

"The Goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush be with us."

FEB.

1897.

CHURCH AND HOME



The Magazine of the Presbytery of St. John

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CHURCH and HOME

The Magazine of the Presbytery of St. John.

Vol. II.

ST. JOHN, N. B., FEBRUARY, 1897.

No. 2

Past and Present.

Old men nearing the end of their life's journey tantalise those of a younger generation by continually asserting that things are not now as they were in their early days. As we read ancient books we find that depreciation of the present was a favourite pastime with all old people. Books of two or three thousand years ago tell us how the old men of that time asserted that men were neither so strong nor so wise, nor so upright as in their younger days. In all succeeding times some have been found to maintain the same idea. If our world has been so constantly degenerating what an awful difference must there be now between what it was and what it is. If the fond fancy of the aged of our race can be trusted then our object should be to reproduce again the glowing colours of the happy time and the highest wisdom would demand the conservation of the laws and practices of our forefathers.

But is the assertion really true? Some folks assert that the climate is not so genial nor so regular as in former times. Some say the average temperature is increasing, others hold it to be diminishing, but all agree that the old weather was better. Yet history does not sustain such assertions. No material alter-

ation has occurred in the external world except what man has caused by his own labour.

Again, men tell us that in former times the race was of greater bodily stature and strength. We now are puny representatives of the heroes and warriors of the golden age. Bones were found during excavations and we were told of the giants of olden days. Science has now demonstrated that these relics were the remains of mastodons, megatheriums and kindred quadrupeds now long extinct. Examination of human skeletons prove exactly the opposite. On the whole man's average stature has not varied to any great extent. The Egyptian mummies of three thousand years ago show very little difference in stature between the men of that day and our own. People, however, were said to be stronger then than now. We are shown arm our that could hardly be borne, and swords that cannot be wielded by men of our times. Yet history tells how these mailed warriors were often helpless from the very weight of their defences, and were easily defeated by troops equipped in a less cumbersome fashion. The victories of Bannockburn and Cressy, and the defeat of the French armies by the Swiss mountaineers, can all be cited against the usefulness of the old

fashioned ironclads. Sometimes a sword or spear is shown that men now can hardly use, but the average of the arms which we are creditably informed were used by our ancestors proves that the strength of men in by-gone generations was not greater than in our own. Great improvement has been made in regard to the public health. Plagues such as that which devastated London are now of rare occurrence. Men seem to live longer, and certainly the arts and sciences have so improved things that long life seems to be more desirable than ever it was.

In a material sense man now is no worse off than he was before, nay he is decidedly better off. Does this improvement extend to his spiritual surroundings? Ancient times are held up as an example to us in matters of virtue, very much to the discredit and disgrace of men of the present day. Very little foundation really exists for such statements. Our ancestors must have been in many ways decidedly inferior to us. They were, through the natural order of things less enlightened. The individual man grows wiser with advancing years, and the race increases in wisdom in the same degree. Some new experience is vouchsafed to us every day. Something new is being invented or discovered. The son profits by his father's labours, and the young derive wisdom from the experiences of the old. James Watt invented the steam engine. His successors have improved his idea, developed and added to it till they have

evolved the magnificent machinery which drives our mercantile navy through the ocean at a rate greater than the speed attained by the early fast express trains. Life is a vast treasury into which all men cast their experience and their wisdom. New contributions are continually being made. Nature's storehouse is ever on the increase. In old days personal courage was the only virtue essential in the character of a man. Men who could hew their way through the ranks of an enemy, or hold a pass against opposing odds, were heroes. War was the only business of a gentleman. Now, though gallant deeds are not rare, and war is still regarded as honourable, still other and gentler virtues are not less esteemed. Now honour is accorded to the missionary who opens up the dark regions of the earth to the Gospel of Peace as sincere, as grand and glorious, as that given to the subduer of a hostile army. Yea, every man whose life is of service to his fellowmen receives his just mead of praise and reward.

