

THE SEMI-WEEKLY TELEGRAPH, ST. JOHN N. B., DECEMBER 4, 1901.

# HISTORY OF ST. DAVID'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Formation of Presbytery of New Brunswick Following Meeting in Institute.

## How Old St. David's Was Organized; Something of Early Workers.

## Description of First Church Building; Names of First Trustees and Minister.

Very few of the present generation can recall that memorable day in the month of May, 1843, at Edinburgh, Scotland, when the great break in the Presbyterian church in Scotland took place. When the moderator, accompanied and followed by 474 members of the then general assembly of the Church of Scotland, walked out in an orderly manner from the general assembly hall under protest, leaving their comfortable gables, manse and churches, in fact their all—their living, their livelihood, on the question whether or not in a parish church the patron that is the landed proprietor should have the power to place within the pulpit of the church a minister without the consent or expressed wish of the people. This break



John Thomson, M. A., D. D. (First Minister).

bytery of New Brunswick, adhering to the Westminster standards.

### The First Minister.

There was no minister in St. John at that time that was associated with these gentlemen, but services were held from time to time, until the 16th July, 1845, when the Rev. Robert Irvine, minister of St. John Presbyterian church, St. John, associated himself with them. Many missionaries were sent out to Nova Scotia and some to New Brunswick. Among the latter was the Rev. Lewis Jack. Supply was given to St. John by Rev. Lewis Jack, one Rev. John Stewart, of New Glasgow; Mr. Johnstone, who went to Quebec; Rev. John Turnbull, Rev. Geo. Burns, and Rev. Alexander Forrester supplied ordinances to a body of Christians who worshipped in St. Stephen's hall, situate on the corner of Charlotte street and the North Side of King Square. Rev. Alexander Forrester established regular services in this building, opening the same on the 12th June, 1848, for public worship.

### Beginning of St. David's.

This was the beginning of St. David's church. On the 10th November, 1848, Rev. John Thomson, minister of Alnwick, Northumberland, England, with family left Liverpool for St. John, having been appointed by the colonial committee of the Free Church of Scotland to minister in St. John. Arriving here he preached in St. Stephen's hall on the 12th

York. Dr. Thomson died at Porters, Scotland, 1st March, 1893. For only a week was this church vacant. On the 2nd July, 1851, the Reverend William Ferrie, M. A., presented his credentials to the presbytery with an application to be received under his care. At this same meeting of presbytery, a memorial was presented and received asking for consideration in a call to the Rev. William Ferrie.

This application was granted and on the 17th July this congregation called Rev. William Ferrie at a salary of £250, which

in the decision of Mr. Ferrie. He preached this farewell sermon on the 14th April, from the text, 2nd Corinthians xiii-11: "He left St. John on the 15th April, 1861, for his new sphere of labor and duty and many of his old congregation wished him "God speed." The other day the Rev. Wm. Ferrie was one of the four survivors of the famous band of Westminister divines, 470 in number, previously referred to, who, on that 18th of May, 1845, protested against the action of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He now lives in Monticello, N. Y.



David Waters, M. A., D. D., LL. D. (Fourth Minister).

be accepted, and on the 7th August, 1851, he was inducted the second minister of this church. In 1852 the debt on the building and for the cost of the land on which the same was erected, was £1,704, 9s. 11d. In 1853 the name of this church was finally agreed upon and the present name was accepted, and from this time on it was and is known as Saint David's church. From December, 1848, up to December, 1856, a Mr. William Sewell was proprietor of this church and at the close of the year 1856 a volunteer choir was organized by which the musical part of the service was conducted.

### Financial Management.

At this time an animated discussion took place both in presbytery and congregation as to the manner in which the churches would be financially managed. Whether under the oversight of the deacons' court and an elective board of management or whether the churches would become an incorporated body, and if a

In October of the year 1861 this congregation asked Rev. Neil McKay to supply them for six months from October 20, to the 10th April this congregation called Rev. Mr. McKay at a salary of \$890, which being by him accepted he was inducted as the third pastor on the 29th May, 1861. In 1868 this church was the largest contributor to the schemes of the church in the synod of New Brunswick, the collection in the year 1861 amounting to \$709.09.

### School Room Added.

In this year extensive repairs were effected on the church and a new school room was erected in the rear of the church to the north side of the church lot. The building was 45x60, with a 17 foot ceiling with a deep cornice. It was the finest Sabbath school and lecture room in the city. It was a room used for all meetings and for general religious and moral objects and



William Ferrie, M. A. (Second Minister).

corporation whether the trustees should be communicants or not. The synod decided that the matter of the election of trustees would be left entirely with congregations without qualification, assigned to those as they might see fit.

Rev. Mr. Ferrie resigned the pastorate of this church on the 6th day of April, 1861, giving as a reason that he had been notified that a call had been moderated in to him by the Fourth Associated Reformed Church in New York, and that he had made up his mind to accept the same.

On the 27th June, 1860, the union of the synod of New Brunswick with the synod of Nova Scotia was consummated in this church.

In 1870 the trustees paid off \$1,600 due on bond and mortgage, leaving the funded debt of this congregation at this date, \$2,900.



