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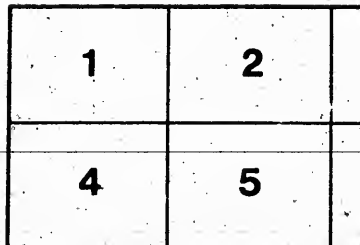
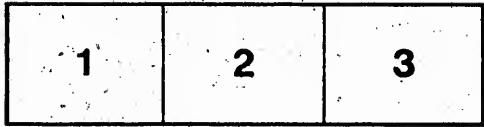
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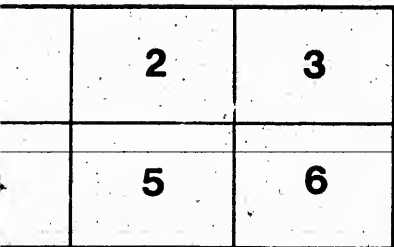
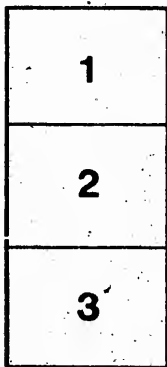
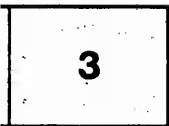
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DRAUGHTS

OF

SCHEMES

FOR

ITINERARY PREACHING.

---

BY JOHN BRUCE,

RULING ELDER OF SAINT PAUL'S CHURCH, MONTREAL.

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Read in the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Canada,

HOLDEN AT KINGSTON, 1ST-6TH JULY,

AND ORDERED TO BE PRINTED AND CIRCULATED AMONG  
THE PRESBYTERIES OF THE SAID CHURCH.

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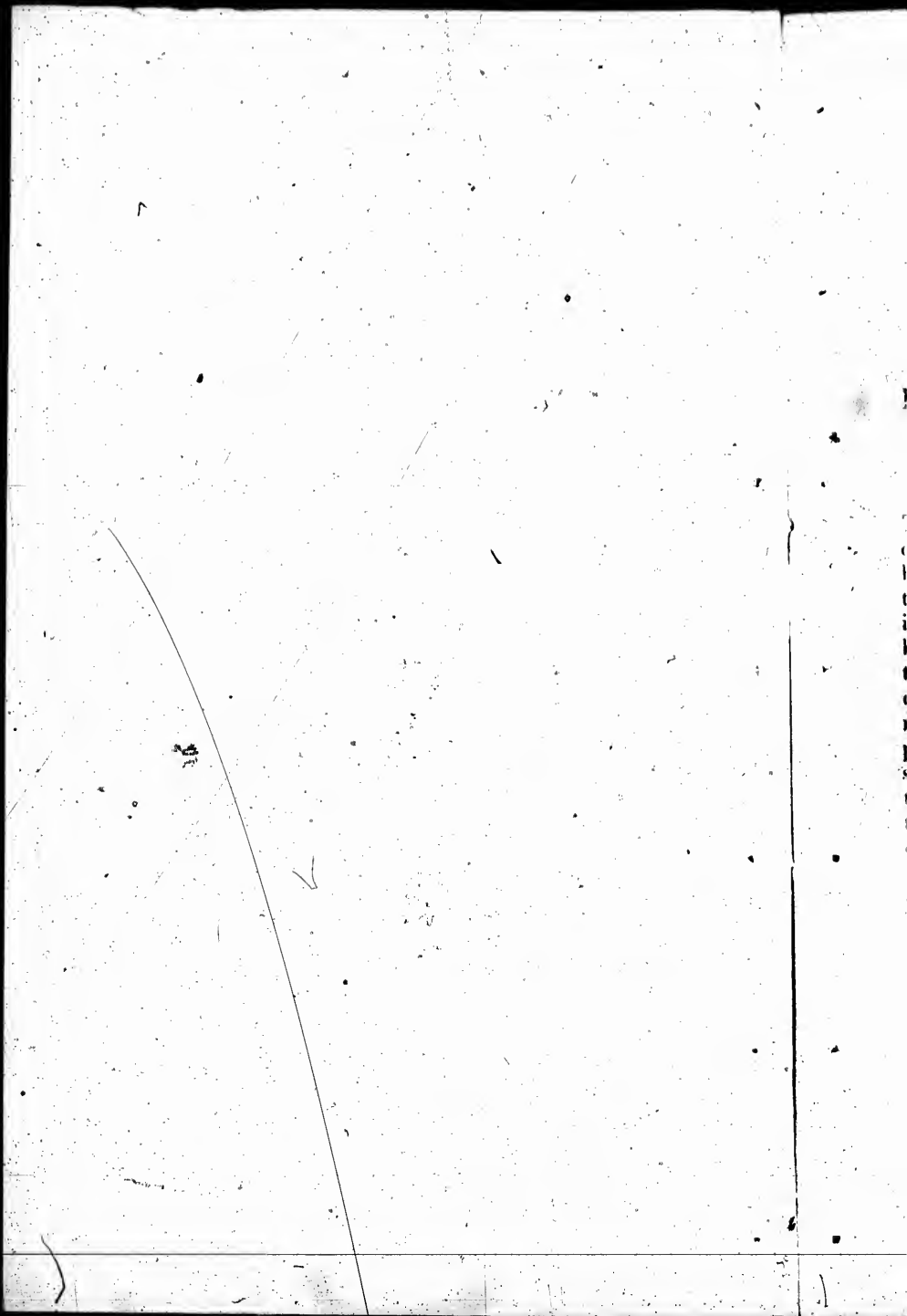
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1842.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
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## DRAUGHTS OF SCHEMES

