

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

DEC.

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., DECEMBER, 1897.

No. 12

## Christmas.

Christmas is the children's festival. Its memories cluster around a manger cradle bed and the Holy Child. It is the festival of the children because they gather many of them from the school to the dear old home. The Yule log blazes up the chimney, the holly berries and evergreens cover the walls, there is good cheer and gladness. Father forgets his cares, mother her anxieties, and they wait to welcome their rosy-cheeked children under the Christmas tree. In far off years these dancing, merry children will remember the Christmas-tide. When in life's battle temptation assails, and courage flags, and hope grows dim, this scene of home at Christmas time will rise in the weary heart, and all its sacred memories will come with strength and with comfort. No barrier is so strong against all evil as is the bright memory of a pure and happy home. The family circle, father, mother, sister—this is the golden band of life. The man who has such memories is rich beyond the dreams of avarice; he has motives to nobleness which impel him to act worthily; he has pride of birth kings might envy, which saves him from every thought which would dim the beauty of the pictures which are enshrined in his heart of hearts. Let,

then, father and mother abound in the wealth of affection. Their image as it is now, the mother as she meets her boy at the gate; father as he takes his tender, sunny girl on his knee—these are pictures which, taken by instantaneous and mystic photography, shall remain upon the children's hearts indelibly. Nor ought the vacant chair to mar the general joy. Is the absent lad not rising in the esteem of his employer in far distant city? Is the girl who is not here with her young husband gathering around her bright and affectionate hearts who shall rise up and call her blessed? Are these letters not pleasant reading from absent loved ones? Do these Christmas gifts not have a double blessing—gifts which come from son or daughter to aged parents to cheer them at this Christmas-tide? Not even where the chair is vacant because a dear one has gone never to return, should grief be allowed on such a day to dim the joy. For have they not reached home and await to welcome their loved ones? The Star of Bethlehem is bright with hope, resplendent with the light of heaven. But there are those who have no home; sad and weary they tread the horrid solitudes of crowded cities; they see through windows Christmas cheer, or as they pass an opened door they hear the laughter of children, the

greeting of meeting hearts, and they feel the smell of rich food, and see the gleaming lights that brighten the glad circle they may not enter. But even to the lonely and the desolate this festival is an earnest of the coming joy. Their journey may be dreary, but it is after all the way to the Father's house. Does their conscience upbraid them with unworthiness? Does memory tell them of a bitter and bad past? The Christmas bells ring out for them a glad jubilee. Oblivion of all the past may be theirs, for reconciliation and forgiveness sound in every peal. Hope, like a gentle sister, whispers in the ear of the saddest soul and bids the most desolate take heart again. In the sick wards of the hospital the nurse, a very angel of blessing, sings on such a night some Christmas carol, while tears stream down her own cheeks as she thinks of her old home, of the sorrow, it may be, which like the hand of a Father has brought her to this noble work, to this holy office, the sick child turns to her, as she whispers that it is Christmas day, with a smile which repays her for all her care; the great big man who has been maimed for life looks in her face and feels in his heart that he is not forsaken, and that the gift of the Holy Child is a mysterious but trusty pledge that he is not forgotten, and that his trouble must in the end be for his good. The prisoner, lonely and lost, hears, through his prison bars, the peals of Christmas bells, and forms new resolves, and as he recollects memories of innocence in the

old home, his cheeks are wet with penitential and blessed tears. Christmas bids the estranged brother forgive a wrong; it tells the friends who are divided to abandon hate and clasp hands in friendship. Christmas bids nations lay down their feuds, abandon their jealousies, and reminds all that we are brethren. Christmas recalls to our hearts the deep debt we owe; nor can we ever repay it, for He whose birth we celebrate is beyond the eager love of those who would delight to minister to His wants, to pour all that is most precious in their lives at His feet. But before He left this sorrow-stricken world He said: "I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and visited thee? And the King shall answer, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto ME!"

