

CHAPTER V.

CHURCH MATTERS, AND SOME OF THE EARLY MINISTERS.

AN account, however brief, of the early settlement would undoubtedly be incomplete should church matters be omitted from it, and it would be a gross mistake if the grand work done by the Presbyterian Church should fail to be recognised. The Presbyterian Church and the settlement had a common origin, and it is to the wise forethought of the Church authorities that Otago owes her proud pre-eminence in religious and educational work.

The earliest settlers were members of this Church, and laid its foundations immediately on their arrival. They brought their minister with them, also a school-master, the purpose being to found a settlement in accordance with the order of things in Scotland. Some provision was made with the idea of having a church and a primary school attached for every settled district, and of having in course of time a High School in the leading towns, with a University in the chief centres.

This noble scheme had a small beginning, one minister, one teacher, and one congregation, the record of whose work is an enduring monument for all time. The Rev. Thos. Burns, the first minister, was a noble specimen of the Scottish Pastorate, while the individuals and families composing the first settlers were well fitted to start the enterprise of pioneering a new branch of the British Empire. Such progress was made that ere six years had passed since the arrival of the first minister and the formation of the first congregation, several other congregations had arisen, and more ministers were needed.

In 1853 application was made to the Mother Church for two ministers, and the Revs. Wm. Bannerman and W. Will received appointments to Otago, where they arrived in the ship "Stately" early in 1854. They received a hearty welcome from the venerable founder of the

Church, who felt a great relief at the arrival of the brethren to share the great responsibilities which had hitherto rested on him alone.

In June, the Presbytery of Otago, consisting of the three ministers, with Captain Cargill and J. Allan as elders, was inaugurated. To these was added Mr. John McGlashan, and associated with the Presbytery were some elders, who could give the benefit of their experience and advice with the constituent members of the court. Very important business was transacted at this meeting, the most important being the institution of a Sustentation Fund.

Immediately on arrival Mr. Will proceeded to the field allotted to him, extending from Green Island to Waihola, both included. Mr. Bannerman occupied all the settled territory south of Waihola Lake, including Tokomairiro, Inch-Clutha, South Clutha, Wharepa, and Kaihiku. Two years after extending settlements southwards necessitated his visiting these, which he did at first on foot, journeying as far as Riverton, visiting the scattered settlers in their houses, holding public services where people could come together, celebrating marriages, and administering the ordinance of baptism. In 1858 the Rev. Wm. Johnstone, M.A., was settled in Port Chalmers, thus relieving Dr. Burns from that portion of his charge. In the same year Mr. Will was relieved of Waihola and adjoining districts by the settlement of Rev. John McNicol. In the following year Rev. A. B. Todd was inducted into Tokomairiro, disjoined from Mr. Bannerman's original charge. In 1860 Mr. Bannerman received further relief by the settlement of Rev. A. H. Stobo over First Church, Invercargill. While the Church was thus extending itself, it had become manifest that Dunedin required that an addition should be made to the ministry and the Church there. Steps were taken to secure a suitable minister, and these resulted in the selection of the Rev. D. M. Stuart, of Falstone, who arrived in Dunedin in January, 1860, and was inducted into the new charge, which had been designated Knox Church. Gradually the suburban districts around Dunedin also received ministers. The Presbytery guaranteed to those ministers who came from the Home Church a share in the Sustentation Fund, which in those days was so attended to as to yield an ever increasing dividend to each minister as their numbers increased. Besides guaranteeing to the ministers received

into the Church a suitable maintenance and a manse, the Church provided what was required for their outfit and passage from Home. The amount required for these was duly remitted to the Home Church, from which its Otago daughter sought nothing but suitable men, and to which it has been not otherwise indebted, being the only colonial Church that has not been pecuniarily assisted by the Mother Church.

