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# Anniversary

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## St. Andrew's Church Niagara

1794 - 1831 - 1911

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A Paper Read on August 21st, by Janet Carnochan.

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*Best Dennis wishes from the writer 1911*

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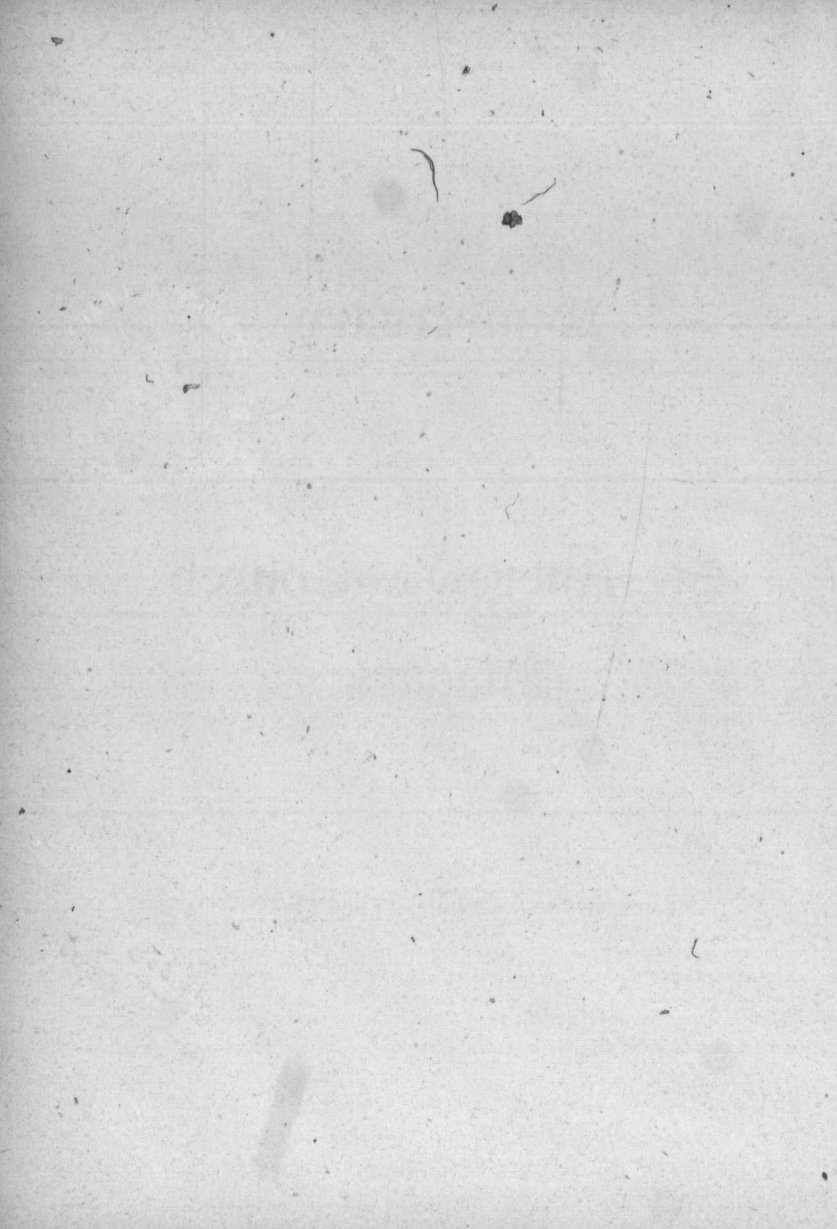
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## ANNIVERSARY

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## ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, NIAGARA