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It is surprising that people do not get weary of the eternal round of barren controversy which seems to be more than ever the chief characteristic of the present age. Turn where we will we stumble across an argument, or find the way barred by a demonstration. If anything prac-

tical be attempted, hundreds of critics are bursting to show that it is based on wrong principles, or involves ruinous results. Nothing will satisfy these self-appointed guardians of Providence unless the scheme be of their own devising, and then it would only be approved by its author alone. But, as a rule, these gentry are wise in their generation. Construction is not their peculiar mission. It is easier to criticise, and an assumption of authority in that case better conceals the essential poverty of the equipment which shows so well behind the veil of anonymity.

Yet there probably never was a time when so many really good, earnest and able men clearly perceive the tendency of the times, or are more bold and fearless in pointing out the true path. The social system which prevails, not only in the old, but also in the new world, is daily adding to the number of socialists, anarchists and all the other leprous spawn which spring from a decaying social condition. What could be more thoroughly satisfactory in tone than the eloquent orations delivered with so much unction from the platform, the pulpit, or the Synod or Assembly floor. The force of conviction is there, the strength of sound argument, the consciousness that what is advocated is not only consonant with, but enjoined by the spirit of Christianity. But what does it all come to? The fervour of the moment may stir a responsive chord in the breasts of the auditors, but the vibrations soon die away. Nothing is done. Things jog on very much

as they did before. Agencies and societies are multiplied by the dozen, to rescue those whose fall is the result of an indefensible social economy. But the root of the matter—the regeneration of society on truer and more Christ-like lives—remains as untouched as before.

The pursuit of wealth and pleasure is still the chief end of nineteenth century man. Before the shrine of the great god Mammon still bow thousands and millions who place their *summum bonum*—their greatest good—in the acquirement of gain, that with it they may live luxurious days. Enlightened selfishness is the principle which to-day governs the business relations of the capitalist and the workman, and of man and man. A demand, whether on the one side or the other, which threatens to reduce profits or diminish wages is looked upon as a wicked and unjustifiable act, quite irrespective of the merits of the case, or the reasonableness of the request. Jealousy and suspicion reign where instead there should be sympathy and generosity. The remedy is simple, and is in the hand and mouth of every man. It is preached every Sunday from hundreds of pulpits; is expounded in books and journals by the hundred weight and yard; is the theme of lecture and oration, and yet who is there that carries the golden rule into his business? For is it not part of the creed of a nineteenth century man, that there are no friends in business? No indeed the rule of trade is—

“The good old rule, the simple plan,  
That they should take who have the  
power,  
And they should keep who can.”

But men have still to learn that the golden rule of Christ is the only principle which can heal the evils of our social estate, and restore to the world the virtues and the graces which are now conspicuous by their absence, and for which nothing can avail.

The natural man craves the things that are open to sense, but even when they are enjoyed most abundantly there is still an unmet want. It is a matter of common experience that happiness and abundance of world's goods do not go hand in hand. Solomon in the midst of his magnificence confessed that he had not satisfaction. The divine nature demands the substance that fadeth not away. We recognise this in our own way, for however we may be deceived by the glitter of earthly splendor, our true admiration is reserved for those who even in the midst of difficulty have been true to themselves. We speak of our better nature, and it is that that distinguishes us as men, and it is only as we submit to its rule that we are doing well our part, and serving God in our spirits and bodies, which are His.

To be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ is simply to be true to the nature that God has implanted in us. So long as we despise His teaching, and live as seems good in our own eyes we are thwarting the object of our creation and wasting our substance in riotous living.

The purpose of Christ's life and death is to restore us to our lost inheritance and live worthy of the name of Him whose children we

are. He has marked the path that leads to the perfection of our manhood and the glory of immortality.

