

MINUTES

OF THE

United Presbytery

OF

Upper Canada,

AT THEIR MEETING IN SOUTH COWER,

JAN. 26, 1831,

AND CONTINUED BY ADJOURNMENT TILL

THURSDAY EVENING, THE

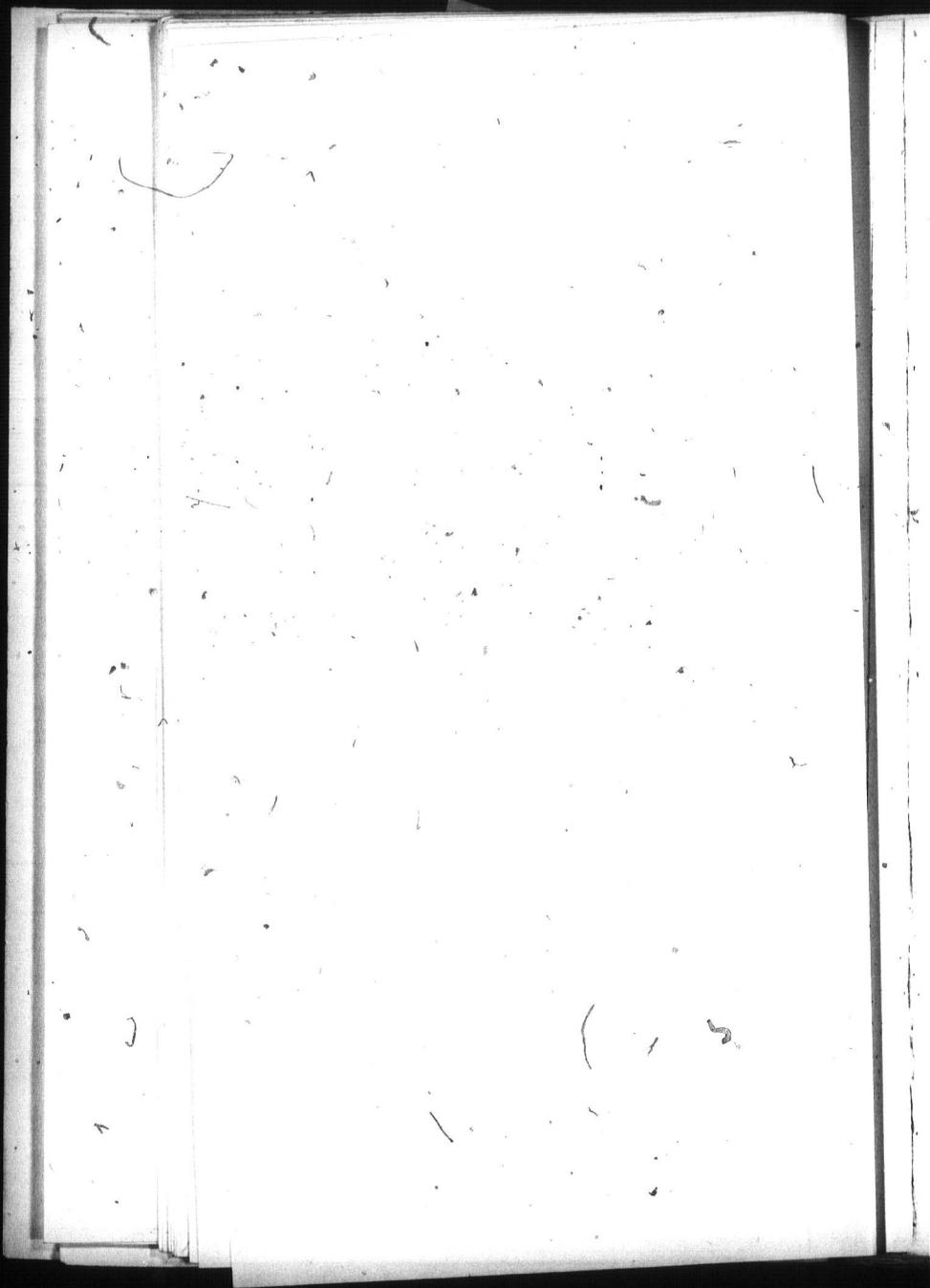
27<sup>th</sup> JAN. 1831.



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1831.



