

Pamph
HEcdC
J

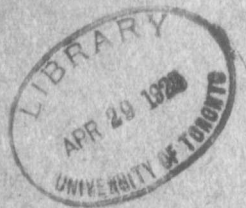
JUBILEE

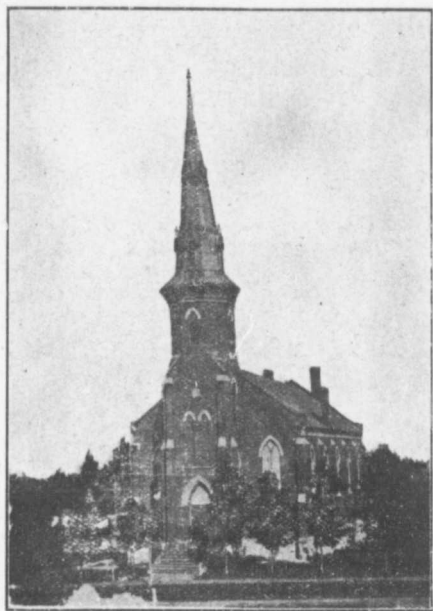
Westminster

Church

Mount Forest

1857 -:- 1907





WESTMINSTER CHURCH.

Fifty Years of Presbyterianism

in Mount Forest

1857 - - - - 1907

HISTORICAL SKETCH

BY THE REV. W. G. HANNA.

There is an interest in tracing a stream to its source, and discovering the rills which combine to produce its volume and flow.

Somewhat like this is the interest with which on this occasion attention is directed to the beginnings of Westminster Church.

Shortly after the settlement of this district, Rev. John McMillan, then a student missionary at Durham, having learned that there were some Presbyterian families in the neighborhood of Mount Forest and Arthur, gave these places occasional supply. The services in Mount Forest were first held in the house now occupied by Dr. Meikle.

Near the close of the year (1856), at a meeting of the Presbyterians it was decided, on the motion of Mr. John Shepherd, to petition the Presbytery of Hamilton for organization.

Then the genius of Presbyterianism for subdivision was exhibited in

the fact that before long two separate projects were under way, one in the interest of the "Knox" and the other in the interest of the "Free Church."

The "Free Church" was organized by a deputation from the Presbytery of Hamilton consisting of Revs. Donald McRuar and Andrew McLean on September 10th, 1857, and took the name of Knox Church. It is believed that the "Kirk" Presbytery of Hamilton organized St. Andrews Church about the same time, though no official records seem to be available. The first pastor settled was Rev. Donald McLean, who was inducted in Knox in June 1859. The Rev. John Hay was inducted in St. Andrews Church in February 1861. Each congregation had built for itself a temporary home, Knox, near the site of the present Westminster Church, and St. Andrews on the corner of King and Fergus Streets.

The first elders in St. Andrews Church were Thomas Swan, Samuel Wallace, John Jack and Wm. Williamson. Thos. Swan was the first Sabbath School Superintendent. The first elders of Knox Church, so far as can be ascertained, were John Martin, William Jamieson, Neil MacMillan and James Scott. Mr. James Scott was the first Sabbath School Superintendent.

The work in both congregations made such rapid progress that in a short time a preaching station was organized at Woodland in connection with St. Andrews, and a Gaelic station at North Arthur was associated with Knox, the first elders in the latter being Duncan McLellan and Alexander McKenzie.

Those first pastors were hard working pioneers. The nature of their work can be best understood by a single illustration. Rev. John Hay travelled on foot over corduroy roads and through the woods 69 miles to Kincardine to dispense the Lord's Supper.

Mr. McLean was succeeded by Rev. John MacMillan in 1865, and Rev. J. A. Murray became successor to Mr. Hay in 1867.

Knox Church grew so as to require this building which was erected in 1873, and conditions arose that gave North Arthur the status of a separate charge under the pastorate of Rev. William Matheson.

In St. Andrew's, Mr. Murray was succeeded by Rev. Donald McNeil and he in turn by Rev. Donald Fraser.

Early in 1884 negotiations were entered into by Knox and St. An-



REV. W. G. HANNA, B. A.
Present pastor of Westminster Church

drew's Churches with a view to union, North Arthur having been merged in Knox Church a little before.

On Sept. 13, 1884, the union was effected and the united congregation took the name of "The Mount Forest Presbyterian Church" (since changed to Westminster) and Woodland was united with Conn.

In a short time the Rev. D. Bickell was inducted as pastor and galleries were placed in the Church.