1794 - 1831 - 1911

Having been asked to give an historical sketch of St. Andrew's, I feel it to be a high honor to be thus selected, but to tell the history of one hundred and seventeen years in fifteen or twenty minutes is certainly an impossible task, so that merely a few facts here and there can be given. It can have fallen to the lot of few people to have attended or been connected with five centenaries all in one little town, but such I have witnessed. In 1884, on the common, was held the centennial of the landing of the U. E. Loyalists; in 1892, in the park, the meeting of parliament here in 1792, the same year the centennial of St. Mark's, and in 1894 that of our own St. Andrew's, while in 1908 was held the centennial of the grammar school, founded here in 1808. To St. Andrew's belongs the honor of having the first church erected in Niagara, and one of the first in Ontario. The earliest, and still standing, the Mohawk Church near Brantford, 1786; that at Williamstown, Presbyterian, 1787, and Stamford Associate Presbyterian Church, formed in 1784, erected a church in 1791, St. Mark's, in town, was not begun till 1804, nor used for service till 1809, although a missionary came in 1792. Our old record book is dated 30th Sept., 1794, and the words of the fathers of the church are worth recording: "A number of people met this day and resolved that 'As religion is the foundation of all societies, and which cannot so strictly be adhered to without having a place dedicated solely to divine purposes, that a Presbyterian Church should be erected in the town of Newark, and that subscriptions for that purpose be immediately set on foot, as well for the support of a clergyman of the same persuasion.'" The committee consisted of John Young, Ralfe Clench, Andrew Heron, Robt. Kerr, Alexander Gardiner, Wm. McLellan, Alexander Hemphill. A descendant of one of

these is living in the town now, of another in St. Catharines, and a card was received from a great-grandson of a third in Pontiac, Michigan. The agreement to pay the first clergyman, John Dun, £100 yearly for three years, is dated June, 1794, and a letter of Richard Cartwright, Newark, 1792, states that the Scots Presbyterians of Niagara have built a meeting house and expect a clergyman shortly, which would seem to shew that some sort of building was used two years before 1794. The size of the building was 40 x 32, and we learn from the Gleaner of 1831 that the present church was erected on the same spot as that on which the former church stood. In the old record book we find the number of windows, the panes of glass in each, the size of timbers—much heavier than those now used. No time seems to have been lost, as we see that a meeting is recorded of the managers, in the church, 24th Sept., 1795, and pews were sold 20th March, 1796. The deed granting lots 157, 158, 184, 185, four acres, is dated 1795, for a Presbyterian church and schoolhouse, the statement being made "that this land cannot be purchased, donated or otherwise disposed of on any pretext whatever, without the permission of the Executive Council." The amount subscribed was £215. Mr. Dun remained for three years and then engaged in trade, and we find was drowned in Lake Ontario by the loss of the vessel on which he sailed from Oswego to Niagara. The Rev. Jno. Young came from Montreal in 1802, as minister, and also taught a school. In the same year the thanks of the congregation are given to Mr. Jno. McFarland for the bell which he had presented to the church.

There are many points in which the history of the church and the history of the country touch one another, as the War of 1812, the marriage law, the clergy reserves, the rebellion, petitions to governors general, the Queen, and a little circumstance connected with the Rev. Jno. Young throws a curious light on other days, showing that in spite of denominational differences acts of kindness and courtesy had been extended by Protestants and Catholics alike. While Mr. Young was the minister in Montreal in 1791, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by him to

his congregation in the Recollet Roman Catholic Church, the use of which had been kindly allowed while their own was being built. The Recollet Fathers politely refused any compensation, but accepted a present of two hogsheads of Spanish wine and a box of candles, and the manuscript quaintly says: "Were quite thankful for the same." Mr. Young was to have the privilege of teaching thirteen scholars Latin, Greek and mathematics if he wished, for the additional sum of £50.

In 1805 the Rev. Jno. Burns came and preached alternately here and at Stamford. We find his name till 1817 at intervals. It was a gallant struggle kept up by this congregation, with no allowance from any society, no help from government as had St. Mark's, struggling under a load of debt with many breaks from confusion caused by the war, only by the strenuous exertions of its people could the congregation be held together. Mr. Burns was the first teacher of the grammar school founded in 1808. The Lundy's Lane Historical Society has published a sermon preached by him in Stamford church, January, 1814, the text being: Prov. 24, 21, and he quotes the words of Nehemiah to the Israelites, which were equally appropriate to Canadians in the presence of an armed and numerous enemy: "Be not afraid of them, remember the Lord who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses." And they did remember when, a few months after, on that sultry day of July the farmers left their wheat fields to fight till midnight hand to hand for the possession of the hill close to the old church, the most closely contested and most sanguinary of any battle of that war, and from their bravery on that field four British regiments—the King's 8th, the Royal Scots, the 41st and 89th—bear the word Niagara on their colors.