## MINUTES

Of the UNITED PRESBYTERY OF UPPER CANADA, at their meeting in South Gower, Jan. 26, 1831, and continued by adjournment till Thursday evening the 27th Jan., 1831.

*Presbytery Church,  
South Gower, Jan. 26, 1831.*

The United Presbytery met, according to adjournment, and after sermon by the Rev. W. Bell, was constituted by prayer, by the Rev. Robert McDowall, moderator. The roll was called and names marked. Members present:

### MINISTERS.

Robert McDowall,  
William Smart,  
William Bell,  
Robert Boyd,  
George Buchanan,  
Robert Lyle.

### ELDERS.

Phineas Peiton,  
John Dickey.

After the minutes of the last meeting were read, a letter from the Rev. James Harris was read requesting an occasional supply of preaching. Upon motion it was

Resolved, that the Clerk write to the Rev. Mr. Harris and Session, expressing the views of the Presbytery upon the subject.

A very interesting and important report from the Missionary of the Presbytery, the Rev. A. Bell, was read: on motion, it was

Resolved, that the Presbytery feel gratified with the report of their missionary for his indefatigable exertions in promoting the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and for the important information contained in said report, and that the same be inserted on the minutes.

REPORT OF A MISSIONARY TOUR IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE PROVINCE.  
*To the United Presbytery of Upper Canada.*

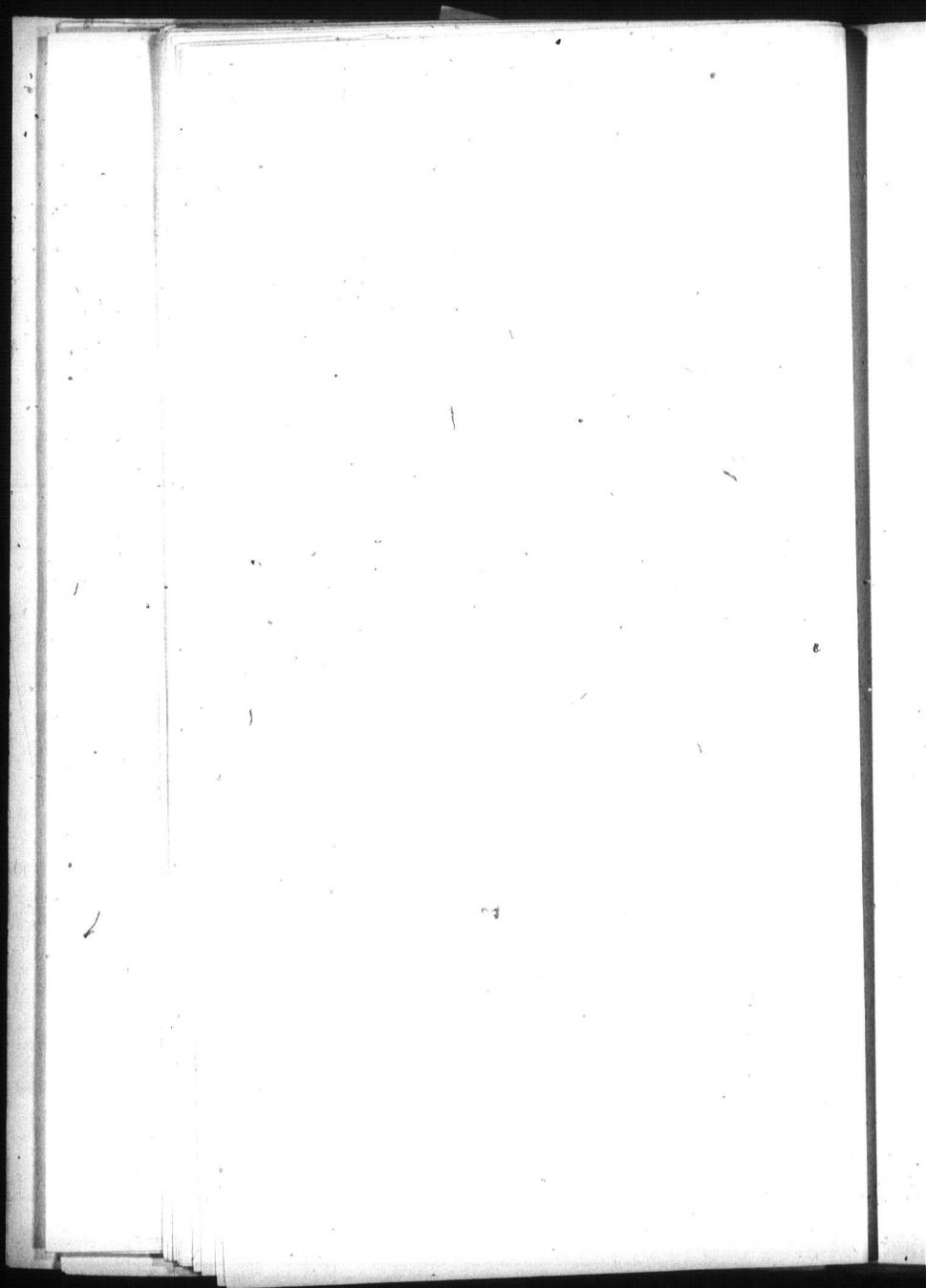
Streetsville, Toronto, 17th January, 1831.