Neil McKay, M. A., D. D. (Third Minister).

Presbytery accepted his resignation without calling the congregation together, they having through representatives acquiesced

in 1871 many improvements were made on the church property. The church was painted inside and out the steeple was

thoroughly strengthened, the walls painted and paneled and when completed presented a handsome appearance, being one of the finest in the city.

In 1872, the first Sabbath in January, morning service was dispensed with. A joint celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was participated in by all the ministers and members of the synod of the lower provinces in this city.

### Pastoral Changes.

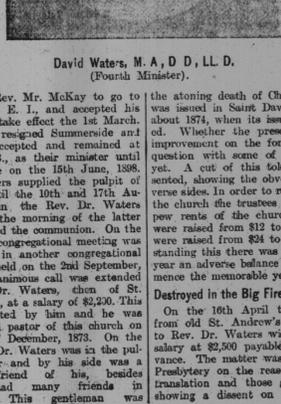
In January, 1873, calls from the Presbyterian church at Merigomish, N. S., and Summerside, P. E. I., had been sent to Rev. Mr. McKay. He had the same under advisement. On the 4th February at a meeting of Presbytery in Calvin church Presbytery agreed to acquiesce in

the resignation of Mr. McKay to go to Summerside, P. E. I., and accepted his resignation, to take effect the 1st March. He afterwards resigned Summerside and being called, accepted and remained at Chatham, N. B., as their minister until his death there on the 15th June, 1898. Various ministers supplied the pulpit of this church until the 10th and 17th August, 1873, when the Rev. Dr. Waters preached. On the morning of the latter day he dispensed the communion. On the 20th August a congregational meeting was held, resulting in another congregational meeting being held on the 2nd September, at which a unanimous call was extended to the Rev. Dr. Waters, then of St. Mary's, Ontario, at a salary of \$2,200. This call was accepted by him and he was inducted fourth pastor of this church on the 3rd day of December, 1873. On the 7th December Dr. Waters was in the pulpit as minister and by his side was the long time friend of his, besides one who had many friends in St. David's. This gentleman was

the atoning death of Christ. This Token was issued in Saint David's church up to about 1874, when its issue was discontinued. Whether the present system is an improvement on the former practice is a question with some of the old members yet. A cut of this token is herewith presented, showing the obverse as well as reverse sides. In order to raise the revenue of the church the trustees in 1876 raised the pew rents of the church. Several pews were raised from \$12 to \$24, double pews were raised from \$24 to \$40, but notwithstanding this there was at the end of the year an adverse balance of \$100.00 to commence the memorable year of 1877 with.

### Destroyed in the Big Fire.

On the 16th April there came a call from old St. Andrew's church, Toronto, to Rev. Dr. Waters with a guarantee of salary at \$2,500 payable quarterly in advance. The matter was discussed by the Presbytery on the reasons given for the translation and those given against it, showing a dissent on the part of St.



George Bruce, B. A., D. D. (Fifth Minister).

David's against disturbing the present relationship, the call was refused by Dr. Waters. In the year 1877, a year memorable in the life and recollection of many in St. John, the trustees of this church determined to liquidate the debt of this church, which was \$2,900. It fell due on the 18th July. Subscriptions were secured to meet this claim and some had been paid on the very day the church and many of the dwelling houses and business houses of the congregation were destroyed by fire on the 20th June. Only two ar-



John Archibald Morison, M. A., Ph.D. (Sixth and Present Minister).

none other than the first pastor of this church, Rev. Dr. Thomson, of New York. Thus the first and fourth ministers of this church were together before the people. Dr. Thomson preached in the morning from 2nd Timothy, 3:15, the same text he had preached from exactly 25 years before and same day as his first text and sermon in St. John. The subject of his text then was the duty of the church in times of danger, and he felt now called upon to preach the same sub-

ject but adapting himself to altered times and circumstances.

Dr. Waters preached his first sermon as minister of this congregation in the evening from the text 2nd Cor., 4:5: "In we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus our Lord and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." The sermon was appropriate and produced a deep impression. The elo-

quies of the preacher was good, using only brief notes and speaking at times with much fervour of argument and at others with much tenderness and pathos. There was no feeling of monotony in the services. In early years the several congregations in Scotland issued to the members at the Communion season, a piece of metal which was called "the Token." This sign was made of different shapes and sizes and from different metals, according to the judgment of the congregation issuing same. It was handed by the minister, in the presence of the elders to the members, and was taken by the members, retained and returned on the Communion Sabbath day. It no doubt typified the coming event in which the member was about to participate, and to commemorate