During the war Mr. Heron, the secretary and treasurer and several other members of the church, were sent prisoners to Greenbush, after the capture of Niagara, 27th May, 1813, and in September we find the church was set on fire by the enemy, some months before the town was burned, St. Mark's being stone, the walls remained, while the heavy timbers of St. Andrew's only served to

feed the flames more fiercely. In 1818 we read of a meeting in the schoolhouse, now the sexton's house, and a collection made to repair the windows and building. Here services were held till 1831. Shewing the interest in education we find that the school kept here was under the care of the church. In all the struggle to keep up services, Andrew Heron was a potent factor, as when a deficit occurred he always as treasurer advanced money. In 1804 he presented a bill of £175, which was approved, and we hear more of this in after years. In 1821, at a meeting in the schoolhouse: "Resolved to put themselves under the Presbytery," and six elders were chosen—Andrew Heron, W. D. Miller, John Crooks, John Wagstaff, John Grier, John Munro. The daughter of one of these is with us tonight. The Rev. William Smart of Brockville was appointed the commissioner, the Rev. John Burns presiding. For several years we have no record of any settled minister, but to St. Andrew's church belongs the honor of having had the first Sunday school in the town. The superintendent was Mr. John Crooks, and lately was found in a crevice of the wall at Lake Lodge, the former residence of Rev. R. Addison, the names of the first class; children of all denominations belonged, as also the teachers and Rev. Thos. Creen, who afterwards became rector of St. Mark's, taught. Mr. Crooks often conducted divine worship directly after Sunday school, 2.30. A curious reminiscence was given of another superintendent, Dr. Miller, who had the children commit to memory a curious sort of acrostic of the names of Christ, a text for each letter of the alphabet, and his daughter, Mrs. Comer, when an old woman of 84, recited this to me in her sweet quavering voice.

In 1818 the Rev. Chas. Jas. Cook officiated, and in the Gleaner of 1819 I lately discovered the account of a meeting in June in the schoolhouse when a memorial was to be presented to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, praying him to recommend that the losses by destruction of the church by the enemy be a special case either to Provincial Parliament or to His Royal Highness, "that the building committee be aided by the receipt of the value of the church destroyed in consequence of being occupied by His Majesty's army during

the late war." This reminds us that somewhere it was stated that compensation was refused because "the spire of the church was used for taking observations of the enemy," 2nd, that the committee, "notwithstanding the magnitude of their own personal and individual losses, sincerely regret that they have so long neglected the first and greatest and most important of all duties, the raising again the house and dwelling place of their God, fully assured that they can expect but little prosperity or happiness in their own while the habitation of Heaven remains trodden under their feet; 3rd, that the meeting feels it to be their duty to exert their utmost ability in supplying money to erect again the Temple of Holiness, and to build again a house for Him who in ages past was the Lord God of Israel, but whom now with mingled emotions of gratitude and delight they are enabled to name the Lord God of Niagara, the Lord God of the Canadas, the Lord God of the Christian world." The last two lines are printed in capital letters. While the sentiment expressed is proper, a less magniloquent style and less tautology might improve the resolutions. A building committee was appointed for the immediate erection of a church, but probably from delay in obtaining compensation ten years elapsed before this was done. £400 was finally granted in 1824, but paid in instalments at long intervals, and the same year the old account of £176 was presented with interest for twenty years, making the amount £317, nearly the whole sum allowed. This seems not to have been settled till 1833, when in the small clear writing of W. D. Miller, interest is allowed for nine years, four and two-third months, till the church was burned, the commissioners not allowing interest after that. The Rev. Thos. Fraser came in 1827, and in 1829 a call was sent to the Presbytery of Glasgow to the Rev. Robt. McGill, who came in October, in the steamboat Canada from Kingston, accompanied by the Rev. John Machar.

Many of the documents copied in the record book may be said to be a part of the history of Canada, as letters bearing on the vexed question of the Clergy Reserves, the Status of Presbyterian Ministers, the share of money allotted to ministers of the Church of Scotland, petitions to the Queen, to the Governor, all showing the determina-



tion of this people to have their rights, not by violence but by strictly constitutional means. A curt letter of Dr. McGill to the quarter sessions with regard to the right to perform the marriage ceremony, shews the feeling of a dignified minister of the Established Church of Scotland at finding this permission to be necessary. Next comes the petition to Sir Jno. Colborne, complaining of their rights being infringed by the establishment of a rectory, which "is incompatible with privileges granted by the Act of Union between England and Scotland."