The progress in Otago was such that in 1865 it was found to be necessary for the proper government of the Church to divide the then Presbytery of Otago into several Presbyteries, and to constitute a Synod as the Supreme Court of the Church. Three Presbyteries were instituted, and these have since increased to six, being only one less than the number of Presbyteries existing in the larger field occupied by the sister Church north of Otago (1898). The Synod was formally constituted January 16th, 1866, under the Moderatorship of Dr. Burns, the first meeting consisting of twenty-one ministers and ten elders. Each returning Synod has witnessed an increase of membership, significant of an increasing number of congregations, and fresh territory occupied by Presbyterian settlers. What that increase has been during the intervening years is indicated by the number of ministers and elders on the roll at the meeting of Synod in 1897. That roll bore the names of seventy-five ministers and seventy-one elders, in all 146, compared with the thirty-one members of the first Synod in 1866. Looking back over the years that are passed since first the Presbyterian Church took origin in Otago, she has good cause to thank God for the progress she has made, and hopefully to enter upon a fresh career of usefulness in the Master's work at home and abroad.

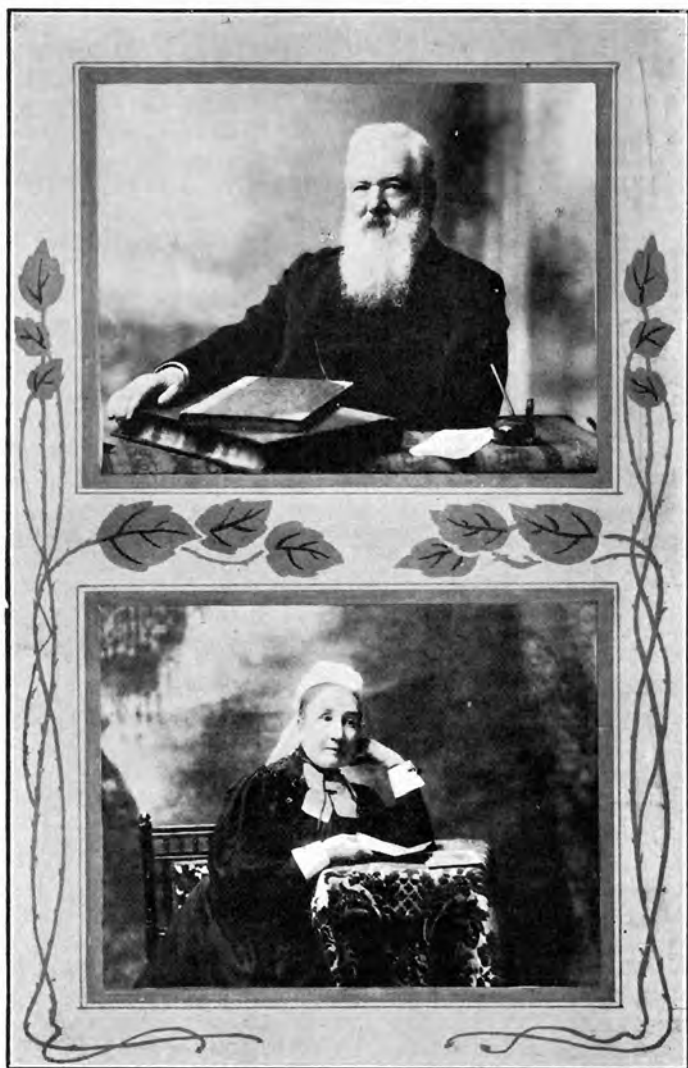
Some four years before the arrival of the "John Wickliffe" and "Philip Laing," Bishop Selwyn paid his first visit to the South Island of New Zealand. He found a knowledge of Christianity in every part, and remarked at the time that he did not believe there was a spot in New Zealand where the Gospel had not been made known. His next recorded visit was on June 14th, 1848, when he stayed two or three days, and was well received by the newly arrived immigrants. Some three and a-half years later the Rev. J. A. Fenton was sent to Dunedin by the Bishop to organise a church, that gentleman arriving on the 1st January, 1852, and conducting a service