After the death of Mr. Bickell, Rev. D. M. Ramsay (now Dr. Ramsay, of Knox Church, Ottawa) was inducted as pastor in August 1891.

By this time, it was found that the congregation by reason of size had become unworkable and a number of families to the South East in Arthur, were organized as a separate station, now known as Bethel, and united to East Normanby as a separate charge.

During all these years, the work of the Church was carried on with zeal and fidelity by pastors, officers and people. They labored, and we have entered into the fruits of their labors. The harvest of prosperity that God is permitting us to reap today is the result of their faithful sowing under his blessing. In looking over the past we may well exclaim, "What hath the Lord wrought!"

The present pastorate opened in October 1897, during which the blessings of our covenant keeping God have been enjoyed. These will be continued and increased, if we are true to him in the bright future to which he is beckoning us forward.

THE JUBILEE SERVICES.

Sabbath, September 15th, will be long remembered by the Presbyterians of Mount Forest. The occasion was a memorable one, the fiftieth anniversary of Presbyterianism in Mount Forest. The day was an ideal summer day, the attendance at public worship, both morning and evening, was very large, and all the services were impressive and stimulating. The church was fortunate in securing to fill the pulpit two eminent clergymen who have themselves completed half a century of Christian work. The Rev. William MacLaren, D. D., Principal of Knox College,

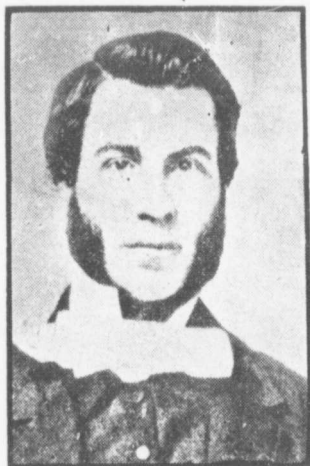
by his dignified and kindly manner, by the clearness and force of his thought, the simple, chaste, straight flung eloquence of his language, delighted everybody. He has wonderful vigor, both of body and mind for a man of over fourscore. The Rev. William McMullen, of Woodstock, is a veteran Presbyterian and spoke with a vivacity and fluency that many a younger man might envy. Rev. W. G. Hanna, B. A., Pastor of the Congregation, presided over all the services in his customary tactful manner. The choir, under the leadership of Mrs. J. N. Scott, with Miss Brebber at the organ, led the service of praise with great acceptance. In the afternoon a special Sabbath School service was held, and which was a very interesting hour. The Superintendent of the school, Mr. A. W. Wright, presided, and a choir of young people, led by Mrs. A. Jamieson, with Miss M. B. Kilgour as organist led the singing. Following is the order of service for the three services :

MORNING SERVICE.

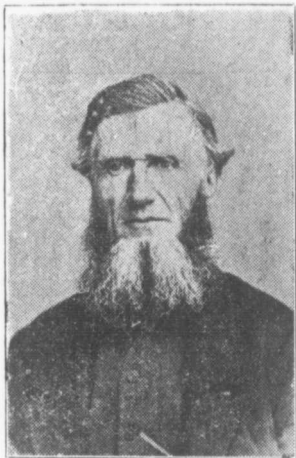
Organ Voluntary
Doxology, Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Prayer, Rev. W. G. Hanna
Psalm Selection 72, Old Hundred
Scripture Lesson Psalm 16, Rev. Mr. Hanna
Prayer, Rev. Dr. McLaren
Psalm Selection 14, "The Lord's my Shepherd"
Scripture Reading, Rev. Dr. McLaren
Offering
Anthem, "What are these?", Choir
Hymn 474, "O God our Help in ages past"
Sermon, Rev. Dr. MacLaren
Prayer, Rev. Dr. MacLaren
Hymn 223, "Nearer my God to Thee"

AFTERNOON SERVICE

Hymn 262, "Onward Christian Soldiers," Choir
Hymn 573, "Jesus, we love to meet"



REV. DONALD MACLEAN
First Minister of Knox Church,
Mount Forest.



THE LATE JOHN MARTIN
A Pioneer Presbyterian Elder.

Prayer, Rev. Dr. McLaren
Hymn 554, "Jesus loves me"
Scripture Reading, Deut. 6: 1-15
Solo, Miss Flora Greig
Offering
Chorus, Several little girls
Address, Rev. Mr. Hanna
Hymn 591, "When he cometh"
Prayer, Mr. John Hanna
Solo, Miss Frankie Maltby
Reading, Kipling's "Recessional", Miss Hilda Pennock
Address, Rev. Dr. MacLaren
Superintendent's remarks
Hymn 584, "Childhoods years are passing o'er us"
Dismissal Prayer, Rev. Mr. Hanna

EVENING SERVICE.

