

# Messenger and Visitor

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## The Convention.

This year it is to Fredericton that the tribes of the Maritime Baptists go up to their Convention. The Capital with its elm-lined streets earning for it the name of the Forest City of the Maritimes, its fine public buildings, its handsome residences, its noble river, its pleasant park and other charms is always an attractive place for the summer visitor. And the delegates who have time to make the trip from St. John by boat have a long rich feast of beauty before they arrive at their destination.

The present is the fifth meeting of the Convention in Fredericton. It first met there in 1848 when it was only two years old. On that occasion Rev. Theodore S. Harding presided, as he did also at the two preceding and three subsequent annual sessions. Revs. I. E. Bill and Samuel Elder were the secretaries and Rev. Edward D. Very preached the Convention sermon. The Convention did not meet in Fredericton again until 1870, when Dr. D. McN. Parker presided and Dr. Backus was the preacher. Eight years later, 1878, the Convention again met in Fredericton, the late Dr. S. W. deBlois presiding and Dr. Day preaching the sermon. The last meeting of the Convention in the Capital previous to the present was in 1889.

There have been great changes and in some respects at least much progress during the half century that has passed since that first meeting of the Convention in Fredericton. The delegates who in 1848 toiled up to the Convention over long distances by stage coach or private conveyance perhaps scarcely anticipated a day when it would be possible for one to take an early tea in St. John and to reach Fredericton in time for an evening meeting, or when one might breakfast in Halifax or Charlottetown and sup in Fredericton. The changes which have occurred since 1848 in respect to the facilities of travel, the communication of intelligence and thought all over the world and in respect to countless other things by which our lives are influenced is indeed marvellous. In our denominational life too there have been growth and progress since those early formation days of our history as a people. There has been increase in numbers and enlargement of work. It would however be too much, we fear, to affirm that there has been a corresponding deepening of the spiritual life and strengthening of the bonds of fellowship in the denomination.

The Baptist church of Fredericton was organized in 1814 and has been somewhat prominently connected with the history of our denomination in the province. Here for many years the N. B. Seminary was located, here the late Dr. Spurden whose name is revered by many labored long in the interests of religious education and here also a number of men whose names are honored among us—some of them now gone to their reward—have labored and left valuable legacies to those who are now reaping the results of their faithful services. The present house of worship, a handsome and substantial stone structure, was erected in 1882 at a cost of \$20,000. The church has lately met with a serious loss in the death of Deacon James G. McNally, a brother deservedly held in high esteem for his Christian character and his unobtrusive, faithful service in the church.

The sessions of the Convention proper did not begin until Saturday, but delegates who were to attend the meetings of the B. Y. P. U. began to arrive on Wednesday. Others came on Thursday to be in readiness for the meetings of the Institute on Friday, so that by Thursday evening quite a number of visitors were on hand. Pastor Freeman, with Mr. Creed and a well organized band of efficient helpers, were most attentive to the visitors and the delegates were quickly made to feel that they were in the hands of their friends.

The B. Y. P. U. meetings which began on Wednesday evening continued through Thursday. A report of the proceedings of these meetings up to Thursday afternoon will be found in our B. Y. P. U. page. The company of pilgrims with whom this scribe went up to the feast reached their destination in time to be present at a part of the Thursday evening meeting. The principal features of this meeting were two excellent addresses—the first by Rev. P. G. Mode, the recently settled pastor of the First church, Yarmouth, who was heard with much interest as he discussed the subject, "Divine Owner-

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ship—Human Stewardship,"—the second by Dr. Keirstead was upon "Literature as an Aid to the Disciple," a masterly effort, and heard with the deepest appreciation. Of this meeting more extended account will probably be given in our B. Y. P. U. columns next week.

