

## News of the Church.

### The Presbytery of Halifax

Met on Tuesday, 11th March, in Poplar Grove Church. There was a large attendance of members. Moderation in a call was granted to Milford and Gay's River, Rev. James Maclean to preach and preside. The demission of Rev. John Cameron of his charge of Elmsdale and Nine Mile River was accepted, and a minute adopted expressive of the Presbytery's high appreciation of his services for the past 27 years. The demission of Rev. A. R. Garvie of the charge of Windsor was accepted. Rev. P. G. McGregor brought to the notice of the Presbytery the death of Rev. Dr. Geddie, of which intimation had just been received. Prayer was offered in connection with the event by Rev. R. Sedgewick. The attention of the Presbytery was called to the fact that Rev. John L. Murdoch has entered on the 50th year of his work as a minister of the Gospel. The Presbytery resolved that Mr. Murdoch's Jubilee should be celebrated in the Presbyterian Church, Windsor, at some appropriate time of the present year. The following Committee was appointed to make arrangements in connection with the Windsor congregation: Revs. P. G. McGregor, C. B. Pitblado, J. Maclean, J. D. McGillivray and R. Murray. The St. Croix Section was disjoined from the Windsor congregation, and St. Croix and Ellershouse were erected into a new charge. An interim session was appointed, consisting of Rev. J. D. McGillivray, Moderator, and Messrs. Goudge, Blanchard and H. Smith.

Rev. C. B. Pitblado moved the adoption of the following Overture to the Synod respecting Psalmody:

*Whereas*, some extension of the Psalmody of our church seems to be a felt want among our people, as is evident from the fact that collections of hymns, in no way sanctioned by our Synod, are used in some of our congregations and in nearly all our Sabbath Schools; and,

*Whereas*, it is desirable that the Psalmody of our church should be comprehensive enough to meet all the requirements of public worship, and uniform enough to prevent the common use of hymns worthless in sentiment or unsound in doctrine.

*Therefore*, it is hereby humbly overtured to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, that the said Synod may be pleased to resolve that, in addition to the metrical version of the Psalms now in use, the hymn book of the Presbyterian Church of England, or the hymn book of the Free Church of Scotland, be sanctioned

for use in the public worship of God in the congregations under its jurisdiction.

In support of this overture, we beg leave to subjoin the following reasons:

1. It asks for what is in perfect harmony with the recognized principles and practices of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces. Our church has already, by common practice, sanctioned the use of sixty-seven paraphrases and five hymns in the public worship of God. The principle that we may use in worship, compositions besides versions of the inspired psalms, is herein recognized and conceded. If it is right to sing seventy-two hymns which may be declared in their teaching to be in harmony with Bible truth, it cannot be wrong to sing any number of hymns which may be considered appropriate in expression and sound in doctrine. What is really asked in this overture is to apply a principle already recognized and acted on, in order to revise and extend the collection of hymns now actually in use. We would simply substitute one of the above hymn books for our present rather defective collection of paraphrases and hymns.

2. The use of hymns is in accordance with the general practice of the evangelical and orthodox Presbyterian churches in the world. In the early ages of the church, hymns which were not versions of the Psalms were used in public worship. The reformed churches of Europe generally use hymns. The Kirk of Scotland has its hymnal. The Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church have each of them authoritatively adopted a hymn book. The sister churches in Canada and the United States employ hymn books in their public worship. The standards of these Presbyterian Churches are the same as our own. The same need which prompted the use of hymns in the Presbyterian Churches of Britain and America, is felt by us in the Maritime Provinces, and we believe that we may safely and profitably follow the example which has been set us by the mother and sister churches, without feeling that we are unduly relaxing our conservatism.

3. Greater variety of metre than we now have seems to be necessary for cultivating and developing the power of music in public worship. The best way of keeping musical instruments out of our congregations, is to preoccupy the ground with good vocal music. But without an improvement of the metre of some of our Psalms, and a far greater variety of metres than we have in our present psalmody, the range of our vocal music must be very limited. For the want of metrical matter, we deprive ourselves of some of the finest and most devotional music extant.

4. In the present collection of para-