Organ Voluntary
Anthem, "Peace at Evening"
Prayer, Rev. W. G. Hanna
Psalm Selection 97, "When the hills around"
Scripture Reading, Lev. 25, Rev. D. McMullen
Prayer, Rev. Dr. McMullen
Hymn 358
Offering
Anthem, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem"
Hymn 301, "O God of Bethel"
Sermon
Prayer, Rev. D. W. Snider, Methodist Church, Mt. Forest.
Hymn 437, "Blow ye the trumpet, blow"
Benediction, Rev. Dr. McMullen.

DR. MACLAREN'S SERMON.

Dr. MacLaren took for his text at the morning service Rev. 21:22, "And I saw no temple therein." All work done in Christian churches looks to the future—the formation of character, the establishment of communion between man and his Maker, and the conformity of man to the divine image. Here we have a picture of the dwelling place of the Christian whether we take the words as referring to this world or to the other world. Heaven is much more a state than a locality. Where Christ is will be heaven. The heavenly city of Revelation is Jerusalem transformed and glorified—but without a temple. Is it not then despoiled of its crowning glory? God's dealing with his people was to bring them to a city without a temple. The tabernacle or "tent of meeting" was fitted for the wilderness wanderings; the temple was suited to them when they had a permanent country. Both were meeting places—of God with men and of men with God. The temple was not a place of abode; it brought the nation close to God, but at the same time it kept the great mass of the nation at a distance from God. The priests alone could enter the Holy Place, and into the Holy of Holies the high priest alone dare enter, and that only once a year. The people were thus not allowed to forget God's august majesty, and greatness, and holiness.

The design of God all down the ages was to bring his people to the city of God without a temple. There have been three dispensations. First that of the Father, during man's unfallen state when he was in touch with God. Sin fixed a gulf between man and God and God has been working to bridge that gulf. Second, the dispensation of the Son. During this period everything seems to look forward to the coming event. Temporary assumptions of the human form by God foreshadowed the incarnation. And so do the forms and ceremonies of Israel's worship. From Eden to Calvary everything seems to look forward with expectant eye to the great consummation. By the incarnation human nature was brought nearer to God than it ever had been before, and through that human nature a great atoning sacrifice had been offered which makes it possible for men to be brought back to God and re-instated in the love of God. Third, the dispensation of the Spirit, reaching from the Day of Pentecost to the consummation of all things. The Spirit's work is to



REV. D. M. RAMSAY, D. D.
Inducted 1891, now of Ottawa.



REV. DAVID BICKELL
First Pastor after the Union.

open men's eyes to the truth and bring men into touch with Christ and with the Father. The work of the temple is done. The gulf is bridged. There is no longer need of a meeting place between God and men. And so when we get yonder we shall see no temple.

We should be fellow workers with God in his great design. The low state of religion among us makes it a conscious effort to live in touch with God. Sinless perfection is a delusion. Much in our life does not conform to the divine image. The thought of God and his law should never be unwelcome to us, and we should never go where we cannot take God with us. This is a high standard and we shall often fail in the attempt to reach it, but it is better to aim high and fail than never to try at all. When we come to the last crisis it will seem no great stride to step across the little stream and enter the city of God. May God give speaker and hearers an abundant passage into the land beyond.

Concluding, Dr. MacLaren said he had great pleasure in being present on the occasion. His memory could go back to a day when the present church edifice was opened, on which occasion he had preached. Not many who were here then are here to-day, and fewer still would recognize the present preacher. It had been his pleasure, too, to have a hand in the training of at least two of the pastors of the church. The best work of a congregation is not seen in the church. Character here is imperfect. The best work is seen up yonder where men are brought into perfect communion with God. But there was a great deal to be thankful for. God lives; God reigns. Good work will be done in the future not less than in the past.

REV. W. G. HANNA'S ADDRESS TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL

Mr. Hanna spoke from the Sunday School lesson for the day: Deut: 6: 1-14, the Golden Text being, "Beware lest you forget the Lord your God." These were the words of the book of Deuteronomy spoken by Moses to the children of Israel before they entered the land of promise at the close of their forty years wandering in the wilderness.