in the Courthouse on the following Sunday. Mr. Fenton's parish comprised the whole of Otago, and he had on his committee representatives from such widely separated districts as the Clutha and Waikouaiti. On the 10th March, 1852, the Committee thanked the Rev. Mr. Creed for his visits to Dunedin, and appointed a committee of one to select a site for a church, etc., and he recommended the Octagon. In February, 1853, there were stated to be 285 Episcopalians, and at the annual meeting in March it was decided to build a church. On the 24th August, 1853, it was resolved to purchase the house of E. B. Atkinson for a parsonage, and a week later another resolution was carried that a wooden church be erected. As a site for the church a part of the Octagon was fenced off, and application made for it to the Governor. Public opinion was so much against the proposed grant that the Governor refused to entertain the proposal, which was dropped. The project of building a church was abandoned, and in 1855 it was resolved to purchase the property on which the Courthouse stood. The Courthouse building was used until a part of the present building was erected and made fit for occupation.

Such is a brief outline of the early struggles of St. Paul's, the pioneer church of the Anglican Communion in Otago. In 1858 Mr. Fenton intimated his intention of resigning on account of failing health, and removed to Waikouaiti, where he opened a church which had been built solely at the cost of John Jones. His successor at St. Paul's was the Rev. A. H. Wyatt, who took temporary charge until the arrival of the Rev. E. G. Edwards. Shortly after this churches were opened at Invercargill and in several other districts. The corner-stone of All Saints' Church was laid on February 11th, 1865; St. Matthew's was built a few years later, and also churches in Caversham and Mornington. In the country districts, too, the Church was advancing, and in 1866 a church was built at Tokomairiro, where the Rev. R. L. Stanford was stationed. The Diocese remained under the charge of Bishop Harper, of Christchurch, until the breaking up of the General Synod in 1871, when the second Synod of the Diocese of Dunedin was held, and the Rev. S. T. Nevill, M.A., elected Bishop, and since that time the lines of the Church have been cast in comparatively pleasant places. The Diocese is not a rich one, but it has pushed on the work of the Church in as rapid and thorough a manner as has been practicable.

Little headway had been made by the Roman Catholic Church in Otago before the early sixties, but as far back as 1840 Bishop Pompallier, the Missionary Bishop of Oceania, had visited the harbour in his schooner, the "Sancta Maria." During the later fifties Father Petitjean, a venerable priest, paid visits to the Catholics in the Province, but Catholics were few and their homes much scattered. The first mass in Dunedin was celebrated in a small house in the North-East Valley, the second in a skittle alley in Feeger's Hotel, and the third in a bottle store belonging to Mr. Burke, but after this the Court-house was secured for morning service. Father Moreau was the next priest. He was a Marist missionary, much beloved by his flock. He had the care of the whole of Otago, and when the rush to Gabriel's Gully took place he visited the field once a month. As population increased other priests were appointed to Otago, and Father Moreau's charge was confined to Dunedin. It is interesting to note that, whereas in 1859 there were only about ninety Roman Catholics in Otago, they had increased in 1891 to 22,000. In 1871 Bishop Moran was appointed to the new See, and for many years laboured early and late for the benefit of his parishioners. He died in 1895, and was succeeded by Dr. Verdon, who proved himself an able administrator, a gentle friend and counsellor, always willing to advise and succour in cases of distress, and firm in righting wrongs.

In the year 1840, on behalf of the Wesleyan Methodists, the Rev. Jas. Watkin inaugurated a mission to the Maoris of the southern parts of New Zealand. John Jones, of Waikouaiti, requested the Missionary Committee at Sydney to send a missionary to Waikouaiti, and the Rev. Watkin was appointed. He met with a good reception from the natives, and a great moral change was wrought amongst them. He left for Wellington in 1844, and was succeeded by the Rev. Charles Creed, who brought to his work a perfect knowledge of the Maori tongue. Between eight and nine years of hard service were given to Otago by Mr. Creed, who witnessed the birth and rise of the settlement. In 1853 he was succeeded by the Rev. Wm. Kirk, who retained the Otago appointment for four years. His successor was Rev. George Stannard, who was an Irishman, although born in Yorkshire.