### REVEREND FATHERS AND BROTHERS:

Being unable to attend the ensuing meeting of Presbytery, I send you, by letter, the following report of the missionary tour, which, agreeably to your appointment, I made through the western part of the Province.

I left home on Wednesday, the 22d of September last, and proceeded to the Presbyterian settlement in the north west corner of the township of Eramosa. After having visited several of the families, I preached, on Saturday the 25th, to a considerably large congregation. After sermon, I had some consultation with the heads of families, and was informed that there were about 22 families of Presbyterians in that settlement—that about a third more would assist in supporting a minister—and that, during the summer before, after they were visited by our missionary, they had opened a subscription, and found that they could raise between 60 and 70 dollars, which they will give, annually, towards supporting a minister, in connection with our Presbytery, if they could have him to preach to them even every fourth Sabbath. They are exceedingly anxious to obtain a minister in connection with us, and there is little doubt but they would do all in their power to support him.

On Sabbath, the 26th, I preached in Guelph, both forenoon and afternoon; and though there were preachers of several other denominations in the town the same day, I had a large congregation. At the meetings that was held afterwards, one or two seemed inclined to make a stand on behalf of the Kirk, but the great majority of them were anxious to obtain a supply of preaching from us. Upon my recommendation, they resolved to follow the same plan as those in Eramosa. Accordingly nearly 40 dollars were subscribed by those present, even those who had made objections falling in with the rest. I was told that, as many of the Presbyterians had been unable to attend the meeting, there was no doubt but the sum would soon be doubled.



At Galt, on the Grand River, in the Township of Dundries, where there is a congregation of Presbyterians, I made an appointment for preaching, on the Friday, the 26th, but very few attended, my message being in the course of the sermon. I joined in prayer with them, and addressed them in a short exposition of scriptures. There was a church organized here, about 7 years ago, by the Antiburgher Synod of the United States, who occasionally send their preachers for a few days. Some of them leading and get the name of being rational preachers.

On my way down the river, in the afternoon, I called upon several Presbyterian families, and learned, more particularly, the state of the congregation. The members of the Antiburgher church are boundless in their own proceedings, at any time. Notice of my preaching did not appear to have been very generally spread through the settlement, and of course, first attracted a crowd of the people, and among the rest, Mr. Sharp, the settler, with whom I lodged, that gentleman would show me every kindness offered to give a more general notice to the settlement, if I would stay till the next afternoon and preach to them, and have some conversation with them, which I agreed to do. On Wednesday the 28th, I preached in Mr. Sharp's house, to a very large and respectable audience, and after sermon had a very interesting conversation with the heads of families. I was told that there were, in the township of Dundries, somewhat about 50 Presbyterian families—that only one half of this number were a connection with the Antiburghers, and that even of these, one third, if not one half, had joined only temporarily, in order to get their children baptized. The Antiburghers have built a church at the village of Galt, but as it is too much to the one side of the settlement, considerable debt upon it, and they therefore divided about it, they have proposed to sell it. The greater part of the Presbyterians generally, and many of their own members, who were present at this meeting, were exceedingly dissatisfied with their extreme bigotry; and all who were present were unanimous in expressing an earnest desire to obtain a supply of preaching from us, in preference to the Kirk or any other body. They think that were a good preacher, in connection with our Presbytery, sent there, the greater part of all the Presbyterians would join with him, and they are pretty certain that he would be well supported—although they were not prepared to say exactly to what extent, as all who would take a part in it were not present. As the result of my visit to Dundries shows, contrary to what we had always supposed, that the greater part of the Presbyterians there would gladly be connected with us, it is our bounden duty to strive to do something for them.