At the close of fifty years we are met here to celebrate our jubilee, as a Sabbath school with our friends and we are met in the enjoyment

of church buildings and organization, for which very few present have labored. We have privileges and means of worship and instruction for which others labored who have gone far away. Let us at the end of fifty years be anxious to enter on a new period, remembering the Lord our God. We must fear the Lord our God and keep all his commandments and follow Him all the days of our lives. As Moses said: "The Lord our God is our Lord." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and all thy might," These make a complete form of law, condensed in the most pronounced form.

As love is the best thing we can give our parents, we must love God in the same way, giving Him our whole hearts and striving to do what He would have us do. God's law is the expression of God's love, and teachers must impress this on the children's minds. They are entering upon the great possession of that good land, and if they should forget God, then God would turn aside from them. Let our resolve be: "We will love the Lord our God and Him only shall we serve."

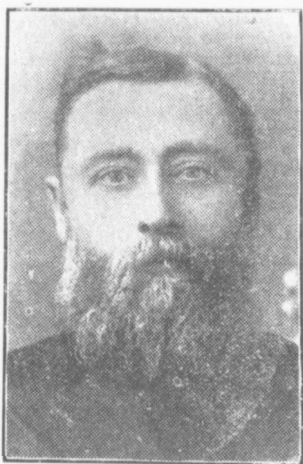
DR. MACLAREN'S ADDRESS TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

Dr. McLaren spoke a few words to the children and expressed his pleasure and delight in being present. "The young have the future in their hands, and it seems to me, judging from the outward appearance (which is not always a safe way of judging) that this school is in a prosperous condition." He gave as an instance of the lasting effects of Sunday School training a story of a boy with whom he went to school in Quebec. The boy was publicly expelled for badness. Many years after the Superintendent of the Sabbath School received a letter from him asking that they send one of their library collections to him in order to start a library in the Sabbath School which he had founded at a place away back in Quebec. That is one instance to show that we should not be weary in well doing.

"The right way to do work is to give your hearts to Christ, and the smallest child can do it. Go where you are called, whether to the foreign field or wheresoever it is and your reward will be the means of making hearts glad in the City of God."



REV. JOHN McMILLAN
Formerly Pastor of Knox Church



REV. DONALD FRASER
Fourth Pastor of St. Andrew's Church

REV. DR. McMULLEN'S SERMON.

Dr. McMullen took as his text Lev. 25 : 10, "And they shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof : it shall be a jubilee unto you."

"The Mosaic system was throughout a system of instruction similar to what is known as the kindergarten method of teaching children to-day. There were sacred places, sacred persons, sacred times, but there was one Holy of Holies which John compared to Heaven in the remarkable words, "And I, John, saw the Holy City and there was no temple therein"—about which we heard this morning.

One of the things we have to learn is to do without things we thought we could not do without, because they are succeeded by things better and more suited to our wants and necessities.

The seventh year was then the Sabbatic year of rest and when the people out of their greed and carelessness did not give the land its year of rest the Babylonian captivity followed. God provides his church with a great man like Moses for the glory and up-building of his church. And then every fiftieth year was a year of jubilee and great rejoicing, when the loads of trouble were lifted off the people and they began afresh.

It is the spirit of Christianity implemented in individual hearts which frees man from the bondage of death, the bondage of sin. Let us hold fast the liberty with which Christ has made us free and be not again entangled with the yoke of bondage.

How many of you can look back upon the fifty years of your history? (Seven or eight stood up.) I, for one, can look back over the fifty years, and I remember, although I do not like to be very sure about it, but still I recollect preaching in the old log church which belonged to the Methodists, before the Presbyterians built the frame church. I remember very well your first pastor, Mr. McLean, who was a fellow-student of mine in Knox, and I have known all your pastors in all these fifty years.

What are the next fifty years to bring about? There are persons who say the world is getting worse, but I am not inclined to agree with them. The world is unquestionably making progress, and I think when the next jubilee is being celebrated that the next fifty years will witness

just as great progress as the last fifty. The various branches of the Christian churches are drawing near each other. Then war is being regarded with less and less favor. True, the nations are building immense and terrible war vessels, but to declare war they require the people behind them. In China the Bible is read and studied in the public schools of one of the great provinces by order of the government, while in the United States and Canada there is great difficulty in having the Bible in schools at all."

Dr. McMullen referred to the fact that Dr. McLaren and he first met in the winter of 1849—50, and were members of London Presbytery in 1856, and of the thirty or forty ministers belonging to the Presbytery at that time only these two are now living.

MONDAY EVENING.