DR. AND MRS. BANNERMAN

1854, "Statcly," AND 1848, "Philip Laing."

The first Methodist laymen to arrive in Otago were Henry Monson and Thos. Ferens, both of whom arrived by the "John Wickliffe." It is essentially characteristic of them as Methodists that, on the evening when they met Mr. Creed, they should adjourn to the bush and hold a prayer meeting. The first public services (other than cottage meetings) were held in the old Oddfellows' Hall, but afterwards a loft over a baker's shop in Pelicet Bay was rented at a charge of 5/- per Sunday. It was then decided to erect a church in Dunedin. A site had already been presented in Dowling Street, and a contract was let for the erection of the church; but the contractor failed and the building was not ready until July, 1862. In the meantime the new minister, the Rev. Isaac Harding, had taken up his duties. Until the church was completed he preached in the Courthouse in the mornings and in Knox Church at night.

Mr. Harding's circuit was the whole of Otago, but as a result of his labours churches were erected in Tuapeka, Clutha, Tokomairiro, Waikouaiti, Oamaru, Invercargill, and elsewhere. Some of these were frame buildings covered with canvas, but others were substantial structures. Mr. Harding was only two years in Otago, but his record is one of which any man might be proud.

The first meeting called to form a Baptist Church in Dunedin was held on June 10th, 1863, when twelve persons were present. Three weeks later another meeting was held, when it was resolved to hold regular services. The first service was held on July 26th, 1863, in the Courthouse, and Dr. Burns generously offered the use of First Church for an evening service. The first Baptist minister to visit Dunedin was the Rev. A. Poole, of Victoria, and he was succeeded by the Rev. J. Langdon Parsons, at a salary of £350 a year for the first year, and a minimum of £400 per annum afterwards. A church was built in Hanover Street, and duly opened for service on July 24th, 1864. In 1867 the Rev. Parsons was compelled, owing to the ill-health of his wife, to tender his resignation, and was succeeded by the Rev. John Williams, whose career was suddenly terminated by a fatal coach accident on December 22nd, 1872. He was succeeded by the Rev. J. U. Davis, whose voice failed at the end of 1880, and he was compelled to resign. The pioneer church has sought to establish out-stations as opportunity served, and has reason to rejoice at the success which has crowned its efforts.

Rev. Thos. Burns, D.D., was the first minister of the Otago Presbyterian Church, the first Moderator of the first Presbytery and first Synod, and the first Principal of the Otago University. He was born on April 10th, 1796, in Mosgiel, Ayrshire. After studying at the University of Edinburgh, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Haddington, and shortly afterwards became parish minister of Ballantrae, and thence after a few years he was translated to Monekton. While there the Disruption of the Church of Scotland took place, when he joined the Free Church. He accepted the first colonial appointment made by the Free Church—viz., to Otago—where he arrived with his family on April 15th, 1848. On the day after arrival he conducted divine service in the chief surveyor's office. The building continued to be the usual place of worship till the schoolhouse was built, which for many years served in place of a church as well as for many other purposes. Dr. Burns had brought with him material for his manse, which was speedily erected at the corner of Princes and Jetty Streets. This he occupied for several years, till a larger one was erected on Church Hill, which, however, was removed in a short time to allow of material being obtained for harbour reclamation, the removal of which left the hill at its present level as occupied now by First Church manse and the handsome First Church.

For well nigh six years he stood alone to discharge the duties of the ministry, and during these years he confined not his labours to Dunedin and its neighbourhood, but extended them as far as Clutha. Help was at length brought to him on the arrival of Messrs. Will and Bannerman in 1854, and later on of Dr. Stuart and others, by whom the whole original Province from Oamaru in the north to Riverton in the south was supplied with religious ordinances. All this was effected between 1848 and 1871, the year of his death. He had lived to see in Otago, which he found on his arrival a wilderness destitute of people and all that makes for civilisation, a condition of progress such as perhaps has never been witnessed elsewhere as made in a short space of twenty-three years.