FOR

### ITINERARY PREACHING.

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THE want of missionaries, for supplying the religious destitution of this colony, by itinerary preaching, has long been much felt, and, so far as can be foreseen, will continue to be felt more or less for some years to come; yet, in the absence of missionary agency, I am of opinion, that by the judicious use of the means which we possess, through some well digested plan, much good might be done and advantage gained, by the itinerary preaching of ministers. The disproportion between our Presbyterian population and ministers, is less than has been generally supposed, and cannot, therefore, be the principal cause of the existing spiritual destitution. On the supposition that the Presbyterian population in Canada is about one hundred thousand, and deducting, for children, one-third, we have sixty-six thousand one hundred and sixty-six, which divided by seventy, (the number of ministers on the Synod Roll,) gives seven hundred and forty for each minister. From this it is evident that their destitution is to be attributed principally to their very scattered localities, which obstacle is rendered more formidable by the want or bad state of roads: but surely this difficulty is surmountable,—it is not one which will not yield to means judiciously employed. Besides, the natural tendency and onward movement of every thing, in a country settling by emigration, especially from countries already civilized and enlightened, must give a decreasing tendency to such an



obstacle. This affords, no doubt, considerable encouragement to missionary efforts.

That our clergy labour with much zeal and constancy, admits of no doubt; but their labours appear to me to have too little of the missionary character for the scattered state of the inhabitants; and could any plan be devised for extending their services to the many hitherto destitute places throughout the Province, much good would, no doubt, result from it: preaching stations would be established, at which might be brought together the growing elements of future congregations. The zeal of the people at each of these would, on seeing and experiencing the exertions of our ministers, be stimulated to give countenance and support to their efforts: attachment to the Presbyterian form of church government and doctrine, would be preserved, a spirit of unity and co-operative zeal would be diffused and cherished throughout the whole Presbyterian population, and that ignorance, which is the natural result of religious destitution, would receive an effectual check.

Whatever plan might be adopted for carrying on systematic itinerary preaching, certain preparatory steps would have to be taken, through our Presbyteries. Each Presbytery would require to issue circulars for general distribution within its bounds, for information respecting religious destitution, and what parts of the country would be most suitable and advantageous for preaching stations; or a travelling agent might be employed for this purpose. The information obtained through these circulars would enable the different Presbyteries to form and mature their plans, and adopt measures for carrying them into effect.

Another important, preparatory step would be, the formation of funds for defraying travelling expenses. Though, in many instances, these, perhaps, might be paid by those who would enjoy the advantages of missionary labours; yet it would be wise not to be altogether dependent on their aid.

The following are hasty draughts of *four different plans* which I would recommend.

I shall explain these plans on the supposition that the average number of preaching stations within the limits of each Presbytery, would be fifteen, that being the average number of ministers in each Presbytery.