### THE INSTITUTE.

Friday was Institute day. The management departed somewhat from the ordinary custom this year by introducing more of the strictly religious and devotional into its programme. At the morning session, after the election of officers for the year, a sermon was preached by Rev. H. F. Adams of Truro. The text was John 17: 22-23, and the discourse was an effective exposition of the great truths contained in the passage. The preacher spoke 1st of Christ's Ideal for his church; 2nd, Christ's method of perfecting his church; 3rd, The Divinely chosen method of showing to the world the authority of Christ. After the sermon the members of the Institute were invited to participate freely in the meeting, and it was evident from the tone of the prayers and remarks that the preacher had spoken to the minds and hearts of his audience. The remainder of the morning was occupied by Rev. B. F. Ward of Boston, in a Bible reading on the subject "Himself for us." Mr. Ward was heard with deep interest.

The programme for the afternoon contained two papers both dealing with Dr. W. N. Clarke's "Outlines of Theology." The first was by Rev. S. B. Kempton, D. D., a review of the book; the second by President Trotter, a critique of the same. Both of these papers were highly instructive and valuable. Dr. Kempton presented a general view of the teachings of the book and expressed a very high opinion of it both in a library point of view and for the discussions of truth which it contained, although in some points he dissented from the views of the author.

Mr. Trotter also highly praised Dr. Clarke's book in style, method and substance it was a work of great attractiveness and power. He was not however in accord with some of the teaching of the book and proceeded to criticize Dr. Clarke's position particularly respecting the doctrine of the Scriptures; his theory of revelation; and his views as to the effect of Christ's sufferings. Notwithstanding the points in which he felt it necessary to dissent from the teachings of the book, Dr. Trotter recognized in it so much that is valuable and excellent that his advice to young ministers would be, "Read the book, read it all. It will bless you. But for the largest blessing, read it with your eyes wide open."

Participation in the discussion then became general. Dr. Saunders declares that nothing was to be feared from the reading and discussion of the books of men whose views we might not be able fully to endorse. He held that in some points, notably in respect to his doctrine of the resurrection Dr. Clarke had ignored the plain teaching of the New Testament.

Dr. Crandall, of Chicago, being present was invited to express his views. He spoke in high terms of the papers, as to both their substance and spirit and highly praised Dr. Clarke's book. No book of theology he had ever read had so quickened his spiritual life and awakened the desire to be a better man. Others who took part briefly in the discussion were Revs. J. D. Freeman, J. Webb, J. Hughes, B. J. Ward, J. B. Morgan, A. Cohoon and Dr. Keirstead. The latter gave an inspiring address in which he expressed dissent from much that was in Dr. Clarke's book. At the same time he had felt the book and kindred works to be helpful, and declared that its underlying philosophy was something which the present generation of thinkers and preachers could not ignore.

On Friday evening Rev. Mr. Ward gave another Bible reading, and this was followed by a sermon by Rev. G. O. Gates, D. D., upon "The Servant of Jehovah," the discourse, which was based upon Isa. 49th chapter, was very highly appreciated.

### THE CONVENTION.

The Convention opened Saturday morning at ten o'clock. In the absence of the president, Rev. J. C. Spurr, of Pownal, P. E. I., the chair was taken by vice-president, C. E. Knapp, Esq. The hymn "There is a fountain filled with blood" was sung. The 84th psalm was read by Rev. E. M. Keirstead, D. D., and prayer was offered by Rev. J. A. Gordon.

After the enrolment of delegates a number of visiting brethren and sisters were invited to seats in the Convention, including Rev. S. W. Cummings of Chester, Pa., Revs. Dr. McLeod, F. C. Hartley and John Coviler of Fredericton, B. W. Ward of Boston, Miss Eva dePrater of India, Rev. Herbert E. Wise of Norwich, Conn. The printed programme was by vote adopted by the Convention for the guidance of the business of the Convention. The nominating committee was appointed as follows: E. D. Ring, Esq., Rev. B. N. Nobles, Rev. C. W. Townsend, Hon. H. R. Emmerson, Rev. E. J. Grant, A. H. Jones and A. E. Wall, Esqs.

On the nomination of Rev. Dr. Saunders of Halifax the Hon. H. R. Emmerson was elected president of the Convention with what was evidently the unanimous and very hearty vote of the Convention. Mr. Emmerson was welcomed in the chair by vice-president Knapp and briefly thanked the Convention for the honor conferred upon him.