Rev. Wm. Will, Taieri, was born 27th April, 1825, in the parish of Colace, Perthshire. In due course he entered the University of Edinburgh with a view of studying for the ministry. In the course of his student career

his attention had been directed to the colonies as a sphere of labour, and he offered his services to the Colonial Committee of the Free Church. These were accepted, with the result that he received an appointment to Otago. He was then duly licensed and ordained by the Presbytery of Irvine, and left for Otago early in October, 1853, in the ship "Stately," arriving at Port Chalmers early in the following February, in company with the Rev. Wm. Bannerman. Their arrival together enabled the Presbytery to be formed, which was named the Presbytery of Otago. Mr. Will immediately after arrival settled in East Taieri, but extended his services throughout the whole Plain, and also to Green Island on the one hand and to Waihola on the other. Gradually his wide sphere became lessened, and ministers were settled in Waihola, Green Island, West Taieri, and North Taieri. In 1862 he visited Scotland, and at a later period was appointed with Mr. Bannerman to represent the Otago Church in the General Assembly of the Victorian Church. For many years Mr. Will filled the convenorship of the Synod Sustentation Fund Committee, and enjoyed the honour of a second Moderatorship of Synod on the occasion of the Church's Jubilee on March 23rd, 1898.

The Rev. Wm. Bannerman was born in the town of Kirkealdy, in Fifeshire, Scotland. At the age of three years his parents moved into Edinburgh, where he showed himself a diligent scholar, and seems to have been above the average in acquiring the instruction given there. At the age of thirteen he was accorded a Bursary. After leaving the High School he graduated at the Edinburgh University and engaged in private teaching, which enabled him to pursue his way at the University. In 1843 he threw in his sympathies with the Free Church at the Disruption, and was present in St. Giles Cathedral in the final scene, the signing of the Protest (so graphically described in the "Memoirs of Dr. Chalmers"), and followed that memorable procession to the Cannon Mills' Hall. It was Mr. Bannerman's privilege to attend the ministry of the late Dr. Candlish, whose instructions he enjoyed till he was employed by the Free Church. In 1847 Mr. Bannerman travelled on the Continent with pupils, visiting France, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria. He made the ascent of Mont Blanc, and passed a night at the historic St. Bernards. A good deal of this tour was made on foot, and Mr. Bannerman often spoke

of it as being an important and very happy period of his life.

Dr. Bannerman was engaged in Church Extension work for a short time by the Edinburgh Presbytery, but the last two years of his life in Scotland were passed at Crathie, in Aberdeenshire. There he organised the Free Church, forming a congregation which held its first meeting in a barn. He often referred to his work there with warmest expressions of regard.

While in Crathie Dr. Bannerman received a letter from the late Mr. Joseph Maitland, saying that he and his family were about to sail for Otago to join his two sons who had gone out there, and were settled in Inch-Clutha. The letter went on to invite him to "join the outward bound." The invitation was at once accepted, and Mr. Bannerman received his appointment from the Colonial Committee of the Free Church, being ordained by the Perth Presbytery, the Rev. Andrew Bonar presiding at the meeting, and accordingly he sailed with his friends and the Rev. Wm. Will in the ship "Stately" in 1853, arriving in Port Chalmers in February, 1854, when he was appointed to the district of Clutha, just then desiring a minister. His parish extended from Waihola Gorge to Riverton. Thus he entered on a long time of exceedingly trying work, done on foot for eighteen months. The first night in the Clutha was passed in the wide chimney of Mr. Pillan's hospitable house in Inch-Clutha, while his first home for the first two years was in the house of Mr. Wm. Ferguson, Inch-Clutha. In 1856 he removed to Wharepa, to a house lent by Peter Ayson, Corydon, till the manse at Puerua was ready.