In 1830 subscriptions were started for a new church amounting to £760, the church to seat 600. In 1831 an acre of land was granted for a manse. In 1838 a glimpse of the Rebellion is given, as the annual meeting was deferred on account of the members being engaged in military duty. In the Gleaner for 1831 I lately found an account of laying the corner stone of St. Andrew's church, in which it is mentioned that it was on the exact spot on which the former church stood. The foundation stone was laid on 31st May, 1831, at 4 p.m.; the prayer and address of Dr. McGill are given in full, the list of articles deposited, coins, newspapers, names signed by minister, elders, trustees, building committee, contractors, members, officers commanding 79th Highlanders, the band of which played. The prayer was short but comprehensive: "Almighty and Eternal, Creator of Heaven and Earth, be pleased to prosper by Thy gracious providence this undertaking and enable us happily to complete what we have piously begun. Preserve this building from fire, flood, storms, and all accidents, that it may be a sanctuary of thy sincere worshippers to remote times. May those by whose sincere liberality it is erected long enjoy within its walls the blessings of a pure Gospel faithfully administered and bequeath it to their posterity as evidence of their concern for the real and immortal welfare of their children and their country. And may a seed arise up to serve and praise Thee when we are joined to our Father in the temple above. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal and Invisible, the only true God, the Supreme Architect and Ruler of Heaven and Earth, be honor and glory for ever, Amen." It is remarkable that the church has suf-

fered from lightning, fire and storms referred to in the prayer, but we are thankful to say that in spite of all these it has been preserved from destruction and still stands. The address was, in part, as follows :—

“Ladies and gentlemen,—We shall regard this as a memorable and auspicious day from which we date the erection of a church which shall, I trust, be a blessing not only to ourselves but to those who shall come after us \* \* \* For myself, ladies and gentlemen, may I be permitted to say that much as we are interested in the present work, we are more deeply concerned in the great design of which this building is only one of the external means of promoting—the leading men to the chief corner stone laid in Zion—elect and precious upon which all true Christians are built, a spiritual house, an Holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. \* \* \* May it be our task and our pleasure to complete what we have now begun. And when time at some period far remote shall have crumbled the structure we are about to erect, and when other hands shall raise from this stone the memorials of our day which we have now deposited in it, I trust it will only be to erect a more magnificent and durable structure, to be the house of prayer to a numerous population more distinguished for wisdom and zeal and piety than we are, who shall then be sleeping in the dust around, perhaps unknown but assuredly not unrewarded.” \* \* \*

In the pastorate of Dr. McGill occurred the Disruption in Scotland when out of sympathy with their brethren there, although there was no similar reason in Canada, many left the Established Church and formed what was called the Free Church. In the old record book there is no reference to the loss sustained in St. Andrew's, but in the session book are the names of several families whose names are dropped from the roll. A gallant battle they fought to support the views they held. They built the brick edifice in the centre of the town now occupied by the Methodist church. The pastors were the Rev. Jos. Harris, Rev. Jno. Alexander, Rev. Jas. Pirie, Rev. F. McCuaig. When the union of the Presbyterian churches took place in 1875, the Rev. C. Campbell, pastor of St. Andrew's, said :—  
“This is not a question for us to settle now, to all

intents and purposes it is a Union long since consummated, for we have been united for some time and need no ordnance of union." The church was sold, the money being used for the renovation of the present church, with the co-operation of Mr. R. N. Ball, the ruling elder.

