumstances judged it better to fix the fast for Friday: we accordingly had Thursday to rest ourselves, call upon some of the people, and see the place.

We walked across the head of the Bay on the ice to the Indian Village, in company with Mr. Telfer, the Government Land Agent in this quarter, a kind, intelligent man, in whose house we were invited to take up our abode while in Sydenham. The Indian village is beautifully situated on the West side of the Bay: it is composed of a number of regular and comfortable looking houses, erected by Government for the accommodation of the Indians; and its appearance is greatly improved in the Christian's eyes by a small neat frame Church, which rears itself conspicuously above the other houses, and almost seems to pronounce a censure upon our countrymen in the other village, who have not yet got any place of worship erected. The Indians here profess Christianity. We entered into several of their houses, and attempted to converse with some of them: we observed a few books in their possession—among others, the Gospel, by John, translated into their own language, and bound together with an English copy of the same. We were told that there is no more of God's word than Genesis, Matthew, and John yet translated into Indian.* We paid a visit to one of those who acts in the capacity of their minister. He speaks English tolerably well, seems grave and shrewd; but acknowledges that he has enjoyed

* From a "brief view of the plans and operations of the British and Foreign Bible Society" for 1815, it would appear that the Pentateuch, the Psalms—Isaiah with Luke and John, are translated into the Mohawk dialect, and only John into the Chippeway.

no regular training for his work. We were anxious to ascertain something as to the effect which his instructions seem to have on his hearers, and the state of religion generally among the Indians professing Christianity; also, of the views of his heathen countrymen regarding the being of a God, a future state, and the necessity of an atonement. In reference to the former, we believe that while they are very regular in their external devotions, raising every evening the hymn of praise, and repairing every sabbath to the house of prayer—the evidence of real conversion to God, as among ourselves, is not so clear or so frequent as is to be desired: and with respect, again, to the latter, we concluded that their belief of their first principles of religion is not so distinct as we are generally led to infer from writers on such subjects.

On Friday, the fast day, Mr. Meldrum drove a distance of twelve miles on the lake shore road, and preached in Gaelic: while I remained in Sydenham and preached in English to those who assembled there. On Saturday we had Gaelic and English service in separate places in the village, at the same time; and after sermon all went into one place, where Elders were to be ordained. The congregation were then asked if there were any objections to any of those who had been nominated to the Eldership, in order that the same might be stated; and none being offered, those persons were called upon. One of them, Mr. Duncan Bell, having been ordained in the mother country, was first admitted to exercise the functions of his office in that congregation. Having then, along with him, constituted a session for the time being, and having received satisfactory answers to the questions contained in our formula, from the others, viz:—Messrs Thomas Lunn, Jas. Ross, Hugh M. Dermid, and George Mackay,—we did, by solemn prayer, set them apart to the Eldership. Some of these Elders, though able to answer in English, understand Gaelic still better. The Elders and congregation were therefore addressed both in English and Gaelic. The service was interesting and solemn in organizing a regular congregation, and planting a Presbyterian Church for the first time in that remote corner of the Colony: in a region only lately reclaimed, or but beginning to be reclaimed from the forest; and till within these few years trodden only by wandering tribes, who knew nothing of the living and true God, or Jesus Christ, whom He has sent to be the Saviour of the world. And we think that our church has cause to congratulate herself on the men who have in this case been selected to hold office in her connection: they are not only apparently men of respectful lity, intelligence, and piety, but have accepted office, we believe, with the view of having their hands strengthened in their endeavors to do good. All of them, without exception, we understand have been in the habit of assembling their neighbors, on the sabbath day, and conducting their devotions. Some of their meetings, we are told, are numerously attended, and at them, all the outward decorum of a regular church is observed. More such persons might be found; and with advantage, in some parts of this extended settlement, might be called to bear office in the church. After the ordination of the Elders, tokens of admission to the Lord's table were distributed to intending communicants.