The Tea given on Monday was well attended and all seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly. The tables were tastefully set, bountifully laden and skilfully served by the ladies of the congregation. The programme of music and addresses was a treat. The speeches were brief and pointed and mostly of a congratulatory or reminiscent vein, appropriate to the occasion.

PROGRAMME.

Organ Recital, Miss Brebber
Hymn 90, "All Hail the Power," 1, 2, 5
Prayer
Opening address by Chairman, Rev. W. G. Hanna
Anthem, "Pleasant are Thy Courts"
Address, Ex-Mayor Gruer
Address, Senator McMullen
Quartette, "I want my life to tell for Jesus," Messrs. O. A. Scott,
R. Scott, A. E. Gibson, F. R. Plunkett
Address, Rev. Canon Spencer, English Church, Mt. Forest
Address, Rev. Stephen Young, Clifford
Anthem, "The God of Israel"



REV. J. A. MURRAY
Second Pastor of St. Andrew's Church



REV. MR. KIDD
Who supplied St. Andrew's Church
pulpit for a period.

Address, Rev. Mr. Cameron, Harriston
Address, Rev. W. C. Riddiford, Baptist Church, Mt. Forest
Address, Rev. Mr. Thomson, Rothsay
Anthem, "Seek ye the Lord," Mr. Plunkett and choir
Address, Rev. D. W. Snider, Methodist Church, Mt. Forest
Address, Rev. T. D. McCullough, Harriston
Address, Rev. Dr. McMullen
Anthem, "The Radiant Morn hath passed away"
Vote of thanks, Messrs. Alex. Martin and Alex. Jamieson
Doxology and Benediction.

Ex-Mayor Gruer, one of the pioneer members of the church, was first called upon and said that Mr. Robt. Scott had been here about two years before he came, but fifty years ago he was here and an adherent of the Presbyterian Church, formerly belonging to Mr. Young's church in Guelph, and so had a recollection of the fifty years. He could not remember exact dates as given in the historical paper read by Mr. Hanna, but had an idea of everything that had passed.

SENATOR McMULLEN'S ADDRESS.

"I can assure you that it makes me feel very lonesome when I think that, with Mr. Gruer and Mr. Scott and a few who stood up in the service last night; I am one of the last of the early pioneers. I feel personally like an old pine tree on the side of a hill that shows many evidences of having battled with many a storm and shows many other evidences of age, with its neighbors gone except a few.

I was one of the Committee that was appointed by the Presbytery of this town (then a village unincorporated) to go to Toronto to try and get the lot upon which this church stands as a gift from the Crown for the purpose of erecting a church. The other members of that committee or delegates were Mr. Thos. Rogers, who is my brother-in-law and lived in Toronto, and whom I tried to get up, but owing to ill health he decided not to come; and Mr. Jas. Reid, a very respected citizen of this town many years ago, who was an earnest devoted Christian man.

We went to Toronto, there were no railways then, narrow gauge or broad gauge, via Guelph, and to the best of my recollection I think the

Grand Trunk was then finished as far as that point. When we landed in Toronto we went to see Dr. Burns, as our friends here thought if we interviewed the old Doctor that we might possibly succeed in getting a site if he went along with us. Our Methodist friends had applied for the corner east of here and it was granted to them and our Catholic friends had applied for the corner which they occupy. Mr. Cavanagh was trying to get the other corner. It was considered an absolute necessity in those days to have the church on the hill, no congregation would think of building in the hollow; and we made application for the other.

We went to old Dr. Burns' house and found the old Doctor at breakfast in his dressing gown. After finishing he came into the parlor and Mr. Jas. Reid introduced us to him. He remained in the parlor while M. S. Burns adjusted his tie and prepared him to go out to see the Commissioner of Crown Lands. When he was in shape we started off. Of course there were no street cars in those days and we had not thought of taking a carriage for the Doctor. On the way to Mr. VanKoughnet's office we thought he would surely be run over; when he approached a corner or went to cross a road he rushed straight ahead, thinking every one knew Dr. Burns and would stop for him, but we reached Mr. VanKoughnet's office at last and found the ante room full of people waiting to see the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The Doctor looked round and came to the conclusion that if we would have to wait until these people were all attended to it would be a long time, so he handed his card to a messenger and said, "Tell Mr. VanKoughnet that Dr. Burns wants to see him." The messenger came back in a minute and said that Mr. VanKoughnet would see him. When we entered his office Mr. VanKoughnet got up and gave Dr. Burns his chair and shook hands with the rest of us, and the Doctor lost no time in telling him our business. He asked if we had made a selection and when told the lot, etc., rang a bell and sent to see if the lot were taken up. We found that Mr. Traynor, up the O. S. R., had made application for it, but Dr. Burns said, "You know it is a lot to build a church on and it must be a becoming lot and this is the only place in the town that would suit. Mr. Traynor will be paid for any trouble he has had. Mr. VanKoughnet said he would have to comply with his request and cancelled the lot to Mr. Traynor and entered it to the Presbyterian Church of Mount Forest as a gift from the Crown. After



HON. JAMES McMULLEN

A Member for 50 years and long an
Elder. (From a photograph taken a
number of years ago.)