We take pride in our nation's history, and he is the veriest coward who would not “drain his dearest veins” that he might be free. Shall we submit ourselves to a bondage more degrading than the loss of our civil liberty? Does not the example of Christ appeal to us with renewed force when we realise that the life which He lived is the only life that is proper to our birth, and that faith in Him is the living force that can redeem us and perfect us in His being.

“As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Adam's disobedience secured expulsion from Eden. Christ's obedience triumphed over sin and death and raised Him to the right hand of God. If we would exalt our manhood we must strive to subordinate our earthly desires to do the will of God, and look to Him who was tempted in all points like as we are, and yet without sin.

#### St. David's Church, St. John.

A very interesting and impressive service was held in St. David's Church, on Sunday, 12 Dec., when four new elders were ordained. At the beginning of the service the Session was called to the front and constituted by the moderator. Public worship was then conducted, an able sermon being preached by the Rev. Dr. Bruce, from Song of Solomon, vi., v. 10. The edict of ordination was certified as having been duly read and no objection having been made to the life, character or doctrine of the elders-elect, the usual questions prescribed for such occasions were put to them and satisfactorily answered. Whereupon after prayer to God, the Moderator in

name of the Session solemnly set apart Messrs. S. Rutherford Jack, Andrew Malcolm, W.S. Morrison, M.D. and Alex. Watson as elders, and admitted them to the exercise of the duties of that office in St. David's congregation with all the privileges pertaining thereto. The right hand of fellowship was extended to the newly ordained elders, and the moderator addressed them and the congregation regarding their respective duties. The service was then concluded in the usual manner. Despite the wet and disagreeable weather, a large number witnessed the interesting ceremony.

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#### St. Stephen's Church St John.

The W. F. M. S. of this church held their annual thank-offering on Wednesday, Dec. 8. A most interesting and instructive service was held, and the sum of \$32 was raised for the benefit of the Society.

This church has inaugurated a new era in its history. It has decided to try for one year the system of collecting weekly by envelopes, for the Schemes of the Church. We wish them all success in their efforts at realising what is the ideal way of raising contributions for such objects.

The at home, held on the evening of Monday, Dec. 6, in St. Stephen's church school-room, when the Guild entertained the young people's societies of the different Presbyterian churches of the city, was a most pleasant social gathering. No pains were spared by the different committees in preparing for their guests, and the room, being artistically decorated with floral and other decorations, presented a pretty and homelike appearance. When all were assembled

a few cordial words of welcome were spoken by the pastor, Rev. Mr. Fraser, B. D., who is also president of the Guild, and to whose energy and public spirit not only much of the success of the Guild is due but even its existence. During the evening several musical selections were well rendered and much enjoyed. Ice cream was served and the members of the Guild seemed to form themselves into one grand social committee for the evening, vieing with each other in endeavoring to make their guests feel perfectly at home and to promote sociability, and it is needless to say that success attended their efforts, for the verdict of all was that seldom had an evening spent in like manner been more enjoyable.

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#### Carleton.

The Ladies' Aid Society of the First Presbyterian Church, St. John West, held a Mother Goose entertainment on the evening of Thursday, 9th December. The programme consisted of a fancy sale and concert. A large crowd patronized the gathering. The affair proved very pleasant and enjoyable, and was very successful in every respect.

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#### Milltown.

The thanksgiving offering taken in St. James Presbyterian Church on Thanksgiving Sunday, amounted to \$235.

The Y. P. S. C. E. held a fancy sale and concert in the Congregational Vestry on Tuesday, 7th December, which was very successful. The sum of \$180 was raised.

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### Woodstock.

The W. F. M. S. of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, held their annual meeting on Tuesday, 7th December, at the residence of Mrs. Charles McLean. The following officers were elected. President, Mrs. Frank Rankine; 1st Vice-president, Mrs. Charles. McLean; 2nd Vice-president, Mrs. Donald Munro; Treasurer, Mrs. Donald Munro; Secretary, Mrs H. V. Dalling; Corresponding Secretary, Miss E. Henderson.