While thus we need fear no comparison with past ages still we must remember that we are reaping the reward of their labours. The measure of comfort we enjoy is due to the exertions of the great men who preceded us. In order that we may truly show our gratitude for the results they have achieved it is necessary that we be inspired thereby to renewed effort, and making their ending our beginning, advance to new and greater results. We owe a

deep debt to our forefathers, and have as deep a duty to discharge towards our posterity. We, if our lives are to be useful, must look at what is before, not at what lies behind, at what has still to be done rather than what has been done. The sacrifices and earnest devotion which glorify the pages of history are our heritage, and they should be an unfailing incentive to us to secure the age we live in, a place in the hearts and admiration of the ages still to come.

PRaise is an important element in our Church service. Its aim is to quicken the spirit of devotion. It is not an artistic performance by a choir—its purpose is to elevate the soul, and not merely to please the ear. If the music in the sanctuary fail to promote religious feeling it has fallen short of its aim. This part of our worship deserves more attention than it usually receives, for not only does it serve to excite holy emotions within us in the hour of service, but it is a happy and effective mode of instruction. The words of the preacher may be forgotten, but words set to appropriate music are effectively retained in the memory. The deeper feelings of the heart find an utterance in music beyond the power of ordinary language. Catechisms may shape our doctrinal ideas, but psalms and hymns minister to the life within. They appeal to our best feelings, and in the experience of life they provide solace for care and consolation under sorrow.

Congregational singing is to be desired, but great care should be exercised in the choice of hymns. The tune is not everything. Sensationalism is not piety. Let us select those that breathe the spirit of devotion and worship, that we may be improved, and our life become a song in praise of Him at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Auxiliaries of the W. F. M. S. Attention!

At the last annual meeting of the F. M. S. Presbytery the recommendation of the Presbytery was unanimously and enthusiastically adopted—that an effort be made during the year to raise the sum of \$400 for the support of ordained missionaries within the Presbytery of St. John, and that at the same time there will be no diminution of the contributions to the Foreign Mission Fund. Some of the auxiliaries have already responded, and it is to be hoped that all will have made a faithful effort in this direction before the end of June. Indeed it is very desirous that as many as can will do so before the first of April, as the fund is heavily in debt and the Home Mission Board is practically borrowing money to pay the salaries of missionaries. Four hundred dollars will send two missionaries into the field for a year, and the missionaries can be had if the money is forthcoming.

Never in the history of our church in the Maritime Provinces could it be said that there was a sufficient number of ministers to supply all our vacancies, but to-day it can be said, "Ought we not to thank God and take courage."

We have a larger number of stu-

dents than there is employment for during the summer months. It is not so long ago when the Board had to seek students in Montreal, Princeton and Union seminaries; now Pine Hill more than meets the demand. This is certainly a most satisfactory phase of our work.

The question now is not men, but money. The C. E. Societies have responded with commendable alacrity and liberality, but even so there will remain a large debt on the fund at the close of the financial year. Some of our societies which are weak in numbers may suppose that their contributions will not make any perceptible difference in the sum total, but it is the numerous small sums which go to make up the whole, for there are very few large sums contributed to any of the funds. It is the cents which make the dollars, the units the thousands.

Let every society make an effort—a good honest faithful effort, and the \$400 can be raised. Why not plan for a special collection? Go out and collect from all who are willing to give. Ask your minister to mention the matter to the congregation on Sabbath. Have a social for this special Home Mission work. Have a public congregational meeting for Home Missions. Let the Sabbath school children prepare themselves for a concert. Where there is a will there is a way. Four hundred dollars is quite a large sum for one society to collect, but for thirty-two societies it is not an impossibility. When the annual meeting comes, and the first of July will be here all too soon, will it not be a very great satisfaction to have carried out your intentions. It is a noble aim, for the aim is to advance God's kingdom in our midst. Let there be no slacking of effort in Foreign Mission work, and do not forget that this Home Mission effort

strengthens the foreign—widens the field every station you open—every field supplied with a missionary will open another door for the missionary society and add another contribution to the funds both for Home and Foreign missions. Contributions are to be forwarded to Mrs. Sterling McLeod Pitts, Fredericton, and if possible before the end of April.