He conducted services in Tokomairiro every third Sunday, visiting there during the week, and returning on Saturday to hold service in Inch-Clutha and Wharepa, in the house of the late Mr. A. Gordon and in the house of the late Mr. Shaw, Finegand. The next Sunday he was in South Clutha, where the service was held in the house of Mr. Andrew Mercer, in the Awakiki Bush, and afterwards in Mr. Hay's, Hilly Park, till the church was built in the Bush. In 1857 Mr. Bannerman had occasion to visit Southland, which had been thrown open for settlement. This journey he made on foot, and, having to celebrate a marriage at Tukurau, he crossed the Mataura, going along the sea beach to the Bluff. This was a long, trying journey. He was alone, and suffered from thirst,

but all the streams he crossed were brackish. Very weary he reached the Bluff, where the Maoris crossed him in a canoe. After a night's rest he walked to Invercargill, and slept in the wide chimney of what was afterwards an hotel. After holding service and visiting there, Mr. Bannerman went on to Riverton with a gentleman who was going that way. Their road was along one of the finest beaches in Otago, but they had a narrow escape at the mouth of the Waimatuku Creek, where the sand was very shifting, making the ford at times dangerous. After a few days' stay at Riverton, Mr. Bannerman returned to Invercargill, and set his face homewards by Maitauro. He was accompanied by the late Mr. Charles Logie, Collector of Customs for Otago, and another very trying journey was begun. After crossing the Maitauro they lost their way, and slept two nights in the open air, with the rain falling heavily, wetting all their provisions (a few biscuits), and with no means of lighting a fire, all around being soaked with the rain. On the third day they reached the hospitable house of Mr. Steel, Popotunoa (Clinton), where they rested, and on the fourth day they reached the little house in Wharepa. Mr. Logie was very much exhausted, and both were weary, foot-sore, and travel-stained as well.

In June, 1861, Mr. Bannerman left home to attend the annual meeting of Synod in Dunedin. The day was stormy, heavy showers of snow falling all day, the ground being white everywhere, and the Puerua and all the creeks "up." On the ridge where the present church is now situated, his horse fell on him, breaking his leg. There was no house within call, but he succeeded in getting on his horse, and reached the house of D. P. Steel (Underwood). There happened to be some settlers there, getting their tools and farm implements sharpened, and they came at once and in the kindest and most generous manner lifted him into the barn, laid him on the hay, brought a bullock sledge, wrapped him in a rug, and conveyed him home, where they carried him in, and laid him on his bed with all the kindness their warm and generous hearts could express. Dr. Manning was at the time away at Captain MacKenzie's station. Mr. Robert Christie started at once to bring the doctor, but the creeks and river in flood made the journey tedious, and it was Wednesday before the leg could be set, the accident taking place on the Monday. Many hours of pain were the result, and Mr. Bannerman

ORIGINAL CHURCH



CLUTHA



ORIGINAL MANSE

FIRST CHURCH AT SOUTH CLUTHA.

FIRST MANSE AT PUERUA.

suffered for nine weeks ere he left his bed. To the last of his life he referred to the great kindness shown to him at this time especially—a kindness no pen can adequately express, but he always spoke of it in the most grateful and affectionate terms. Until this time he had preached every Sunday without exception for eight years. As soon as he was able to be out again he held service in the manse; later on he was very kindly taken by Mr. George Richardson on a sledge to hold service in Inch Clutha, and the next Sunday the late Mr. John Geggie did the same kind service to Wharepa. As the years passed Mr. Bannerman formed congregations, and his parish gradually narrowed to its present limits. Mr. Todd was settled at Tokomairiro; Mr. Stobo at Invercargill, when the ladies presented Mr. Bannerman with a handsome communion set, part of which is now in the present Puerua Church, the remaining part having been given most courteously by the Deacons' Court to Mr. Bannerman's family. Inch Clutha was next settled, and this congregation and that of Milton each presented him with a very handsome gift of money. Tapanui, Wharepa, Clinton, and Balclutha were all in turn supplied with stated ministers, so that Puerua and Port Molyneux then had regular services, and with the exception of Catlins River the work of the district was easily overtaken. In 1884 Mr. Bannerman had a serious accident—a broken leg—which caused him to resign his charge, he being quite unable for pastoral work. He removed with his family to Dunedin, where, after somewhat recovering his strength, he took the work for foreign missions as well as his work as Clerk of Synod, which last office he held till the union of the North and South Churches was completed. In his work for foreign missions he was required to visit the New Hebrides in 1889, and continued his work as member of Missions Committee till laid aside by illness in May. While engaged in the mission work Mr. Bannerman received the degree of D.D. from the Edinburgh University. He suffered much till the 24th December, when he passed away in great pain, somewhat suddenly, as he seemed for some weeks before to rally. The evening before he was able to see some friends who came in, his sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Craig, who were on a visit to New Zealand, and were to leave next day. He was able to lead in family worship, which in his illness he was seldom able to do, reading from the sixth chapter of John, 19th verse