I next took my route to the westward, by the Governor's road. In the townships of Burford, Blenheim and Oxford, especially in the two former, there are but few Presbyterians, and these few widely scattered. I exhorted and prayed in several families. Understanding that, in the new townships to the north of Oxford, there were several Presbyterian settlements, of which the former missionary had not heard, I resolved to visit them; and on Thursday, the 30th, went out to the township of Zorra. As I found a great many Presbyterians here, I resolved to spend the Sabbath amongst them, and employ the intervening time elsewhere. Accordingly, I went out to the township of Nissouri, and preached there on Saturday the 2d of October. In this neighborhood, I found about 15 families of Presbyterians. They are anxious to obtain a supply of preaching, and think they could raise about 60 dollars a year to assist in supporting a minister.

On Sabbath the 3d, I preached in Zorra all day. Here the congregation was so numerous, that although the house where the people assembled was a very large one, it could not near contain the whole of them, and I had to preach to them out of doors. In this township there are upwards of 60 Presbyterian families. The most of them have not been very long settled, and are not yet able to do much; but if they had a minister, they would be willing to support him so far as they were able. This township, with Nissouri and Oxford, would require the labor of one missionary.

On Monday, I returned to the public road, and pursued my journey to the westward. In some of the old settled townships, there are a good many Presbyterian families scattered up and down; but they have been so long destitute of preaching by Presbyterian ministers—and so long accustomed hearing all sorts, but at the same time doing nothing for the support of the gospel, that many of them have become, in a great measure, both indifferent and inactive.

On Tuesday the 5th, I preached in the township of Westminster, and at that place found about 12 Presbyterian families, mostly from the South of Scotland. On Friday the 8th, I preached in what is called, the English settlement, in the north west part of the township of London. There are about 22 Presbyterian families in this neighborhood, from the North of England. On Saturday the 9th, I preached in the centre of the township of Lobo. In this township, so far as I could learn, there are about 40 Presbyterian families, but very much scattered. On Sabbath the 10th, I preached, in the morning, near the centre of the township of London. As near as could be learned, there are from 30 to 40 families of Presbyterians between this neighborhood and the upper part of the township, upon what is called the Proof Line. In the afternoon, I preached in the village of Leodon, at the forks of the Thames; and again, in the eve-

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mine, in the northwest corner of the township of Westminster. In both of these neighborhoods, there are a good many Presbyterians, but I had no opportunity of ascertaining their numbers.

In all of these last mentioned places, I had large and exceedingly attentive congregations; and so anxious were several individuals to hear the preaching of the word, as they had been accustomed to hear it in former days, that they accompanied me during the greater part of the time I was in that neighborhood. The Presbyterians in those three townships, London, Lobo, and Westminster, will form a large congregation. A year or two ago, they had been reorganized by some individuals who had formerly been in connection with the Kirk of Scotland, to erect a Kirk minister, and had opened a subscription to try what they could raise; but having a good deal of what is usually required, the project had been for some time abandoned. As many of them had been accustomed, in the old country, to have the choice of their own ministers, and all of them had seen, more or less, in various ways, the deplorable effects of patronage, in the established church at home, they seemed, in general, upon second thought, unwilling to run the risk of suffering from its effects, in any shape here. They are exceedingly anxious to have the gospel preached among them liberally, in its purity, and with faithfulness. The greater part of them expressed their earnest desire to obtain a supply of preaching from us; and before I left the neighborhood, even the few, who had formerly advocated the Kirk, express of themselves in favor of our cause. If they had a minister in connection with our Presbytery, who was a good preacher, they are pretty certain that they could support him comfortably. I can't mention here, that a short time before this, as I was informed, an English, or minister, from the States, had attempted to form a church in the township of London, but could only get four that were inclined to join him.