Moncton W. H. M. S.

It is with very great pleasure that the CHURCH AND HOME announces that the Moncton Woman's Home Missionary Society has decided to support an ordained missionary within the bounds. The amount pledged by this society is \$150 per annum, which means a step in advance. We have no doubt but this decision on the part of the Moncton Society is wise and will be attended with a deeper interest and a larger blessing among the several members themselves. We are pleased to note that a very liberal contribution was made last year, and this year, in addition to what has been pledged for a missionary, \$46 were paid in to the H. M. Society, St. John.

Carleton.

The W. F. M. S. of the Carleton Presbyterian church organized a Mission Band on Jan. 16th, with a membership of 27, since increased to 51. This Band, named the "Rainbow," gives promise of good work. Its first regular meeting, held on Feb. 5th, was of a very interesting nature and largely attended. The officers elected were: Mrs. Annie Smith, president; Miss Minnie Dalzell, 1st vice-president; Miss Jennie

Purvis, 2nd vice-president; Miss Blanch Gregg, secretary; Miss Annie McLellan, treasurer.

Hampton.

On January 11th our people at Blomfield met in their first annual sectional meeting. The report of a committee appointed to inspect the "Auld Kirk" at Lower Norton was received, and it was deemed advisable to petition Presbytery for permission to take it down and utilize its material for building purposes. It was also decided as soon as leave was granted to go right to work at the building of a hall for public worship. Since the date of the meeting a site (and there is no better in Bloomfield) has been secured. It only remains for Presbytery to approve of it. A subscription of \$100 from Mr. Duncan Beaton has been already received. A Board of Managers was appointed including Duncan Beaton, John Floyd, John A. Campbell, John McVey and Peter Campbell. The latter was appointed treasurer.

Hampton section held its annual sectional meeting on the 20th January. The managers of last year were re-appointed. The treasurer's report showed that after all obligations had been met, after the debt of the church had been virtually wiped out during the year, a balance of \$13 still remained in the treasurer's hands.

With the first Sunday of February St. Paul's church, Hampton, enters upon a new stage in its history. Hereafter it will have an evening service every alternate Sunday in addition to the regular morning service. We hope that this advance is but the beginning of better things.

Fredericton.

The Christian Endeavor Society of St. Paul's church, Fredericton, have sustained a loss in the death of their late president, Mr. Reuben Blackmer. He died on the 17th Dec., 1896, after a short illness of typhoid fever. The end came suddenly, unexpectedly, and was a shock to the community. Always bright, earnest, helpful, he will be much missed, not only in the church of which he was a member, but in the Y. M. C. A., where he held the office of director. In all movements for the general good he was ever a ready helper. His death at the early age of 28 years reminds us of the shortness and uncertainty of life. May we so profit by the lesson that when the summons comes we shall be found ready.

Norton Church.

Norton congregation is one of our small congregations--consisting of about ten families. The old church was built a mile below the railway station. As a matter of course the village was at the station. The stores were there, the post office, the doctor, the smith, the carriage builder and shoemaker. People went up to the village and came down to the village and went over the village, so the habit grew on the people, and it ended in our church being vacant and our congregation growing less and less. Service once in ten weeks in summer, no Sabbath school, no prayer meeting, six months no pastoral visits, and people wonder why Home Missions do not succeed. It was said that our cause in Norton was done for. Well we admit that it was a close shave. If we were going to die, some of us at least were determined to die hard. Sometimes

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it looks as if many of our strong congregations don't care if we do die. We will try and believe that they do care. If they don't care may the Lord have mercy on them and make them care.