to the end. His work, indeed, was "finished." Next morning he passed away. His resting place is in the South Cemetery, Dunedin, where loving hands committed his remains till "the day dawn, and the shadows flee away."

Rev. D. M. Stuart, D.D., first minister of Knox Church, was born in Kenmuir, Perthshire, in 1819. After attending the parish school there, he entered the University of St. Andrews, and afterwards that of Edinburgh. After being licensed, he received a call from Falstone, in the North of England, which he accepted, and was ordained and inducted into that charge. This he resigned in 1859 on accepting an appointment to Knox Church, Dunedin, into which he was inducted by the Presbytery of Otago on May 16th, 1860. On his arrival in Dunedin and on his induction Dr. Stuart met with the heartiest reception, both from his brethren in the ministry and the congregation of Knox Church, as well as from the citizens of Dunedin generally, among whom he soon came to hold a prominent position.

As minister of Knox Church he continued to discharge his duties till his death in 1894, which had been preceded by a short period of declining health. Ever unflagging in the discharge of his various duties, he found time and opportunity to interest himself in and to further the educational and charitable institutions of the city. Many sought his advice and received assistance that braced them for their respective duties in life. His interest in church matters was not limited to the sphere of his own congregation, but extended to the whole Church. He lent his services wherever they were sought, and few congregations failed to have the opportunity of receiving and being benefited by them.

Rev. Wm. Johnstone, M.A., first minister of Port Chalmers, was born in 1823 in the parish of Cruden, Aberdeenshire. He received his education in the parish school of his birthplace, in the Grammar School of Aberdeen, and in Aberdeen University. Having been duly licensed, he accepted a commission appointing him to the Otago Church, and was settled in Port Chalmers in 1858, taking in charge the whole district north of the Port, where his manse was erected. His services were welcomed and appreciated not less in the outlying districts than in the centre of his operations, where the original wooden church gave place to a stone edifice, which was opened by the Rev. Wm. Will and Dr. Stuart in January, 1872.

His health was unhappily not of the best, and this greatly interfered with the work that lay to his hand. It finally gave way, and at the age of fifty-eight years he died, to the profound regret of his congregation and the Church at large.

Rev. Alexander B. Todd was born in 1821, in St. Andrews, Scotland. He was licensed to preach by the Free Church Presbytery of St. Andrews in the year 1855, and was ordained to the office of the ministry in 1858. On the first day of January, 1859, he embarked for Otago in the ship "Mariner." The Rev. Archdeacon Edwards was a fellow passenger, and the two ministers held service in the saloon alternately on the Sabbath, and the friendship thus commenced continued through life. The two ministers left London the same day, landed in Dunedin the same day, and retired from the active work of the ministry the same day, December 31st, 1894.

Mr. Todd's first charge was Tokomairiro, where he laboured for about ten years. He was the first minister who preached to the miners in Gabriel's Gully. In 1869 he was settled at St. Paul's, Oamaru. For several years he paid periodical visits to the stations on the Waitaki, preaching to runholders, shepherds, miners, &c., and helped to form several congregations as off-shoots to St. Paul's. Through failing health, after twenty-five years' service in Oamaru, he retired from the active work of the ministry on December 31st, 1894.