

sonary at Woodstock, Ingersol, St. Andrews, and other stations in the West, subject to the arrangement of the Home Mission Committee.

The next ordinary meeting was arranged to take place at Hamilton, at Wesleyan Knox's Church there, on the second Wednesday of January, 1847, at 12 o'clock, noon, when the Presbytery was closed with the Apostolic benediction.

UNION OF PRESBYTERIANS IN CANADA.

Hamilton, Nov. 17, 1846.

The following is the Minute of the proceedings at the late meeting of the Committees of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, and of the Missionary Synod of the Secession Church. The Conference was conducted in the best spirit on both sides, and an earnest desire for union, if attainable without the sacrifice of principle, was manifested.

The Committees of the Synod met, Dr. Burns was chosen Chairman, and the meeting was conducted by prayer. There were present of the Presbyterian Synod of Canada, Rev. Dr. Burns, Rev. A. Gale, with Mr. W. McMillan, Elder; and of the Missionary Synod, Revs. Messrs. W. Proudfoot, Thomas Christie, James Roy, and R. H. Thornton; and R. Christie, Elder.

Rev. W. Proudfoot was chosen Clerk, and read the Minutes of the former meetings.

The Rev. Mr. Gale, for the Committee of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Mr. Proudfoot, on the part of the Missionary Synod, read statements of opinion—as agreed upon at last meeting of the Committees to be submitted.

It was moved by Mr. Gale, seconded by Mr. Proudfoot, that the respective committees exchange papers, and that at some future time, when remarks by both parties be exchanged, and that at an early day thereafter, said Committees meet for further Conference, it being understood that the same remarks be exchanged in sufficient time previously to said meeting, to allow necessary conversation to each Committee. The meeting was closed with prayer.

ROBERT BURNS,
Chairman.

W. PROUDFOOT,
Clerk of Committee.

Home Missions.

VISIT TO THE WEST, BY DR. BURNS.

(To the Editor of the Record.)

MY DEAR SIR.—You have requested of me some account of my visit to the West in October last. Of my first visit to London, in August last year, some notices were inserted in your October number of the same year. To these I shall not at present advert; but before proceeding with my present narrative, permit me to advert to a district of the West, (though nearer Hamilton,) in which I attach great importance, and to which I had an opportunity of paying a visit last summer. I allude to the stations on the Grand River, and in the Talbot District. These are properly two distinct fields, and may prefer a peculiar claim on our regard. No one rejoiced more than I did in the settlement at Caledonia and Ancaster Co. Con. of my old and much esteemed friend, Dr. Ferrier, my visit to whom and his excellent family was very refreshing. If God shall give him health and strength, his labours on the Grand River will be felt as far as Dunnville; but the field is far too large for one man, even with all the help which the labours of our worthy missionary, Mr. Bellane, may afford. The friends at Dunnville, though I had it not in my power to visit them, are warmly interested in the cause of our church, and are earnestly thirsting for a regular supply of the waters of life. The physical features of this district are becoming every year more and more favourable to health, and I would strongly recommend this station to the Presbytery of the bounds,

as one of the most accessible, and at the same time the most promising. Were an active and truly zealous missionary stationed there, the hands of Dr. Ferrier would be greatly strengthened, and a healthful spiritual influence would be diffused over a part of the land where Satan has his seat, more particularly in the forms of profane infidelity, Sabbath transgression, swearing, and gross intemperance, the feeder of all the rest.

I say little of my interesting ride on the Grand River, from Brantford down to Caledonia. The scenery for more than 20 miles of the winding Ouse most beautiful—the morale of the scene tenderly affecting. There on the bank of the river stands the great "Council-House" of the "Six Nations;" and here and there present themselves to the view of the passenger, small groups of red men, women, and children; the remnants of the old occupants of the soil, and still the possessors of many thousands of acres of the finest land in the Province. The thought which pressed itself on my mind in looking at them was,—Has the Presbyterian Church done any thing for the improvement and christianization of the aborigines of this land? I verily believe that had we done—I mean the British Presbyterian churches—all that we could and should have done for our settlers, a direct and also reflex influence for good would have gone forth upon the natives.