FIRST PLAN

The first plan proposes the adoption of the rotary principle, in supplying the supposed stations with divine service, and that each station shall have service every second week, during *nine months*, it being difficult, for nearly three months, to visit many; from bad roads, or the state of the weather. The number of services at each station during that time would be about eighteen: of these, let nine be given on week days, and nine on sabbath days. By this rotation every minister would be absent from his congregation nine sabbaths in fifty-two. If twelve were given on week days and six on the sabbath, it would reduce his absence to six in the course of the year. But, by accommodation services, his congregation might be supplied on the greater number of the nine or six sabbaths: for example, in towns where more than *one* congregation exists, the rotation of itinerary duties might be so managed that only one minister, on the same sabbath, would be absent from his flock. In his absence the minister of the neighbouring congregation might divide the services of the sabbath between both congregations. Such arrangements would not leave any congregations to be without divine service but *few sabbaths* in the course of the year; and, surely, no congregation would object to be without service for a very *few sabbaths*, that their destitute brethren might have the gospel preached unto them a *few sabbaths* in fifty-two. This plan would require that the rotation of the duties of the several clergymen, and the successive days of preaching at each station, should be so regulated and timed, that each would be absent at certain, regular intervals of time, that no congregation might be without service, on the sabbath, oftener than once in five or six weeks, during the months that itinerary preaching would be practicable. For this purpose, it should be required of each Presbytery to draw up tables annually, exhibiting, in regular rotation, the days on which service would be performed at each station, and associating with each day in the table the name of the individual minister by whom the service would be conducted; and, to prevent

neglect, some individual at each station should be supplied with a copy of this table, with an order to give due notice to each minister of his turn at his station. Each minister being also furnished with a copy, would be a further check on neglect. And should any circumstance prevent a minister from taking his turn, he, receiving due notice from the station, (should he have forgot to consult his table,) would be able to supply his place by another, or by timely notice prevent disappointment or inconvenience at any particular station.

By this, or some similar plan, ninety stations, in both divisions of the Province, could be supplied with spiritual instructions, every second week, during, at-least, nine months of the year. And to follow up those instructions, catechists, or other religious instructors, properly qualified, might be most usefully employed at those stations and in their surrounding neighbourhood, in superintending and conducting sabbath schools, instructing Bible classes, holding prayer and other religious meetings, and stirring up heads of families to religious duties: but all to be under the direction and superintendance of the Presbytery.

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## SECOND PLAN.

By this plan the different stations within the bounds of each Presbytery might be divided into what might be denominated contiguous and remote stations. Contiguous stations might be supplied in rotation by the ministers of their neighbourhood. Remote stations—generally, by all the ministers of the Presbytery, aided by missionaries, when their services could be obtained. Let this be explained by selecting a particular town and district of the country. Around Montreal is a number of places in which considerable audiences might be collected, and which, by watchful care, would form the nuclei of future congregations. Let these, as already recommended, be supplied by the ministers in Montreal, or the others in the neighbourhood. In the district of Chateauguay, there might be several preaching stations. These could be

more conveniently supplied by ministers in that district. By adopting this plan, contiguous stations would have an occasional service almost every month in the year. Remote stations, except where missionaries were provided, could have service only at long intervals. The working part of this plan would require to be drawn up with considerable care, in order to equalize, the services as much as possible among all the stations and to prevent the too frequent absence of any minister from his own congregation.

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### THIRD PLAN.

This plan proposes that every minister would have his own station, and selected, with reference, as much as possible, to his convenience. The people at each of these stations might be considered, as forming *part* of his spiritual charge, and as such, be made a constituted a body—having a session—and the ordinance of the Supper regularly administered to them, when that could be conveniently done, and when not, they might communicate with his congregation. A chatechist, at each station, under the direction of the Minister and Session of the station, would be of considerable service. See first plan.

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### FOURTH PLAN.

The fourth and last plan which I would recommend, proposes the application of the same principle differently from those of the preceding schemes.—It proposes that each minister should itinerate in regular monthly succession: that the arrangements of his Presbytery shall be such as to have the ground of his itineracy marked out for his month: that during his absence from his own congregation, the Presbytery shall cause his church to be supplied as often as possible: that his missionary duties return not oftener than once in twelve months; that the whole missionary labours of the Presbytery be, as much as possible, equalized

among the different stations ; that the rotations of each minister, and the seasons of his communion, will be so timed as not to interfere with each other ; that the annual turns of the several members of each Presbytery, will be so changed, every year, that none will be called from his congregation, on the same month each year ; that, with respect to the weather, and state of the roads, the rotation will be so regulated that each will *only in turn* be exposed to the inclemency of the weather, &c. ; that each will be at liberty to appoint a substitute, or make an interchange of turn ; and that each minister shall be required to keep a record of his proceedings, for the information of his Presbytery.