What was the use in talking about church building to people who were so much neglected, so little cared for? They were accustomed to do as they were doing for so long that they could do no other. An appeal was made to the churches; Carleton C. E. Society responded first, then Fredericton, next Woodstock, lastly the people themselves, and the outcome is a neat, comfortable little church, seating 150 people. The building is finished completely and tastily. On the last Sabbath of January the opening service was held, Rev. James Gray preached in the morning and Rev. James Ross in the afternoon, Fully 250 people were present; the building was literally packed.

It was very pleasant for the older people to hear the voice of one who had been their pastor for many years. Mr. Gray is now beyond four score, and his eye is not dim, nor is his natural force much abated. His voice was clear and strong, and his sermon was lucid and logical as of yore. Thirty-seven years ago Mr. Gray dedicated the first church at Norton. At that time the congrega-

tion included Sussex, Hampton, Hamond River and Golden Grove, Bloomfield, Waterford, and for some time Roxbury. We hear to-day of hard work and large fields and long journeys. Let us hear some of the old ministers speak and some of the young ministers will be quiet for a long time.

A re-arrangement of congregational boundaries has been made and Norton is added to Springfield and English Settlement, and there will be preaching services throughout the year in the new church, and our people are consequently greatly encouraged. There is now a prospect of growth and development. The promise is to those who toil and wait.

Our people in Norton wish to convey through these columns their thanks and hearty appreciation of donations in aid of the building fund, to Carleton, Fredericton and Woodstock churches; to St. Stephen church for the pulpit formerly used in their own church, and to Miss Campbell, St. John, for a costly pulpit Bible.

Greenfield.

On February 14th a collection was taken at the close of the morning service in Greenfield Presby-

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terian church on behalf of the Indian Relief Fund. The handsome sum of \$9.03 was contributed.

On the evening of the 16th the women of W. F. M. Society met at the residence of Mr. James McCain, there to present a memorial address consequent upon the death of his beloved wife who was also the president of their society. It was feelingly replied to by the bereaved husband.

At the meeting of the Presbytery on January 19th a call was presented from St. Andrews Kirk, Pictou, in connection with the Church of Scotland, in favor of Rev. Jas. Burgess of Carleton. It was signed by over 400 members and adherents and was accompanied with a guarantee of \$1,100 and a manse. It was decided to receive and sustain the call and cite the congregation of Carleton to appear for their interests at a special meeting to be held in Carleton church on February 9th at 3 p. m. Rev. W. Rainnie was appointed to exchange with Mr. Burgess and cite the congregation.

At the same meeting a call from Pizarinco in favor of Rev. Andrew Boyd was presented. It was signed very unanimously, and in addition to the former guarantee offered the use of the manse when finished. The call was sustained and placed in Mr. Boyd's hands, whereupon he intimated his acceptance of the same. The induction was fixed for February 4th at 3 p. m. Mr. Rainnie was appointed to preside and address the people. Mr. Fraser to preach and Mr. Burgess to address the minister.

A meeting of Presbytery was held in Pizarinco on Thursday, February 4th, at 3 o'clock. Rev. D. J. Fraser preached an appropriate sermon

from Psalms 73, 16-17. The edict was returned certified as having been duly read. After public worship Mr. Rainnie put the questions prescribed by the formula and offered the induction prayer. Mr. Boyd then received the right hand of fellowship from the members of the Presbytery present. Mr. Burgess addressed the minister and Mr. Rainnie the people on their respective duties and privileges. Mr. Boyd received a hearty welcome from his people as they retired at the close of the services. On motion Mr. Boyd's name was added to the roll and the Presbytery was closed with the benediction.

The committee appointed by Presbytery to visit Springfield, consisting of Messrs. Ross, Sutherland and Rainnie, held meetings in Scotch and English Settlements, and by mutual concession of the fields were enabled to arrange for supply being given once a fortnight to Norton. As Bloomfield goes with Hampton the matter of supply of these fields has been practically settled.