## Presbytery and Congregation Discuss Scheme for Financial Control of Church.

## Complete Data of Pastors; P Events in Term of F

## Blow Inflicted in Fire of 77-1. Recovered, Prospered and Prog.

Lord." The congregation continued worshipping in this place at 3 o'clock in the afternoon until February 17, 1878, and also every alternate Sabbath evening. After 17th February, 1878, the morning service was continued in the lecture room of the church and the evening service every alternate Sabbath evening in the Mechanics Institute. At the time of the St. fire there was \$9,000 insurance money which \$2,000 mortgage was due 15th. This was paid on that date. The ing committee of the church the \$7,000 to commence and complete church. The corner stone of the church was laid on the 13th 1877, and the church was co- opened for public worship on the 1st day of December, 1878. The late Rev. Dr. McKnight, then principal of Pine Hill Theological Hall, Halifax, preaching from Romans 14:17. In the afternoon a minister meeting assembled, it being the children's service, and this meeting was addressed by Rev. Dr. Waters, Dr. Bennett and late Rev. Dr. G. W. M. Carey, Rev. Messrs. Howard Sprague and William Mitchell. In the evening another large congregation assembled and Rev. Dr. Cyrus Ham-

St. David's church cost.....	\$40,000
Received from insurance balance.....	\$7,000.00
Collection by Dr. Waters, 4,000.00	
Collection in church opening.....	213.33
Contributions by congregations.....	5,474.48
Donations by members of congregation.....	2,600.00
Mortgage.....	15,000.00
Loans.....	3,500.00
Balance current.....	1,612.14
	\$40,000.00

On the 20th June, 1881, a meeting of the session and trustees was called at services in the evening at which Rev. Dr. Waters intimated his intention to resign the pastorate of this church. He would table his resignation at a meeting of the Presbytery to be held at St. Stephen on the 21st June and desired that no obstacles should be put in the way of his departure. On the 4th July a congregational meeting was held under instruction from Presbytery to appoint commissioners to appear before the Presbytery at St. John on the 12th of July. At the meeting of Presbytery on the 12th July the pastoral tie between Dr. Waters and this church and congregation was severed, Dr. Waters having accepted a call to the Reformed Dutch church at Newark, N. J. Dr. Waters died at Halifax 4th August, 1897.

In the balance of the year 1881 and in 1882 this pulpit was supplied regularly and on the 25th day of September, 1883, a congregational meeting was called at a call was presented in favor of Rev. George Bruce at a salary of \$2,000 but sustained by Presbytery at \$2,200. On the 9th October commissioners were appointed to present this call before the Presbytery. On the 10th October this call was sustained by the Presbytery and transmitted to Rev. Mr. Bruce. The Presbytery of Hamilton of which this gentleman was a member, met on the 21st November and at this meeting Mr. Bruce accepted the call to this congregation.

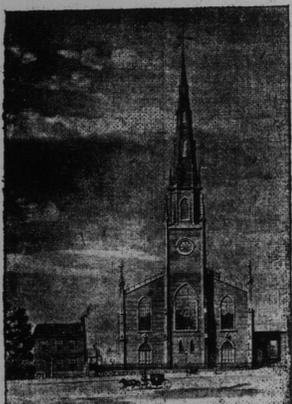
On the 5th December the Presbytery of

## New St. David's.

or division was called "The Disruption." These disruptionists held that the people in the congregations ruled and that they should have a voice in the matter of the choice of the man, who should minister to them in holy and spiritual things; and for such consent and acquiescence they would be expected to pay his salary and the expenses of ordinances. Feelings ran high, house was divided against house, family against family; members of families divided, and consequently such action did not, nor could it, tend to make for things of peace. In those days there was considerable emigration from Scotland and the North of Ireland to the shores of New Brunswick, and this flow coming to St. John, many more took up grants in the surrounding counties.

## Presbytery of New Brunswick Formed.

Presbyterianism spread here in those days and this unhappy division of the home church was imported to this and the other maritime provinces. The home churches, on both sides of the question sent to this side of the Atlantic missionaries called "deputies" to present the views of either side. On the 13th March, 1845, a very interesting and most enthusiastic meeting was held in the Mechanics' Institute of this city. The object



Old St. David's, Burned June 20, 1877.

of the meeting was to diffuse among the audience some information concerning the state and prospects of the Free Church of Scotland. The addresses delivered were of the most animated and thrilling nature and were listened to with marked attention. The speakers on this occasion were the Rev. Messrs. MacMillan, of Cardross, and Patrick Leslie Miller, of Wallacetown, Dundee. The Rev. Andrew Stevens, brother of His Honor Judge Stevens and the Rev. Andrew Donald, then of Norton, Kings county, also took part. On the 17th March, 1845, an agreement was entered into between Rev. Messrs. John Turnbull of Blackville; Andrew Stevens, of St. Stephen, and Andrew Donald, of Norton, whereby they came out from the parent church of Scotland and formed the Pres-

bytery of New Brunswick, adhering to the Westminster standards. The grounds were enclosed with a two-foot stone-mortar wall eight feet high. The first stated minister of this congregation was Reverend John Thomson. The first elders: Thomas Walker, M. D., James Patterson, LL. D. The first deacons: Edward Charters, John Wilson. The first trustees were Thomas Main, Thomas Irvine, William Irvine, Alexander M. Kirkland, John Stewart, David Miller, M. D., and James Milligan. Rev. Mr. Thomson continued as the minister of this church until the 28th May, 1851, when he resigned his charge and accepted, after repeated and reiterated invitations, a Presbyterian church and congregation situate on Grand street, New



Commemorative Tokens, (front and Obverse View)

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