Other plans might be brought before the *Synod*, but it is hoped that these are sufficient to afford some guidance to the *Court* in selecting what may be best adapted for accomplishing the desired end. But whatever scheme be adopted, the important results of systematic itinerary preaching must appear evident. Unity of design, and co-operation, in this, as well as in every thing else, must produce unity of effect. A systematic co-operation in the cause of Christ, must be one of the most effectual modes of kindling zeal, encouraging and urging on perseverance, fostering working habits, and generating schemes for the promotion of the cause of truth. None of the plans recommended interferes with missionary operations, strictly so called. Beyond the sphere proposed exists a field of sufficient extent for them—indeed, having two such spheres of labour gives advantages. The operations of the one would help on the other; the itinerating pastor would imbibe more of the missionary spirit—the missionary would be more stimulated and encouraged in his work—the parts of the country forming the different fields of operation would be so traversed by them that the actual state of the people would be better known, and their prejudices, and the different features of their moral character so well studied, and so well ascertained, that both missionary and pastor, taking advantage of this, would be better prepared for their labour.

# PLAN

FOR

## CONDUCTING MISSIONS BY SUPERINTENDENTS

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This scheme was not submitted to the Synod; but, as it offers many advantages, in supplying the religious destitution of the colony, the writer has taken the liberty of adding it to his other plans, that attention may be more generally directed to the subject—hoping to see, very soon, a system formed for evangelizing our long neglected Presbyterian brethren, *worthy of our church.*

Under existing circumstances, I should consider it prudent to divide the whole field of destitution into three divisions. The first would include our large towns, whose spiritual wants have not been sufficiently provided for. The second would comprehend those parts of the country proposed to be supplied by the foregoing plans. The remainder of the field would form the third division, and to which this plan has reference. The first would be a proper sphere for town missions: the last would take in all those parts of the country which could not be conveniently supplied with divine service by our clergy. Our missionary ground might be divided into districts, corresponding, as much as possible, with the bounds of the different Presbyteries. Let each district have its own chief missionary, (except when the extent of the district, or its great amount of destitution, would require more,) under whose direction all missionary operations, within his own bounds, might be conducted.

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### DUTIES OF SUPERINTENDENTS.

The work and different duties of superintendents would be the dividing, and sub-dividing of those parts of the country within their bounds, into sections or localities for

missionaries, exhorters, catechists, &c.—selecting preaching stations—establishing sunday schools—forming religious classes for the young—administering church ordinances and directing and regulating the whole mission within their bounds. Preaching would form another part of their duties: this they would be required to do wherever audiences could be collected; and in those parts of their districts, where the people live in too scattered a state, opportunities should be embraced to preach from house to house, stirring up, especially heads of families, to read the scriptures, practice family worship, and regularly to instruct their households. It should also be required of them, not only to visit, preach, appoint, direct, and prescribe duties, but also to examine the life, diligence, and behaviour of all under their supervision, and regularly to report to the Presbyteries of their own labours and those of others, under their direction. The religious training of youth ought to be a particular part of their work; and no opportunities should be missed to encourage and stimulate secular instruction. The time of their remaining in any particular part or parts of their jurisdiction, should have especial reference to the character of the destitution of such part or parts—the exposure of the settlers under their charge to the contaminating influence or example of the surrounding population—or any other cause requiring consideration.

#### ADVANTAGES OF MISSIONARY OVERSEERS.

To Presbyteries, they might be of much service in gaining support to the mission. Through them, much valuable, statistical information could be obtained, and which would be of great service in regulating or directing missionary operations. By their agency, the labour of Presbyteries would be concentrated, and very much lessened. The work, therefore, so far as that would have reference to them, *ought to be better done*. But the greatest advantage of such an agency would be, the presence, on every part of the field of labour, of an individual of talent, experience, and tact, to manage, regulate, and direct all missionary work—of sufficient sagacity to

trace those trains of exciting circumstances, which are the causes of that lamentable depravity and ignorance, that have been growing and extending their influences for so long a period; and to apply the proper means for opposing their influence and destroying their effects. It offers other advantages. The under missionary, teacher, or exhorter would require counsel, and much encouragement, with respect both to himself and those under his care: the smoking flax would require to be gently fanned, the bruised reed tenderly handled, and the openly profane prudently dealt with. In *these* respects their services would be most valuable. The communities or localities in which missionaries might be stationed, would have the further advantage of their preachers, exhorters, &c. being seldom called from their spheres of labour. The work of evangelizing would thus be carried on with less interruption, and with a greater increase of effect. And it admits of no doubt, that the good to a scattered population, in having the gospel brought to their homes, however secluded or remote, by men of fit qualifications, traversing the country in every direction, would be greater, and effected in such way as would exactly suit their circumstances and situation.

