

**Message of Hope for the New Year. By Rev. J. Mayles.**  
**The Dear Old "Locals." By W. M. Patterson.**  
**Ald. W. McNeill, J.P. By Rev. R. H. MacFarlane.**

The

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LONDON: THURSDAY, JANUARY 3, 1918.

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## A MESSAGE OF HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR.

By Rev. J. MAYLES.

One of the most eventful and tragic years in the history of the world has just closed, and what the future has in store for us no one can say. Almost every prediction made since the commencement of the year has been fulfilled, and in no particular have often fulfilled general expectations. We have commenced each of the last three years with an ardent longing for peace, and have cherished the fervent hope that that happy issue could not much longer be delayed. But "hope deferred makes the heart sick," and the outlook at the moment is dark in the extreme. Thank God, amidst all the gloom the light of the gospel still shines, and those who accept its gracious message may face the future without dismay. "God is with us," and that is the most heartening fact for these sad times. The consciousness of His presence inspired our fathers and prophets in the darkest days of Jewish history. The Kaiser is reported to have said on the 22nd of December, "The year 1917, with the great battles, has proved that the German people has in the Lord of Creation an unconditional and avowed ally on whom it can absolutely rely." When we think of the infamous aims and methods of Germany, such speeches sound like this vain boasting of a blasphemous hypocrite. But it shows, at any rate, the value which the Kaiser attaches to having God on his side.

The fact that God really dwells among men has been made more realistic and vivid in the incarnation. "God was manifest in the flesh," and during the earthly life of Jesus He assured His disciples that though He must depart He would yet remain with them. Commenting upon the last words recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, Dr. McLaren says, "Note that emphatic *I am*, which does not only denote certainty, but is the speech of Him who is lifted above these lower regions where time rolls and the succession of events occurs. That *I am* covers all the varieties of *am, is, will be*. Notice the long vista of variously tinted days which opens here. However many they may be, however different their complexion, days of summer and days of winter, days of sunshine and days of storm, days of buoyant youth and days of stagnant, stereotyped old age, days of apparent failure and days of apparent prosperity. He is with us in them all. They change. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The promise of Christ has been verified in the Christian consciousness of every age.

It has been said that "St. Paul's theology was his experience writ large." He is the most typical and outstanding representative of the first generation of Christians, and there is nothing to which he bears more unequivocal testimony than the reality of Christ's presence with him amidst all the varying fortunes of his career. When all men forsook him, the Lord stood by him, and his presence sufficed for all exigencies. And as in that far-off time so in our day the witness of saints is substantially the same. In the biography of Hugh Price Hughes his daughter tells us that when young men came to her father with their doubts and perplexities he would say, "There is no cause for dismay, but feed upon Christ in your heart, and go on studying and thinking." At this moment He is nearer to me and more real than you are." Charles Wesley's words, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want" were frequently on his lips. This was the secret of his remarkable ministry, and the source of "repose and hope amid eternal things." Critics may sneeringly



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**THE LATE ALD. W. McNEILL, J.P.**

**By Rev. R. H. MacFarlane.**

a faith be termed madness, would that we were so compassed. Be careful in all thy ways, to balance justly the scale of things, and thou wilt speedily discover that thy joys far outnumber thy griefs. Let me cease with a sentence from an ancient Greek writer: "A man can only advance by struggling to make this world better."

The question of the candidates' examination was again brought up. It was decided that the oral examination take place, and that the examiner report their findings to the General Committee. When the results of the examination were received, to determine the necessity and method of the further examination. The Secretary was requested to draw up a list of the candidates for the membership of leaders. Two applications for admission to the membership declined—one was from a clergyman of the Anglican Church, and the other from a Congregational minister. Permission was given to Norman, a Congregational minister, May Syred in the Canning Church, Nottingham, instead of Mr. Natonen. Letters of sympathy were directed to both Mr. Natonen and Mr. Syred, and to Mr. May Syred in Jefferson in their illness. An application was received from Rev. James Tristram for permanent membership of the Society. It was decided that the application was given for the trial of an unrequired site of land at Dretwich, which has been surrendered by another applicant. The claim of the Rev. Dr. Jewett in sending 2,500 dollars on behalf of himself and friends to be applied to the payment of the debt of the Society, was not accepted. The claim of the Church, and it was resolved that this sum should be paid to the land being raised by the better-paid ministers of the Society. The claim of the Rev. Dr. Jewett to all themselves of the Society, was not accepted. The claim of the Rev. Sir William Hartley's scheme. The General Fund were authorised for payment, and several applications for the aid of the Society were received. The General Fund were authorised for payment, and several applications for the aid of the Society were received.

"The Fairy Godmother." By L. T. Meade. (W. and R. Chambers. 5s. net.)  
This is a fine story for girls. The Fairy Godmother is a great aunt who loves the three girls of the story, and behaves splendidly to them. From the first page to the last of this big book the story grips, and any girl who gets the book will rate it a treasure.

The following ministers took part in the service in the church: Revs. W. Lawrence, C. R. Vercoe, R. H. McFarlane, J. W. Whitaker, C. Finlay, C. L. Tack, and Revs. Bennion, Ashworth, Leach, Thomas, Jenkins, Pickthill, and others were present. The body was taken to the cemetery and interred in the family vault. The burial service was conducted by Rev. R. H. McFarlane, and Rev. W. Billlake, M.A., Christ's Church, Crawe, offered the concluding prayer.

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