I had, at one time, thought of returning at this point, but my horse having become so lame, that I was unable to do so. I considered that, till it recovered so far as to be able to go back with me, it would be my duty to look after some other means of travelling, and continue my journey to the westward, in order to obtain some more particular information with regard to the religious state of that part of the country. Accordingly, I went back to the Scotch settlement, at the east side of Westminster, and through the kindness of a Mr. Nichol, I was furnished with another horse.

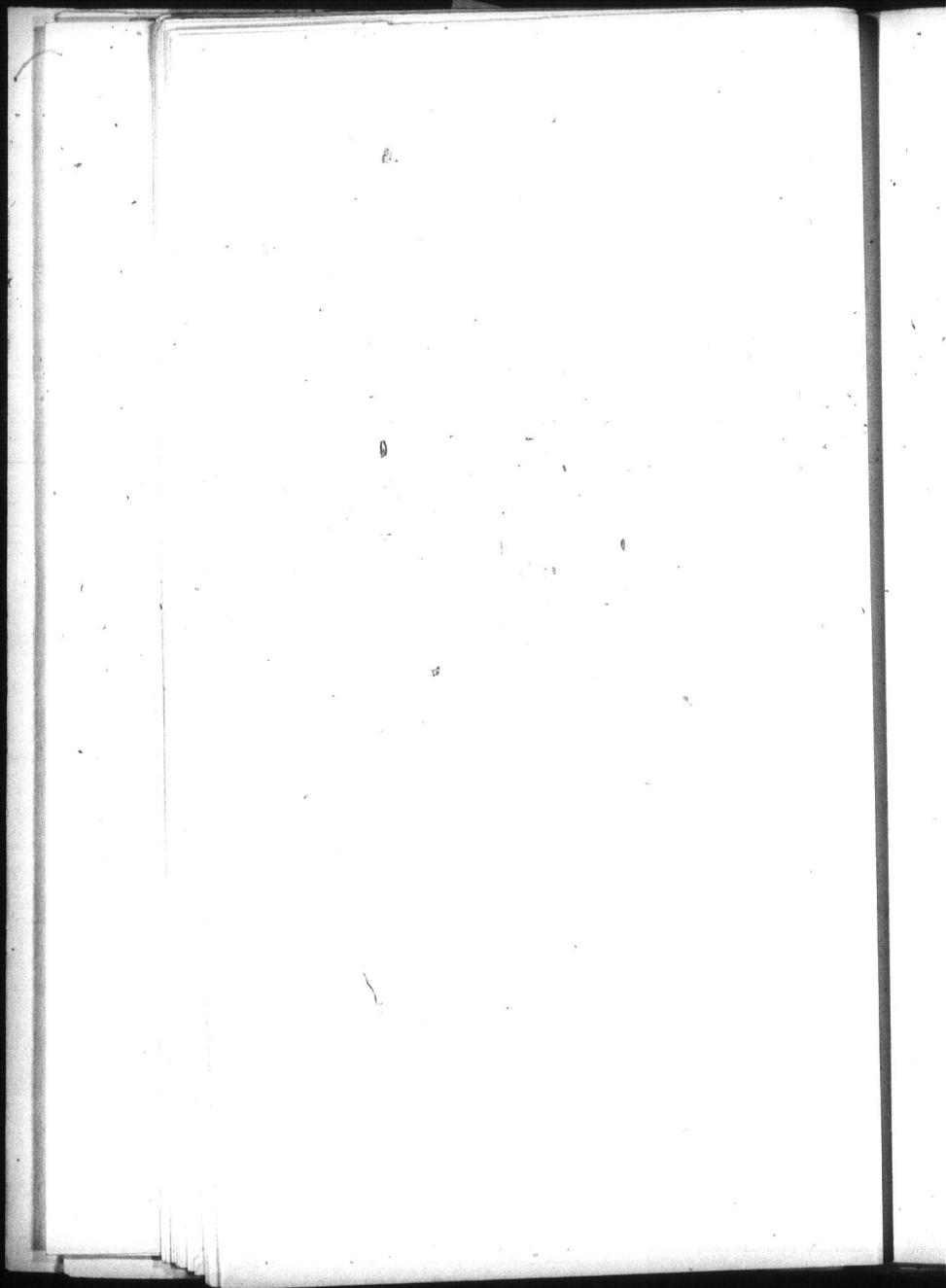
On Tuesday the 14th, I resumed my journey, and crossed from the township of Delaware, to the north side of the Thames, where the road leads through the long woods, and is excessively bad. These woods are very thinly settled, and only upon the road. I called upon a few Presbyterian families that I heard of, as I went along; and in the evening I preached in the township of Eldrid. I was told that there were about 12 Presbyterian families, or perhaps a few more, in this township, but considerably scattered. A great many of the people, through this section of the country, belong to a sect of Baptists.