A petition to the Queen from St. Andrew's, in 1842, complains that the Presbyterians had not obtained their share in the settlement of the Clergy Reserves in 1840, by the mistakes in the census in 1839. There were then in the congregation 142 families, giving the number in each family, making 628 altogether. This was in the palmy days of Niagara, when the church was filled above and below during ship building, and when British troops were stationed here and Niagara was the county town for three counties; only one pew and two half pews were not taken. A legacy of £750 was left by John Young "for the perpetual maintenance of divine ordinances in this church," and with this sum the present manse, built by Dr. McGill, was purchased by the congregation. The handsome pulpit was also the gift of Mr. Young. Dr. McGill removed to Montreal in 1845. It is singular that while Montreal gave a minister to Niagara in 1802, Rev. Jno. Young, that the chief city of Canada should now be indebted to Niagara for an able preacher gracing the pulpit of St. Paul's for many years. A few still remember the stately commanding presence, the rich full voice, the dignified bearing of this divine. A book of prayers and meditations by him was published here in Niagara, and a book of sermons in Montreal, and a magazine, *The Christian Examiner*, was published here many years, of which he was the editor. The Rev. Jno. Cruikshank followed, and was succeeded by the Rev. J. B. Mowat in 1849, of whom it may be said that he loved his people and his people loved and revered their pastor. It was one of the strange coincidences of life that the daughter of the manse, Miss McGill, born there, should return as the pastor's wife and die there after one short year of married life. The zeal of Mr. Mowat was shewn by his preaching to the colored people of the town in their chapel, and also driving to Queenston to preach in the old church there. Dr. Mowat accepted a professorship in Queen's University, Kingston, and was succeeded by

Rev. Chas. Campbell in 1858, who during twenty years preached scholarly sermons and endeared himself by his kindness to all in trouble. The decease of Wm. Duff Miller is recorded by him in stately periods—"who for nearly fifty years worthily and actively filled the office of elder to the day he rested from his labors." St. Andrew's has been fortunate to have as pastors so many gifted men, and also several officers remarkable for their length of service, as Mr. Jno. Rogers, who as a boy worshipped in the first church, and sat for fifty years in the same seat in this church, than whom no more gentle, amiable spirit ever worshipped within these walls. A period of 120 years is covered by the names of Andrew Heron 32 years, W. D. Miller 42 years, John Rogers 46 years, as office bearers, while in later years another period of 126 years—George Dawson 43 years, Robert Ball 43 years and James McFarland 40 years. It may be questioned if any other church can produce such a record, while a present Sunday school teacher has reached the 40th year.

In 1854 a glebe was purchased with £150 given by the Clergy Reserve Commissioners, the people raising £50 to complete the purchase. In 1852 was purchased the bell still in use, and twice in this period the church suffered serious loss from a tornado and a stroke of lightning, and little more than a year ago the spire was struck by lightning, but little damage was done. The introduction of an organ took place in Mr. Campbell's pastorate, the musical services having always before been led by a precentor. In 1878 the Rev. W. Cleland became the pastor, in whose time a new organ was obtained. He was followed by Rev. J. W. Bell, whose pastorate is still remembered with pleasure. In that period the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was formed, and also the Young People's Christian Union, and in 1884 the Rev. N. Smith came, who for twenty years ministered, and during whose pastorate the membership increased and the church was thoroughly renovated and the Sunday school increased in numbers. For a short time the Rev. A. Duncan was the pastor, succeeded in 1895 by our present pastor, the Rev. A. F. MacGregor, B.A., a profound and original thinker, as well as a student, whose eloquent, sometimes fiery, sermons rouse us to action. Last year the Young People's

Christiam Endeavor celebrated their 25th anniversary, purchased a new organ, and this year a new Esty organ has been placed in the church by the exertions of the choir.

Of the thirteen pastors during the hundred and seventeen years, whose nationality is known, seven have belonged to Scotland, one to England, one to Ireland, and four to our own loved Ontario. In the north outside wall of the church a small tablet has the words: "The Minister's Burying Ground." Is it not strange that in all those years no minister of the church died here, so that but for an infant of a day this square is unoccupied. They rest in far different graves—one in the depths of Lake Ontario, one in Montreal, one in Scotland, one in Kingston, another in Toronto and one of the earliest in Stamford.

In January, 1894, at the congregational meeting, it was resolved to celebrate the centennial of the church. This was held on the 19th, 20th and 21st August. Invitations were sent to all former members and descendants of such whose addresses could be obtained, and though many difficulties were met with by the committee, one of the city papers spoke of the celebration as "A National Event," so many descendants of former ministers, elders and members came, some from long distances, to be present. On Saturday Sir Oliver Mowat, the Premier of the Province, gave a reminiscient address, and Sir John Beverley Robinson also spoke, and former pastors, and the occasion was one of pleasant interchange of reminiscences of those who had not met for years. On Sunday Rev. Dr. Mowat preached from the high pulpit in the gown by request. On Monday night the Rev. Wm. Ball was listened to with delight as he peopled the pews with their former occupants as he remembered them. He was one of four who went out from this congregation to proclaim the tidings of the cross. Rev. John Barr, Rev. David Niven, Rev. Alexander Dawson, Rev. Wm. Ball, and one a former president of the Christian Endeavor, Miss Minnie Smith, now Mrs. Robertson, is at the present time a missionary in China, and her brother, a son of the manse, is now preparing for the ministry. Who will be the next to do likewise?