On the recommendation of the nominating committee vice-presidents were elected as follows: Rev. H. F. Adams of Truro for Nova Scotia, Rev. E. J. Grant of Summerside, for P. E. Island. Secretary H. C. Creed, Assistant Secretaries, H. E. Colpitts and R. H. Phillips, Treasurer, J. W. Spurden, of Fredericton. The Convention also appointed, as committee on estimates, B. H. Eaton, Esq., Halifax, Rev. W. Camp, Sussex, Rev. E. A. McPhee, Kingsboro, P. E. I. The report of committee on the Year Book was presented by B. H. Eaton, Esq. The report showed that 3000 copies of the Year Book had been printed at a cost of nearly \$400, the account being squared by proportional contributions from the Boards of Missions and Education, the B. Y. P. Union and something from advertisements. In reply to enquiries respecting the delay of the appearance of the Year Book last year, Mr. Eaton said there were reasons for it which it was perhaps not worth the Convention's time to hear, but there was no doubt but that the Year Book would appear in good time this year. In this connection, Rev. J. W. Manning moved for a committee to take into consideration the matter of publishing the Year Book with special reference to the plan on which the expense incurred in publishing the Year Book. The motion was adopted.

The report of the Foreign Mission Board having been presented and distributed in printed form, was tabled for consideration at the afternoon session.

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

The main business of the afternoon session was the reading and consideration of the report of the F. M. Board. The report was considered clause by clause. The opening paragraphs of the report strongly emphasized the importance of the mission work and the obligations resting upon the Lord's people to promote it to the extreme extent of their ability.

The second clause of the report referring to missionaries on furlough was as follows: There has been on furlough during the year, Rev. Geo. and Mrs. Churchill, Mrs. R. Sanford, Mrs. W. V. Higgins, and Miss A. C. Gray.

The Rev. H. and Mrs. Archibald had also received permission to take a furlough next spring; but it was found that his health was giving way so rapidly that his physicians ordered him out of the country immediately. He could not live there. Restored health was possible only in a more bracing climate. These faithful missionaries have laid down their work with great reluctance and with a great pain in their hearts. It is to be hoped that the illness is not so serious but that medical skill and rest may succeed by the blessing of God in not only checking its progress, but in a complete restoration to health and strength. To this end your Board most earnestly asks the prayers of all God's children. In connection with this clause at the request of the President prayer was offered by Rev. J. W. Bancroft for our missionaries in broken health. In the clause referring to Reinforcements the report, while showing the great need of increased forces on the field, deplored the Board's inability under existing financial conditions to reinforce the mission. In connection with this clause a stirring address was made by Rev. Dr. Gates of the F. M. Board, urging the importance and duty of sending to the Foreign field the brethren and sisters who are ready and waiting to go. The clause was also discussed freely by a number of the delegates and the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved that the clause be referred back to the Board for amendment and that we ask the F. M. Board to send to the foreign field the missionaries named in this clause and that we, delegates of this Convention, go back to our constituency trusting in the God of Missions, pledging ourselves to do our best to secure the necessary funds to enable the Board to do this.

The resolution was adopted by a standing vote.

The next clause, having reference to the examinations of the younger missionaries in the language showed that they are making satisfactory progress in their work of preparation to proclaim the gospel to the Telugus. This was adopted. The report calls attention to the World's Missionary Conference to be held in New York next year, signaling the closing year of the century, but what will doubtless be the greatest missionary gathering the world has yet seen. Here is the opportunity of a lifetime for some of us. It now remains for our pastors and churches to give it the widest possible publication, and to insure its far-reaching spiritual influence by keeping it before the minds of the people and by remembering it in prayer.

The next clause headed the

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was as follows:

We believe that the day of our opportunity has come. It has not passed. The close of the 19th century ought to be marked by a great rally to the standard of the cross and the last command of Jesus Christ. Especially should this be so among Baptists. They led the hosts at the beginning of the century. It would be simply disgraceful to fail or falter at its close.

The year 1900 will mark an epoch in our denominational history. It is to be fittingly observed. This is as it should be. But the year 1900 will round out 25 years of our work among the Telugus of India; and in the

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