A special meeting of the Presbytery was held in Carleton church on the afternoon of February 9th. Rev. D. J. Fraser occupied the chair in the absence of the moderator. The subject under consideration was the call extended to Rev. J. Burgess from St. Andrew's Kirk, Pictou. Representatives from the Carleton congregation were heard. They one and all spoke of the work done by Mr. Burgess and expressed the desire of the congregation to retain his services if possible. They intimated that an increase of \$100 would be made now in the salary and another advance when the debt was cleared away. Mr. Burgess was then asked to express his mind on the matter, when he announced that he had de-

ecided to decline the call, whereupon, on motion, the Presbytery set the call aside and heartily congratulated Carleton congregation on their success in retaining Mr. Burgess as their minister.

Editors of CHURCH AND HOME.

SIRS,—In your recent numbers you have been dealing with the question of the trial imposed on candidates seeking a hearing in vacancies. I would seek to call attention to another branch of the subject under discussion, namely, the procedure relating to the call. The system hitherto adopted by Presbyterian churches for the calling and settling of ministers produces some very curious scenes which afford a continual source of amusement to the non-clerical element in our churches. Public opinion has long ago satisfied itself that the way of Church Courts are fast finding out, and this philosophic attitude is strengthened every time that a "call" is presented to a Presbytery. In all these cases commissioners from both churches descant at length, and in the usual manner, on the graces and qualities of the particular minister in question, who then has to rise and deliver himself of a speech, which, no doubt, he has prepared before these pleadings began. They are, therefore, hollow affairs to him, to which he need pay no attention unless he pleases. Very likely he is conning over in his own mind what he has prepared at home all the while that the office bearers before him are waxing more and more eloquent on his popular style of speaking, the saintliness of his character, his devotion to pastoral duties, making out in a general way that he is indispensable to the success of Christ's cause in a particular locality. Now to the uneducated lay mind this looks very much like a farce.

The minister has examined the call before this. He has got all the information regarding it which has been put before the Presbytery. He doubtless knows far more about it than any other man, for deputations and individuals from both congregations have been interviewing him, giving him explanations about many things which are left unmentioned at the public recital. He, therefore, has had every facility given him for making up his mind, and as a rule he has managed to perform that wonderful feat long before the court meets. No doubt it sometimes happens that once in a great while a weak-kneed brother, unfortunate enough to receive a call, casts himself into the arms of the Presbytery weeping and wailing out that he has no mind of his own, and hysterically beseeching his brethren to think for him and decide his fate. Would it not be well to put an end to a system which allows men in responsible positions to do their thinking by proxy, and others who decide for themselves, to sit listening to speeches after their mind is made up?

But it may be said by the adherents of the present order of things that all this elaborate pleading is absolutely necessary, because the Presbytery decides whether the minister called shall go or stay. They must have the case fully laid before them, it is said, before they can give an impartial judgment on its merits. I acknowledge the force of the proposition, but while this is the theory of the Presbyterian church, is it the practice? Unhesitatingly I affirm it is not. The one element which rules the decision of Presbytery is the decision arrived at by the minister. Now-a-days no Presbytery would take upon itself the responsibility of saying to a minister, remain in your present charge, after he had expressly stated his desire to leave

it. Even if they did, what would his congregation do if they had any independency of spirit left? They would leave the pews if they thought that it was only by the compulsion of an external authority that he mounted their pulpit steps. On the other hand if the minister intimated that he wished to remain where he was, no Presbytery would compel him to go and begin work among strangers. To all practical intents and purposes the minister has, therefore, the call in his own hands, and there it should remain, he intimating the decision to which he has come to all the parties concerned.