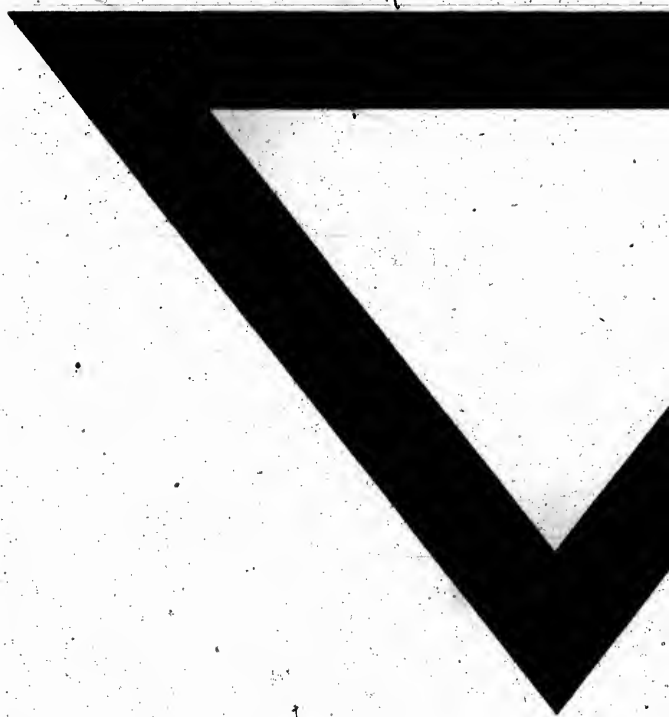
Other advantages might be stated, but it is hoped these are sufficient to shew that it merits *some consideration*, and may be of service in digesting a general scheme suitable to the state of the country and the character of our destitution.

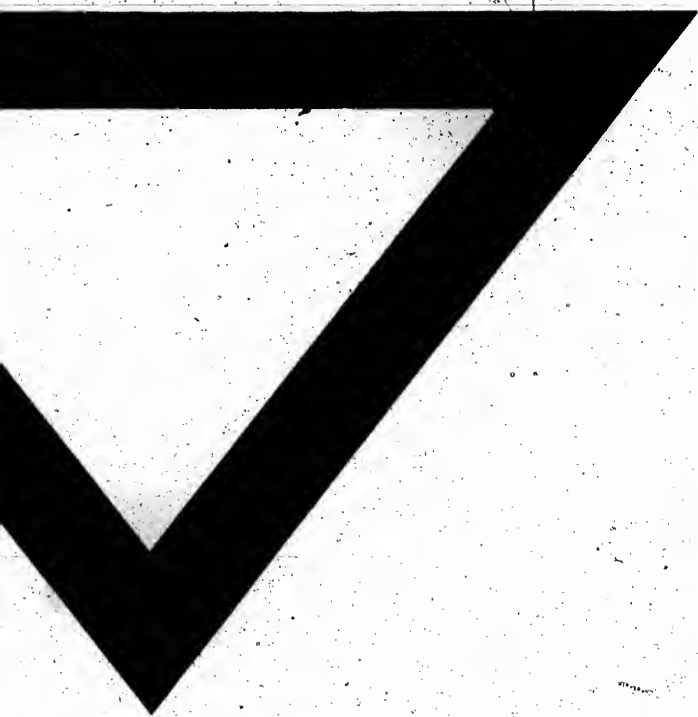
Whatever plan be adopted, it ought to be one that would take in *all* the destitution of our Presbyterian population—draw forth and effectually exercise the missionary spirit, zeal, and charity of our churches—unite them more closely within a system of dependent co-operation—and capable of application to the growing wants of a growing colony.

N. B. Want of room prevents me from giving an outline of my second plan for missions, in which I have proposed that each Presbytery should have a distinct field within its own bounds, and be divided into different committees for conducting and superintending missions. Each Presbytery is supposed to form a kind of sub-committee



to the Synod, to which an annual report would be made by the different Presbyteries, a condensed outline of which would by them be published. The committees proposed are, three,—a committee of finance, a superintending, and a prudential committee. The first would have the sole management of money matters, and the correspondence, local and foreign, which these would require; the second the immediate conducting of missionaries, catechists, &c.; and the third would have to provide places for assembling people to hear service at the different preaching stations, ascertain what parts of the country should be made stations, &c.











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