THE LATE THOS. MARTIN, M. P.
Long an Elder.

he had done that, Dr. Burns said, "You know, Mr. VanKoughnet, when you have a church you have to have a manse too." So we got the site for that also.

When we had built our first church Dr. Burns opened it. I can well remember he preached and I think, dispensed the sacrament. The congregation was then largely from the country. He announced that as we had no service in the evening he would advise us to go to the Episcopal Church, and he was going himself. Rev. Mr. Auld was then minister and in some way he got to know Dr. Burns was in the church and during the singing of the first hymn came down and took the Doctor by the arm and ask him to go up to the pulpit and just as they reached the platform the hymn was finished and Dr. Burns turned his fine old face to the congregation and said, "I joyed when to the House of God go up, they said to me."

I can remember it was Dr. Irwin of Toronto who came to dispense the sacrament in the log church (Methodist Church) and I am glad to say a kindly feeling has grown up between us. Our service was in the morning and theirs at night. They gave up their service because Dr. Irwin was here; and I can remember the heads: "We are the ark of the church"; "The pot in the ark was Christ in the church" and "The manna in the pot was Christ in his people."

Now I do not want to further detain you. I am very glad indeed to have the privilege of reciting the experiences regarding the past. I suppose as one of the oldest members here, I feel, as I said in the first place, lonesome. It is hard to say how long Providence may permit me to live as a member of this Church and in connection with it. I earnestly hope that He will take me to Himself when I am called away."

At Evening Time There Shall Be Light.

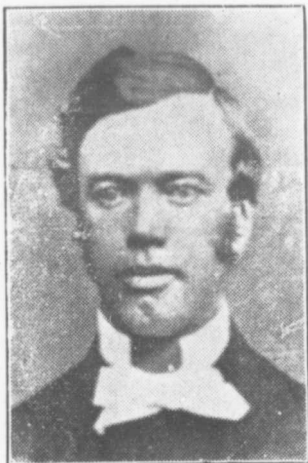
The following beautiful verses were written by the Rev. John Hay,
first minister of St. Andrew's Church, Mount Forest, and of Woodland.

Not only gleams the noonday sun,
Irradiant on his bridegroom throne,
Nor when his joyful course is done
Is darkness left to reign alone:
But oft as eve her vigil keeps,
The lady moon is watching bright,
Below the earth in beauty sleeps,
And so at evening time 'tis light.

O nature kind! O kinder God!
Creator of the night and day,
The path by mortal children trod
Shall never want thy cheering ray.
But through the ages' onward flow
And in the seasons' circling flight
At morn the sun his course shall know,
At evening time there shall be light.

And kinder in Thy promised grace
When darkness reigned, a mighty blot
On Thy fair earth, and all its race,
With all its wisdom, knew Thee not.
When feebler grew the sacred flame,
And blacker rose the gathering night,
The brightness of Thy glory came
And filled the latter days with light.

O Sovereign Grace! O Gracious One!
Thou giver of all grace below;
The days and years shall backward run,
Ere Thy fair promises forego.
Though dark the hour and weak the power,
And blind the hapless, helpless sight,
When hope and faith and nature lower,
At evening time it shall be light.



REV. JOHN HAY
First Pastor of St. Andrews Church.

JUBILEE COMMITTEE

ELDERS

John McCall, James McMullen, James Crow, Dr. Meikle, Dr. C. A. Jones, Wm. Forgie, Alex. M. Martin, Henry Wanner, Arthur W. Wright.

TRUSTEES

R. Scott, James McMullen, Wm. Gruer, Alex. M. Martin, Jno. Ross.

MANAGERS

J. A. McMullen, S. A. Pennock, Arthur W. Wright, Wm. F. Ward, George Till, Alex. Robertson, Alex. Jamieson, Wm. Forgie, John Calder, A. J. Leslie, Robert S. Marshall, Jacob A. Douglas.

A. W. WRIGHT, Chairman

S. A. PENNOCK, Secretary