Of the funds allocated, the sum of \$12 was voted to the North End Mission, St. John.

The Mission Band for part of the year had collected over \$28, the largest amount gathered by the band in one year. Miss Pearl McKibbon is treasurer of the Band.

CHURCH AND HOME desires to express its sympathy with the family of Rev. William Ross, of Prince William, in the bereavement they have suffered through the loss of their youngest child—Maud. May He who alone can give comfort speak peace to their aching hearts is our earnest prayer.

### Fairville.

During the latter part of November a series of union evangelistic meetings have been held in this community. Services were held alternately in the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist Churches. The pastors were assisted by Rev. Mr. Martin, an evangelist from the States. Large crowds attended the meetings and much good seems to have been done. The various churches since Mr. Martin's departure have been conducting separate meetings in their own edifices with good results. Rev. Dr. Bruce assisted Mr. Morton in the Presbyterian Church, on Dec. 10., at what was considered to be the last of the present series. The meetings have directed attention to the things that make for righteousness, and much good has been accomplished by the services.



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### The Old and New Theology.

Psalm ci. 1. — "I will sing of mercy and judgment."

This is the 250th anniversary of the adoption by the Scottish Kirk of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Shorter Catechism; and Presbyterians throughout the world are taking advantage of this opportunity to remind themselves and others that ours is a church with no mean history—that the Scottish symbols and liturgy were venerable before they were replaced two and a half centuries ago by the Westminster Confession and Directory of Worship—that the Presbyterian church was once the national church of the three kingdoms—that ever since, though scattered in many parts of the world, we have been a united church in doctrine and government. It is quite satisfying to our denominational pride thus to trace our ancient and honorable lineage; and if we are in any danger of being blinded by the dazzling glories of the past to present demands and future needs, let us hope that some Kipling will sound a warning note in the midst of our jubilee rejoicings, and teach our church the humble prayer:

"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,  
Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

It seems, however, that we are more enthusiastic over "Historic Presbyterianism" than the Westminster Assembly—that we are not nearly so proud of our creed as we are of our history. We join heartily in celebrating the past glories of our church, her present eminent qualifications for service, the splendid hope which lights up her future. We all acknowledge that the Westminster Assembly of Divines was one of the most respectable church councils that ever met, from the standpoint of both learning and piety. No one will deny that the Confession of Faith

and Shorter Catechism were wonderful documents for the age that produced them. And yet there are indications that nineteenth century thought and experience are outgrowing both the form and content of the seventeenth century theology.

Professor Bruce says that the Shorter Catechism has extensively fallen into desuetude in Scotland; and among ourselves it does not occupy in family life anything like the place it once did. A quarter of a century ago Calvinism—which is the theological system embodied in our standards—was the dominant theology in all parts of the Presbyterian church; to-day the report comes to us that the Confession of Faith has been allowed to go out of print in Scotland. Colonists are generally more conservative than they who stay at home, but even in Canada there are not wanting signs that Calvinism is being outgrown by our most effective preachers and best thinkers. Our ministers teach doctrines which are scarcely in harmony with some parts of the Confession, and the ordination vow to be faithful to its teachings is very charitably interpreted by all our church courts. The life of one of our greatest and best Canadian ministers, recently published, reveals the agony of soul which he experienced at the time of his ordination. His conscience may have been morbidly fastidious; but we cannot read the story of his life without regret, that one who loved, as he did, his mother church, who could not be happy in any other, who was afire with noble enthusiasm to serve the Lord, could only enter upon the service to which God had called him by formal subscription to a creed which was a partial and defective symbol of his personal faith. His is the experience of many young candidates for the ministry; and this is an evidence that our present standards do not

adequately represent the living faith of our church.

