

CHURCH and HOME

The Magazine of the Presbytery of St. John.

Vol. I.

ST. JOHN, N. B., AUGUST, 1896.

No. 8

In a time of unrest such as this, when the foundations of the Christian faith, and all things, even the most sacred and hallowed, are undergoing the test of being doubted, tried and proved, it is necessary for man to remember that he must distinguish between the truth which is eternal and the temporary and transient form in which it may be expressed. It may be necessary that creeds and systems should be devised, but their exponents should remember that these are but the work of men, and are in no way obligatory on the heart and conscience, except in so far as they embody the truth of God. The faith required in the gospel from believers is no mere intellectual assent to any scheme of doctrine. What is required is a living, working faith, rooted and grounded in something personal to us. Christianity never has made any appeal to the reason of men or to any outward evidences. It declares that it can prove itself a revelation from heaven by the best of all possible witnesses—the individual man's own heart and conscience. *Be and do this, and ye shall know whether it be of God.* Christianity offers rest, peace, happiness—all that is necessary to satisfy the cravings of man's higher nature, and in return it demands that man should live and love as Christ lived and loved. Those

who have tasted the joy of believing and communing with God in the silence of their hearts are not disturbed or annoyed by the noise and bustle at the gate. There deep in the heart is the citadel which stands secure, although the bulwarks of man's erection crumble and perish. Why should we imagine that all things will progress except that Church system to which we belong? Why should we imagine that change is allowable in all things except that creed to which we may be attached by one of the most subtle forms of prejudice? No one age can exhaust the infinite truth of God. Age succeeds age, and to each the dead past becomes the stepping stone to higher and nobler forms of truth. Why then should the results of the searching spirit of modern criticism trouble or discourage us? If the thing be true it will prevail. If it be not true, then it will be cast aside, trampled under foot and utterly forgotten. Up to this point the world's history has given evidence that it is governed and guided by laws that result in a constantly upward movement. Why should we imagine that that Providence has now ceased from its labours? We cannot believe that that is true. Ever upwards and onwards shall man be led, until the kingdoms of the world shall have become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ. Let us have faith, then, that out of the present heavings and tossings of the Churches the everlasting truth which is in Christ shall emerge, purified and fitted for the new age which has already dawned.