What varied scenes have these walls witnessed.

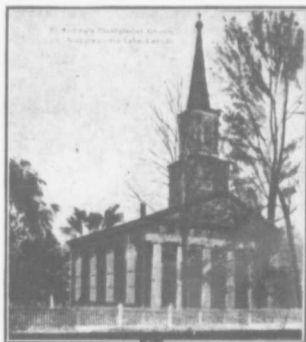
Here Gough, the great temperance lecturer, spoke in 1852, when 800 were present. Here was performed Handel's Messiah by the choir, under the leadership of Bandmaster Harkness of the Royal Canadian Rifles. What an endless procession of scholars in the Sunday School, of Christian Endeavorers, of teachers, sextons, precentors, choirs, members, managers, elders, pastors; what their sorrows, their joys, their hopes, their fears, their aspirations for a higher life, their vows, their prayers, how far reaching the influences exerted, we may not know.

May St. Andrew's be still more prosperous, may the members of other anniversaries look back on the past with thankful hearts as we now do, notwithstanding all the difficulties, the vicissitudes, the dark days as well as the bright days. May St. Andrew's flourish. May our Heavenly Father, who has allowed us to see this day with thankful hearts, still support and guide us and enable us to do more for the advancement of His Kingdom than we have done in the past.

The words of the dedication of the Centennial book of St. Andrew's, published in 1895, and its closing words, may be quoted here: "To the present and former members of St. Andrew's, some of them in distant parts of the American continent, but all cherishing the memory of the church in which they once worshipped, and the lessons learned there, this humble volume is dedicated by the writer."

And the closing words of George MacDonald in one of his works: "I delighted to think that even by the temples made by hands outlasting these bodies of ours, we were in a sense united to those who in them had before us lifted up prayerful hands without wrath or doubting. And I thought how many witnesses to the truth had sat in these pews. I honored the place; I rejoiced in its history; it soothed me and turned me to a holy mood. Therefore I would far rather, when I may, worship in an old church."

PROGRAMME  
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION  
ST. ANDREW'S  
NIAGARA-ON-THE LAKE



1794    ◁    1831    ▷    1911

NIAGARA, AUG. 10th, 1911.

DEAR FRIEND :

A cordial invitation is hereby extended to you to be present at the Anniversary of St. Andrew's Church, which celebrates the eightieth year since the building of the present church, and the one hundred and seventeenth of the first building and organization of the church. Services will be held on Sabbath, August 20th, and on the evening of August 21st.

J. CARNOCHAN,  
Sec. of Committee.

A. F. MacGREGOR,  
Pastor.

## General Programme

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The services on Sabbath, August 20th, will be conducted by Rev. James Barber, M.A., of Niagara Falls; morning and evening at 11 a.m. and 7.30 p.m., and several brief talks will be given in the afternoon to the Sunday School at 3 p.m. by visiting friends.

On Monday evening, at 8 o'clock, a Platform Anniversary Meeting will be held, with brief addresses by Revds. D. H. Fletcher, D.D., Clerk of the Presbytery, Hamilton; J. H. Ratcliffe, D.D., St. Catharines; G. Munro, St. Davids; R. C. Brownlee, D.D., Niagara Falls, N. Y.; Jas. Barber, M. A., Niagara Falls, Ont.; J. H. Bell, M.A., Kew Beach; N. Smith, of Toronto, and the local clergy.

A brief historical sketch will be read by Miss Carnochan, and there will be closing words by the pastor.

A suitable programme of music will be rendered by the choir, under the leadership of Mr. W. D. Caskey.

### POSTSCRIPT.

When the celebration of this anniversary was decided upon, it was not contemplated to make any special financial appeal, but a very generous offer from one of the friends worshipping with us since this note of invitation was placed in the hands of the printer, has impressed the duty of our accepting the conditions of the offer so that our church may be entirely free of debt. "We can and we will."