On Wednesday, a Presbyterian family upon whom I called, in the township of Nosa, informed me, that in that township there were not more than 2 or 3 Presbyterian families upon the street; but that there was a settlement begun at the back part of the township of about 12 or 14 families, all of which were Presbyterian except two. I was unable to visit them, owing to their great distance back, and the badness of the road.

After entering the Western District, I travelled through several large tracts of woods, the first and largest belonging to the Moravian Indians, who have a village on the south bank of the Thames. I could hear only of a very few scattered families of Presbyterians along here, and indeed, there are but few inhabitants altogether; for the country all along here, is but very partially settled. The road crosses to the south side of the Thames, by the last bridge on the river, about 70 miles above Sandwich. I heard that there were a few Presbyterians at Edlison, near the northern side of Lake St. Clair, who were formerly settled there by Lord Selkirk; but I was unable to visit them, owing to the distance and the difficulty of getting to the place. Along the south shore of Lake St. Clair, where the public road leads, a distance of about 30 miles, there are but very few houses to be seen; and the most of the inhabitants, for some distance up from the mouth of the Thames, as well as on the Detroit river, are French Catholics, the descendants of the early French settlers.

I arrived at Sandwich on the Friday evening. Being rather discouraged with the view of things here, I readily accepted of an invitation to preach to the Presbyterian congregation in Detroit, and on Sabbath the 17th, I preached there to a very large and respectable audience.

On Tuesday the 19th, I preached in the village of Amherstburgh, near the mouth of the Detroit river. The inhabitants are mostly French Catholics, and I was informed that there are very few of either Presbyterians or Episcopalians. Mr. Gale, a minister of the Church of Scotland, is settled here, and is engaged in teaching a school during the week. On my way down, along the shore of Lake Erie, I had to travel through several large tracts of woods; and even where there were settlements, they consisted of only a single range on the lake shore. The most of the people in this part are Baptists. In the township of Aldborough, there is a settlement of Presbyterians, princi-





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I had intended to have sent a more full account of my journey, but having no other mode of conveyance than the mail, I was obliged to compress it as much as possible, especially as I have to send the report of our committee at the next time. Should the Presbytery wish to have the names of the females and places where I lodged, the persons who assisted me, or any other particulars, for the conduct of future missionaries, I shall be happy to furnish them from my note-book, at any time. I considered it of no importance to incorporate them in the present report.

This was an exceedingly fatiguing, but, at the same time, a highly interesting journey. Owing to the distance I travelled, and what I accomplished in the time, the fatigue I endured was sometimes extreme, but this was, in general, forgotten, in the pleasure I experienced in seeing the eagerness and the joy with which the word was received by those who were hungering and thirsting after it—also in the kind attention I received from christian friends. There is not, in this lower world, a more sublime feeling, than that which the christian missionary experiences, in forming the banner of the cross, and, in the name of heaven, proclaiming the blessings of salvation. The destitute condition of those, who once enjoyed the light of knowledge, loudly calls upon us for exertion. The inquiries made in these two last missions to the westward, as well as in others, undertaken in other parts of the province, have furnished us with the evidence that there is a number of congregations both able and willing to support ministers in our connection—and were active and pious ministers laboring in all these congregations, it is incalculable the good that might be done. We have likewise seen that there is a missionary spirit in many of our people that will lead them to assist in supporting missionaries where it is necessary. I should think, then, for my part, that there would be, now, little or no risk in adopting the measure which has been once or twice already brought before Presbytery; and applying to some of the Presbyterian Synods in the Mother Country, to assist us with a few well educated, active and pious young men, to labor in our destitute settlements. The principles, on which we have set out, will, I am certain, be approved of by all, who know what Presbyterianism is, radically in itself, without any political appendages—and I trust, they will carry us through. The Lord is before us. Let us then, fathers and brethren, persevere in the holy cause.