We hear much in these days of the old and new theology; but we can scarcely be said to have a new theology. If Calvinism has been deposed from its intellectual sovereignty, its throne is still vacant. If we have grown out of it, it has been so quietly and unconsciously that we awaken to the fact with a sort of shock. There has been no deliberate rejection of the old system; those who decry even to-day the work of the Westminster Divines enter on a thankless task. The fact is that theology proper has of late years been receiving very scant attention. The leading minds of the church have been abroad in the fields of literary criticism, historical research, biblical interpretation; and they have come back to find that the Calvinistic system no longer commands, as it once did, the intellectual homage of the church. The past generation has had many great scholars but few great constructive thinkers, and the result is that we have to-day no theology which receives our enthusiastic allegiance. We have discovered of late many valuable facts, but we have as yet built upon them no theological superstructure. We are rich in religious emotions, but we are wanting in ruling ideas. The church never had truer faith, richer passion, nobler enterprise than she has to-day, but these are without any sure and steadfast intellectual basis. We have a magnificent temple for the spirit, but none for the intelligence. Much of the material for constructing one has been gathered; but it is doubtful if all the preparatory work has yet been done for enabling the church to build a creed which will give "intellectual form and justification to the better sentiment of our time."

That there has been a reaction

from Calvinism, no one who has been watching the signs of the times can deny; and we can also catch glimpses of how the new theology, when it comes, will re-interpret some of the Confessional teachings. Reprobation as the final purpose of God will be replaced by reprobation as a stage in the Divine process of carrying out the purpose of universal mercy. God cast off the Jews that the fulness of the Gentiles might be gathered in and so all Israel be saved. He "concluded all under unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." That God decreed any soul to eternal death outrages our religious sense. The Christian consciousness of the church repudiates with indignation the awful idea. Our fundamental religious instinct: deny it. Willingness to be damned for the glory of God may be the mark of a fine humility, but it is a terrible insult to the Deity. The Glory of the Father and the highest welfare of his children are in perfect harmony. Reprobation is an awful fact; we find it in the history of the Jews, in the New Testament teachings, in the events of modern life; but it is not a final decree; it is a means toward realizing the purpose of Infinite Love.

Election, too, will find a place in the new theology, for it is clearly a doctrine of Scripture and a teaching of human history. But election is not for the salvation of the few but of the many. Abraham was elected that through him all ends of the earth should be blessed. Israel was elected to be the school for teaching to the world God and the righteous life. We in the Christian church are elected not to salvation merely but to privilege—a light to lighten the Gentiles. God chose the few that through them He might gather all unto Himself. Any doctrine of election that attributes partialism to God will find no place in our future thought.

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea.”

He is the Father of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; all mankind is the burden of His care; His love is as truly manifest in His punishments as in His forgiveness; the Divine Sovereignty is the Sovereignty of love; this is the richer truth of our time which will raise the Divine election from a partial decree to selfish salvation to a call to service, an election to privilege. The new theology will not likely dogmatize on the future of the race. There is manifest a reaction from the dark picture of the future as painted by the seventeenth century theologians. God will give to every child whom He has created a fair chance to attain to the best and highest of which he is capable. Everyone may not embrace his God-given privileges; but so long as any soul in this or any other world is willing to return to God, the Father’s arms will be outstretched in love to receive him. God’s revelation of Himself assures us that the Heart of the Eternal cannot but grieve over the lost—cannot but be lonely and unhappy so long as any soul in the universe remains in sin and misery. Further than this, we cannot say; we can but trust and hope. We are content to leave the veil which hides the inscrutable shadow. Our religious instincts, the trend of history, the teaching of the New Testament, the order of the moral world—all tell us that God is for us, and not against his children. In the midst of nature’s apparent cruelty and history’s inexpressible sternness, Jesus stands for the Eternal goodness of God. In the midst of human failures Jesus stands for the possibilities of every child of God. And in the presence of Him who is the Image of the Father and the anticipation of perfected humanity, we shall not utterly despair.

The poets are our greatest and safest religious teachers—they are highly gifted with faith, sanctified imagination, spiritual intuition—and how clear is their song of that “far-off divine event,” when God shall be all in all!