In the Talbot or Port Dover District, to which the Plank Road from Hamilton of 35 miles makes the daily access very easy, I spent one Sabbath and two days of the following week. The Sabbath's services were diffused over a real equilateral triangle—each side about seven or eight miles in length—and each station of easy approach. At Victoria, the old capital of the district—of ancient settlement—a beautiful village; we were favoured with the use of the Baptist church in the forenoon. At Simcoe, the present chief town of the district, we had the use of the Independent chapel in the afternoon; and at Port Dover we met in a school-house at six in the evening. On each of these occasions we had tolerably fair congregations. The evening one was lessened by a painful event, which had taken place just an hour or so before I came to the village of Port Dover. Five young men, from 15 to 20 years of age, had been plying a canoe on a Mill Dam in the neighbourhood, when the canoe upset and four were drowned! Death had thus fearfully "entered into the windows" of three families of the place, and "weeping, lamentation, and woe," were thus spreading themselves over the peaceful village at the moment of our entrance. We endeavoured to improve the sad event in the evening service; and the whole of Monday, till four in the afternoon, was spent in visiting the abodes of sorrow. Never have I seen more of human character in such a short compass as on that day—never had I a more palpable proof of the difference which the grace of God causes betwixt the sorrow of the world, and the deep but holy and profitable sighs of the children of the kingdom—never did I see more the value of a pious resident missionary, both in the way of checking youthful folly, and of pouring the "excellent oil" into the wounds of the Learnt. On Monday afternoon I went to Vittoria, and preached a second time in a school-house, and held some intercourse with our friends in the village, who stand greatly in need of judicious direction. On Tuesday, at 12, I preached at Normandale, three miles south-west, and on the margin of Lake Erie. The termination of a lonely valley is here the seat of one of the most extensive iron works in the Province, and the "Van Norman Stoves" have a high reputation. From the worthy proprietor, Mr. Van Norman, I experienced much kindness, and he pressed much on my attention the importance of a resident missionary in the District of Vittoria, thus embracing four stations, all easily accessible. How interesting to see, on the ringing of the "Furnace Bell," a goodly company of perhaps 30 stalwart iron furnace men, in working dress, and with their wives and families, meet in the adjoining school-house to hear the message of salvation. Their looks indicated intelligence and satisfaction. Some of them had come lately from Lanarkshire, in circumstances rather limited—now they are proprietors of the soil, and in comfortable circumstances. Every where in Canada

I meet with Scotsmen—they are the best of all settlers. Many of them have seen or heard me before; and their hearty shake of the hand, and their hearty "hoor's a' re' yeer," is, in a distant land, very cheering. The memory of some is at times provokingly tenacious; for on one occasion I was thanked for a new and modern improved edition of a discourse which, said the repeater, "I heard from you at Strathroy, on a week-day, in autumn, 1832." Among other "memorabilia" thus had escaped me; but by a short appeal to the faculty called "the Association of Ideas," I found my friend perfectly correct.

It was not from my own Presbyterian friends only, such as Mr. Van Norman, or Mr. Clark of Simcoe, or Colonel McCall, or Mr. Riddell of Port Dover, I received kindness; Mr. Hewitt in Vittoria, and the family of a lady in the neighbourhood, both of the Baptist persuasion, were unwearied in their attentions. The number of Presbyterians, or of Old Country people, in this district, is not very large; and yet this station, hitherto much neglected, would richly reward skilful cultivation.

Resuming my course to the Westward, it was with feelings of regret I found that the Free Church of Canada had not lifted its standard in the town of Brantford, which is fast increasing in importance and in wickedness. There is a small body of Scots Presbyterians here under the inspection of Mr. Roy, a pious Minister of the United Secession Synod, but the cause does not seem to prosper very much. Were there a resident Minister in the place, whether of the one body or of the other, something more effective might be accomplished. My impression is, that it is just in such young and rising towns as Brantford that the energy and zeal of Christian Churches should show themselves. The Presbyterian Churches of Britain have neglected many fine opportunities of planting the gospel in rising settlements by not keeping their eye set from the first on infant movements and trying to make prospective provisions for coming emergencies. The slow and tardy cautiousness of Scots Presbyterians has in this respect presented a strange contrast to the *perfidium ingenium Scotorum* in other things. We have always wanted to see what other bodies would do before we'd do anything. Thus a sound, and vigorous, and healthy Presbyterianism has failed to be the pioneer in the bush. It has lagged behind, and yielded the palm to other sections of the Christian Church who take advantage (very laudably) of her supineness, and then laugh at her when she begins to rub her eyes and draw her curtain aside. I visited, in August last, Owen's Sound—a splendid settlement where the "City of Sydenham" is in embryo, rising amid the thickest forests with fairest prospects—where of 1200 settlers, 700 are Presbyterians, wealthy and intelligent, and to whose interesting formation processes, the Presbyterian Churches have given too little attention.

One main object of my visit to the West was to preside at the dispensation of the Lord's Supper at Woodstock. The Presbyterian Church here is in a somewhat unfinished state, but it is capable of seating from 4 to 500 hearers. It was erected some years ago on Government ground, adjoining the Court House. The rules have not yet been made out, but there is reason to hope that as the great majority of the people belong to the same Church, the deed will be ultimately granted in their name. The congregation consists of two classes; the English class residing mostly in the town, and the Gaelic class, perhaps the largest in point of numbers, and residing mostly in the District around. On the Communion season there are congregated, besides the ordinary congregation, not a few from Zorra, Nissouri, Moss, and the other Townships, contiguous to Woodstock, and where Highland settlers abound. These children of the hills and glens of Caledonia retain much of the character they bear in the father-land. In the view of the holy ordinance of the Supper to be dispensed on the first Sabbath of October, they began to collect in or around Woodstock by the middle of the month, and there was from Wednesday unto Sabbath, a daily service in English and Gaelic; sermons, prayer-meetings, or