The following are the sums I received on account of our Home Missionary Society. Donation from W. Chisholm, Esq. Nelson, 10s.; Contribution at Kamosa, £1 5s.; do. at Guelph, 11s. 7s.; do. at English settlement, London, 15s. 3s.; do. at the centre of the township of London, 8s. 3s.; do. at the village of London, 19s. 11s.; donation from D. Ross, Esq. Vittoria, 5s.; contribution at the Presbyterian Church, Gainsborough, £2 13s.; do. at the Presbyterian Church, Louth, £1 10s.; from the funds of the Clinton and Grimsby Branch Home Missionary Society, £2 2s. 6d. total, £10 9 6d.

ANDREW BELL.

On motion, Resolved, that a respectful, and immediate application be made to His Excellency, the Lieut. Governor, Sir John Colborne, requesting him to procure the United Presbytery of Upper Canada the privilege of choosing a Professor of Divinity in King's College, to sit in the Council and in every respect to be on an equal footing with the other Professors in said College.

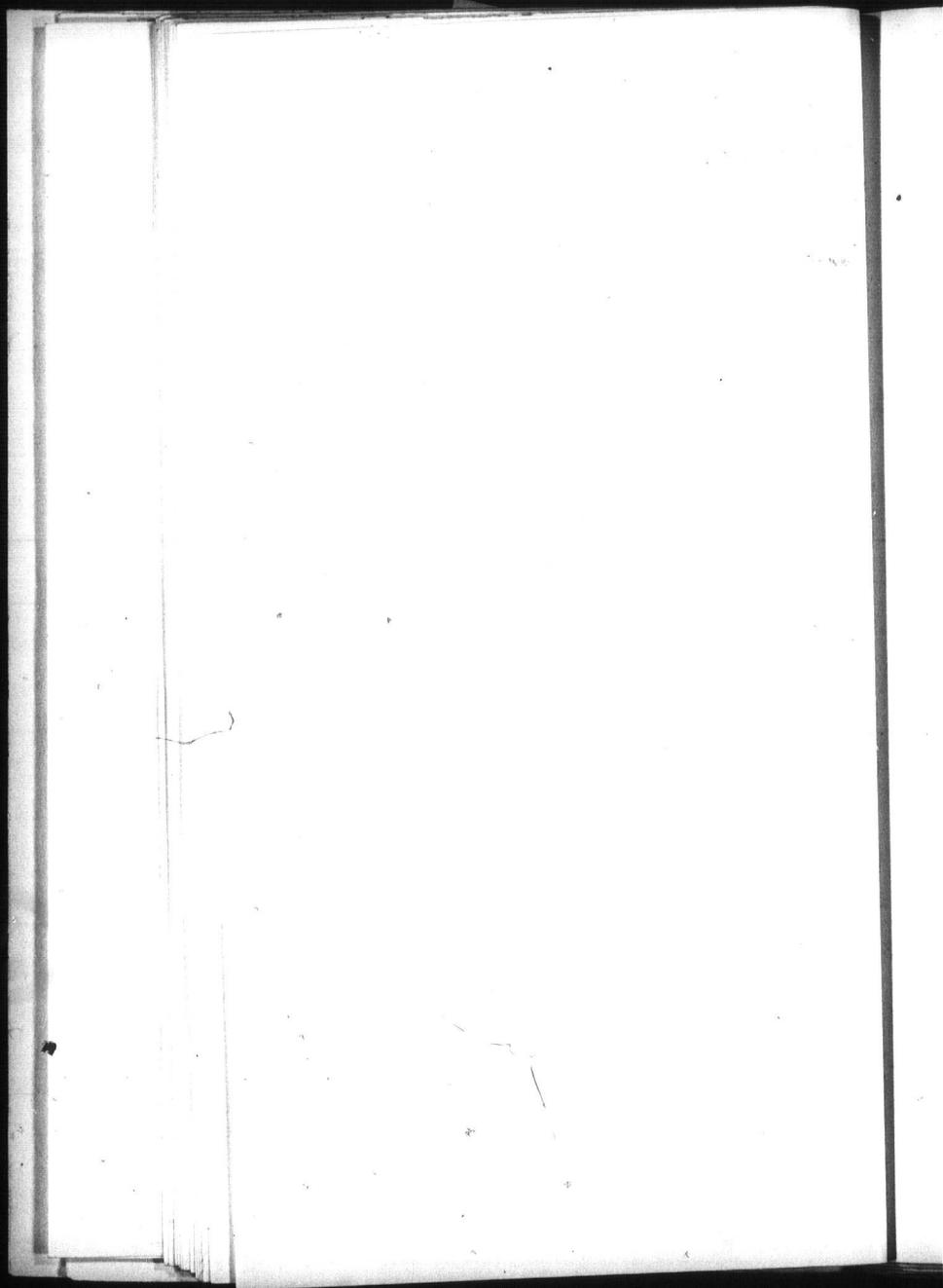
An interesting and highly important letter was read from Wm. Freeland Esq. Secretary of the Home Missionary and Education Society of Lower Canada, on the subject of a Theological Seminary. After mature deliberation it was, on motion,

