

# THE AYLESFORD UNION.

"That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."—PAUL.

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Rev. D. A. Steele, D. D.

BY REV. J. H. MACDONALD, B. A.  
PASTOR OF THE AMHERST  
BAPTIST CHURCH.

Rev. D. A. Steele, D. D., has been for years one of the foremost men of the Baptist denomination of the Maritime Provinces. In the year that Canada was born he was called to the pastorate of the Amherst Baptist Church and for twenty-nine years continued to minister to the people there. So long a pastorate culminating in the completion of the handsome and commodious church edifice, the cut of which appears in this paper, and that during the days when pastoral itinerating was eminently fashionable, tells a story of a devoted and successful ministry which no words can adequately describe. He was always a close and earnest student whose pulpit work was prepared with the greatest care. The people to whom he ministered were therefore edified as well as shepherded. In the great gatherings of the denomination, when the most distinguished leaders were present, his brethren, by common consensus were always wont to make a place for the popular Amherst pastor.

Of the types of men graduated from Acadia, he would readily be classed among the literary. While his pastoral duties were exceedingly onerous, making continual demands upon his sympathy and energy, he always found time for the cultivation of the literary side of his nature. The Greek Testament, Latin Vulgate and the Hebrew Bible were his daily companions. He has also kept himself in touch with advanced things in the different realms of investigation, and thus while maturing in years, he is ever fresh in thought and life. Now that he is retired from the more active duties of the ministry, our Baptist literature is being enriched by the product of his pen. He now speaks to our leaders as well as to the rank and file.

Dr. Steele is most genial in dis-

position. He has always kept in close contact with young people. His breezy disposition is most stimulating, and the young men who come in contact with him are invariably helped in the upward and onward course.

## "The Hymns We Sing."

A SYNOPSIS OF A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE AYLESFORD B. V. P. U. ON TUESDAY EVENING, JAN. 18TH '98, BY REV. D. A. STEELE, D. D.

The lecturer commenced by defining a hymn as a song of praise, addressed to God. There is a kind of incongruity in the singing of verses addressed to one another, as "Ho



REV. D. A. STEELE, D. D.

My Comrades, See the Signal,"—one can hardly use the formula in such cases, of the old preachers, "Let us Sing to the Praise and Glory of God."

"A Hymn is not versified dogma" says the hymn lover. "It is not to teach men the doctrines of Christianity, but to raise their souls to thankfulness that God is so good to men." We cannot, however, altogether eschew the didactic element, as witness Wesley's

"Arise, my soul, arise,  
Shake off thy guilty fears,  
The bleeding Sacrifice  
On my behalf appears."

The Gospel is taught in every line, yet it is full of passionate de-

votion, and will always stir you to praise.

Body and Soul.—The words and rhythm are the body. There must be smooth, well sounding verse, nothing to jar upon the ear. But the soul, how shall we describe that subtle quality? The secret of a real hymn is in the heart of it. There must be deep emotion, the utterance of the inmost heart to its Creator and Redeemer. We have not far to look for such expressions. Take Krishnu Palo (Carey's first Hindoo convert)

"O thou, my soul, forget no more  
The Man who all thy sorrows bore."

As to those compositions which are good, always to be depended on for Christian worship, the lecturer gave the first place to Isaac Watts, in every sense the father of English Hymnody. He first quoted at length the hymn, "Come sound His praise abroad, and hymns of glory sing," and endorsed it as a good hymn, plain, simple, easily caught by the ear; of a decent body and a fitting soul. It is reverent, it brings the worshipper at once into the devotional attitude. But it falls short of perfection. A painter of portraits was asked what he thought of a certain picture. "It lacks that"—snapping his fingers. Just what is lacking here. But take the other extreme of Watts' work, and you have the very best: "When I survey the wondrous Cross."

This hymn has all the elements sweetly mixed. Lowly adoration, tender devotion, dignity, the rhythm is faultless, the effect subduing, softening the hardness of our nature by its expressions of the awful sacrifice of Calvary. It will live as long as there is a Christian to sing. That kind of work can never be eclipsed. Charles Wesley he rates very high. He is the lyricist of all our hymn books. Take "Love Divine, all Love Excelling." Here is lyric fire. You feel it. You are panting after God, Who is love itself, Who dwells not only in Heaven, but Who comes down to soothe, deliver and fill men with Himself, Who is carrying on His new creation in us, and pre-