The “larger hope” which is becoming a part of our modern thought will not give us the dogma of universal salvation. Universalism, too, is dogmatic within a realm where we cannot know. It is a shallow optimism, which refuses to look on the darker side of human life, which disregards the judgments of God. It affirms that all men will finally be saved; and this new claim to omniscience we cannot acknowledge in place of the old. James Martineau said that only superficial and shallow minds refuse to recognize the Divine judgments, while men like Jesus and Plato looked them full in the face. He who told the beautiful story of the Father’s love for the prodigal son also spoke of “an eternal sin” which cannot be forgiven. No words are more comforting and inspiring than those which fell from the lips of Jesus, but how awfully severe He sometimes was! He spoke of the “outer darkness” which a man may deliberately enter; and that that darkness shall ever be dispelled we dare not affirm in the face of Jesus’ words: “It had been better for that man if he had never been born.” The process by which actions crystallize into habits and habits stereotype character will likely hold good in the future world as well as in this. A man may so act in this life that the finer qualities of his nature are destroyed; and if he persists in indulgence of passions which delight to feed alone in selfishness, is it not possible that he may lose his soul? He who sins, sins against his own life—such is the severity of God’s law. Whatever may become of the dogma of

"eternal torment," the principle of "Divine retribution" shall abide. It is a surface view of life which leads to the belief that all men are alike and will reach the same condition. Moral crises reveal the radical differences of men. Some are good, and are working upward by the principles of God; others are bad, and by lives of selfishness and moral degradation are heaping up unto themselves treasures of wrath.

The new theology "will sing of mercy and judgment." "Behold the goodness and severity of God." It will know of no salvation except that which consists in moral and spiritual character; and such salvation is no cheap and easy purchase. It costs pain and sacrifice on the part of every man who wins it. It can be bestowed only through the agony and bloody sweat of the human spirit. The way to heaven is the path of anguish. The brave and pure and true are toiling thither; but for the false and cowardly, the lazy and the vicious, so long as they are content to remain in the comfortable abode of the flesh, salvation is forever absolutely impossible. Such is God's judgment, and it is eternal. But the wrath of the Lamb is the symbol of His love. God's punishments are the token of His mercy. God is only against the man who is against himself; he is on the side of every one who is working his way up from bruteness to spiritual manhood. There is no decree which bids any man who would climb higher despair. The processes of the moral universe are making for the earnest seeker after God and the brave fighter for a pure heart. The old theology was not confident that God is for humanity; but the new will assure every soul who would be pure and good, and who is face to face with the tremendous issues of the moral life: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

### Presbytery.

A special meeting of the Presbytery was held in St. Andrew's Church, St. John, on Thursday, Dec. 2, at 2.30 o'clock, p. m. The Moderator's action in calling the meeting was sustained. A letter was laid before the meeting from Rev. Thos. Corbett resigning the pastoral charge of South Richmond congregation. The Clerk stated that he had cited the congregation to appear for its interests. A letter from the Elders and Trustees on behalf of the congregation was read in answer to the citation. They offered no objection to the acceptance of the resignation, while regretting that Mr. Corbett had seen fit to take the step he had. Mr. Corbett still adhered to his purpose of resigning Presbytery, with regret, accepted the same, to take effect at the end of December. Mr. Miller was appointed Moderator of Session during the vacancy. The pulpit is to be declared vacant on the first Sunday in January.

A discussion then ensued as to the advisability of celebrating the 250th anniversary of the completion of the Westminster Standards. Presbytery ultimately decided not at the present time to hold a celebration, but to refer the whole matter to the next regular meeting in the hope that a series of meetings might be held commemorative of the continuity of Presbyterianism.

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On Thursday evening, Dec. 9th, Rev. D. Fraser, late of Hampton, now of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, was presented with a handsome fur coat and driving gloves to match by a committee on behalf of the congregation.

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