In this way a great deal of unnecessary speaking would never be heard and a considerable amount of money saved, which could be devoted to its proper objects. Besides, congregations would not be kept so long in suspense, to the weakening of their work and the diversion of their energies. Months go past under the present system during which nothing is talked of except the call, and plans of an aggressive kind are kept back until it be seen whether the minister is coming or not. Imagine a man preaching to a vacant congregation and winning the confidence and affections of the people, and from two to five months going past before his final decision is given. What business house would keep up arrangements which allowed such a delay as this in the appointment of any of its servants? Not one; and yet the church jogs on in this old-fashioned way, heedless of the loud protests of many of its laymen who cannot understand why the affairs of the most important society in their midst is thus mismanaged. They ask, and quite rightly too, why should all this ponderous machinery be put in motion and kept moving so long when a simple letter would practically gain

the same end? Of course this would simplify matters and bring calls to ministers more on a level with offers of situations to ordinary people, and that might be deemed by some a great degradation of the pulpit and a worldly innovation. However, the church has not reached perfection yet, and must subject herself to criticism, and she is not wise if she does not take the "most excellent way" when it is pointed out to her. She cannot afford to be out of touch with public opinion, especially in matters where the lay mind is as capable of forming a sound judgment as those are who are largely responsible for her policy and practice. Under paragraph 265 of the Rules and Forms of Procedure of our church, it is possible to shorten the procedure and have the matter settled in one day at Presbytery instead of two, as was customary. But even one is one too many, at least as presently spent, and if the long-winded orations and that speech from the minister called, could be avoided, great good would result to all concerned. In his speech the minister usually loses his head and forgets that he is speaking to the world at large. He unbosoms himself of all his doubts and difficulties and talks long and low of the soul exercises he has passed through in coming to a decision, and generally finishes up in a way that makes people laugh at him who don't know him. He appears as a martyr and looks for sympathy. Now to the lay mind this is all very absurd, and little wonder need be felt that the worldling rejoices over such a condition of things. Ministers, in such positions, are not called upon to give the reasons which have influenced them in arriving at their decision, and why they persist in doing this and yet keep back the one bearing on the comparative merits of the

salaries offered, is passing strange to most people. If they were more reticent they would gain in general esteem and do less injury to themselves and the profession to which they belong. Many worthy ministers have lost perceptibly in influence and usefulness by the manner in which they have handled calls. This has brought out their weaknesses, which were remarked upon at the time and remembered long afterwards, to their great disadvantage. The Presbytery of St. John have been foremost in the struggle for needed reforms, and I trust that they will bend their energies to this much needed task, and that through their instrumentality the day is not far distant when the evils connected with calls to ministers, to which I have tried to direct attention, may soon be numbered among the things that were.

Yours respectfully,

MONYMUSK.

In his latest volume of sermons Dr. Maclaren makes the remark once and again, as if the subject were much on his mind, that there are "few things which the so called Christianity of this day needs more than an intenser realization of the fact, and the gravity of the fact, of personal sinfulness." He believes this to be the root of the shallowness of so much that calls itself Christianity in the world to-day, the source of almost all the evils under which the church is groaning. It has a great deal to do "in shaping all the maimed, imperfect, partial views of Christ. His character and nature, which afflict the world." Of old we have known it as the mother of most of our heresies. The fact is a somewhat startling one, when it is remembered that never was there an

age in which men clamoured more loudly for their rights, and in which class more fiercely denounced class for its sins. But this is just because the sense of personal sinfulness is feeble. Men who do their duty are the least clamorous for their rights, and the most conscious of short-coming; therefore they are less censorious than others. — *The Christian*.

The essence of religion from the human side is a *sense of spiritual need*. The animal, when well fed, and all its instincts are satisfied, is a creature for the time without a want. Because man is never satisfied, and has needs deeper than any earthly source of satisfaction can reach, he craves for God; in other words, he is religious. The first result of contact with the Divine Spirit is that this sense of need is quickened and deepened. Before we can receive the great gift, our capacity for it must be enlarged. The Gospel is the answer to this capacity for God. Its law is, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Both the hunger and thirst, and the banquet that is provided for them, are the work and gift of Christ. He wakens the cry, "Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me," and He grants the boon, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." — *The Christian*.

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