On Sabbath, the 15th, there was service in the forenoon, both in English and Gaelic, as on the day before, when both places were crowded; particularly the one where Gaelic was preached; which, however, was smaller than the other. The Lord's supper was afterwards dispensed in the larger place, first to communicants who were addressed in English, and then to those who were addressed in Gaelic: and the service of the day was concluded in the former language. About fifty persons communicated; one or two of these coming all the way from St. Vincent, a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles, because they had never enjoyed a similar opportunity since their settlement there, many years ago: indeed, on the Saturday evening we conversed with and resolved to admit to the Lord's table two men, heads of families from that place, who had never partaken of this ordinance, but who were apparently anxious on the subject, who had travelled so far that the opportunity might not pass unimproved, and who, we un-

* The Methodists have had a preacher stationed in Sydenham for some time.

derstood, were in the practice of holding fellowship meetings with a few of their neighbors. The general attendance at Sydenham on the Sabbath day was, considering the circumstances, very large—three or four times larger than any meetings ever held there before; and was by some computed at more than two hundred. This statement of particulars may perhaps disappoint the expectations of some; but it is to be taken into consideration with regard to the number of communicants, that the population of the highlands of Scotland from which many of the settlers are drawn, have a characteristic hesitation about approaching this ordinance, and many additional members of the church live in this district, who, from age and want of conveyances could not be present; and with regard to others, that a snow-storm had come on during the previous night and threatened to continue during the day, which might have prevented many coming from a distance; and if we add to this the peculiar situation of Sydenham, with the circumstances of the settlement generally, to which I shall afterwards allude more particularly,—the attendance being numerically smaller than some might expect, may be accounted for; and its amount at any one place at any time will not furnish an index of the number of Presbyterians in this quarter, or of the desire for ordinances.

On Monday I preached in Sydenham at 10 o'clock, A.M., and Mr. Meldrum proceeded four miles on the way homewards, and preached in Gaelic at the same time. After service I overtook him, and we travelled together to Mr. Smith's, near the twenty mile swamp, where he preached in the evening, according to appointment, first in Gaelic and then in English. Next day we advanced a few miles further and preached again—Mr. M. in Gaelic, at one McKechnies', and I in English at McCormick's. We then drove on beyond the fifty mile Swamp to Mr. Waw's, where we had appointed a meeting, but the hour being late and the sky dark, as well as the population thin in that neighborhood, few persons assembled, and therefore, instead of a regular sermon, we satisfied ourselves with reading a portion of scripture, making a few remarks, and praying.

On Wednesday Mr. M. preached in Gaelic at Mr. Lamond's, on the fourth line in Arthur, and I in English at Mr. Gunn's, on the seventh line: and we returned to Fergus that night—on the whole we were pleased that we had had this work assigned us by the Presbytery, and thankful that we were brought back from our journey in perfect safety. We had been away from this place nine days; and during that period had preached eighteen times, besides delivering addresses connected with the ordination of Elders, and the dispensation of the sacraments. We had scattered the good seed on ten different localities, and had in general what we regarded in the circumstances of the settlement, large as well as attentive audiences. In particular, we were pleased and astonished at the attendance upon the Gaelic services, amounting in some instances to seventy persons; and perhaps in Sydenham on the Sabbath day to 100,—and never below fifty. Taking together all those who waited upon our ministrations during our tour, without including the same individuals twice, the number amounted surely to many hundreds, and all warmly attached to our church.

Besides performing the immediate duty of preaching the word, &c., we did not fail on all occasions to urge upon the people the necessity of doing something energetically for themselves, and recommended them to embrace the favourable opportunity afforded by our Home Mission Scheme. In the Northern Division of the settlement we think there is a general desire and intention of making an effort; indeed there has been a movement made in the right direction, and it would appear that the prospect of the people there being able to support a minister among them, is in their opinion not very far distant. A collection was made on the Sabbath in Sydenham while we were there, in behalf of the Home Mission Fund, which amounted to about eighteen dollars; and a public collection was made at one of the Highland settlements on the Garrafraxa road on the Tuesday following, where there was service by Mr. Meldrum. But in the Southern Division, although we were several times, in name of our church, attacked for neglect of her people in these parts, I fear there is great apathy among the settlers, and want of a sense of their duty to provide according to their ability for