Resolved, that the contents of said letter be laid over until the next meeting of Presbytery for further consideration, and that the Clerk be instructed to correspond with the Secretary of said Society.

Thursday Morning, 9 o'clock.

Presbytery met, and was opened by prayer. Members present as above. After sermon by the Rev. Robert Lyle, an application was made to the Presbytery by Mr. John Dickey to be received under their care and direction as a student, with a view to the exercise of the gospel ministry. He was examined in the Latin and Greek languages; also as to his motives, as well as his Christian experience, and gave satisfaction; and was recommended to pursue his studies.

Resolved, that every Missionary employed by this Presbytery, or the Missionary Societies under their direction, shall make a written



report to the Presbytery, containing every possible information in a religious point of view, together with a particular statement of the items and places where they have collected money.

On motion, Resolved, that the Rev. Messrs. McDowall and Wm. Bell be a committee to prepare a Pastoral letter, addressed to the members of our churches, and persons connected with our congregations: urging upon them the exercise of the Christian graces, and the discharge of the particular duties of the Christian life, not only to illustrate the scriptural character of a professor of the religion of Christ; but, calling upon them to consider the claims and the necessity of encouraging, and supporting those institutions that have for their object the increase of the Redeemer's kingdom; and the same to be submitted to the next meeting of Presbytery.

On motion, Resolved, that at the first meeting of the Presbytery in each and every year, the records of all the church Sessions shall be laid before the Presbytery for their inspection.

Received from the Branch Missionary Society of Edwardsburgh by Rev. R. Boyd the sum of £2 17s. 7d., which was paid over to the Rev. R. McDowall being the amount due him for missionary labors.

REPORT OF THE YORK COMMITTEE OF PRESBYTERY.

The Committee of the United Presbytery of Upper Canada, consisting of the ministers in the Home, Gore, and Niagara Districts, report,

That a call having been received, from the Presbyterian Congregation, at Mount Pleasant and the adjacent townships, for Mr. John Bryning, a licentiate of the United Presbytery, to be their pastor—the same having been sustained by the Committee, and accepted by Mr. Bryning—the Committee met by appointment at Mount Pleasant, on Wednesday the third day of November, 1830, for his ordination. The Rev. James Harris commenced the services of the day by praise and prayer; the Rev. Andrew Bell preached the ordination sermon; the Rev. William King gave a statement of the circumstances which had led to the proceedings of the day, put to Mr. Bryning the questions of the formula appointed to be put to candidates for ordination, which were satisfactorily answered, and afterwards led in the ordination service, when Mr. Bryning was, by solemn prayer, and the laying on of hands, ordained to the work of the holy ministry—the Rev. James Harris gave the charge to the newly ordained minister, and the Rev. Daniel W. Eastman addressed the congregation and concluded with prayer, praise, and giving the apostolic benediction.

*Signed in the name of the Committee,*  
ANDREW BELL, Convener.

Toronto, 17th Jan., 1831.

On motion, Resolved, that the next meeting of Presbytery be held in the Presbyterian church, Brockville, on Wednesday the 15th of June, 1831. And all the members are hereby enjoined to attend.—The Public services to commence at 6 o'clock, in the evening.

ROBERT McDOWALL, Moderator.  
WILLIAM SMART, Presbytery Clerk.