

## The General Assembly.

### THE PLACE OF MEETING.

THIRTY-EIGHT years ago a young man, born in Dumfriesshire, Scotland, and educated at Toronto, undertook the work of founding the Presbyterian cause in the Red River district. This was the late Rev. John Black, D.D., of Kildonan, who journeyed forth, taking some eight weeks on the journey from Canada.\* Thirty-one years Dr. Black laboured faithfully in what was called, when he went there, "The great Lone Land." On the 12th of February, 1882, he rested from his labours, and in a very striking sense it may be said of him, that his works do follow him. Not only have the wilderness and the solitary place blossomed abundantly, in the material sense, but that quiet rural parish now occupies a prominent place in the religious centre of the North-west. The name *Winnipeg*, given to the place in the year of its incorporation, 1873, had been borne by the cluster of houses half a mile, or thereabouts, north of Fort Garry, for several years previous to that time. The mean straggling village of 1871, with a population of less than 300, had, in two years, grown into a city of 2200. In 1887, it is probably 30,000! It is the capital of the province of Manitoba, and the seat of a Provincial University to which are affiliated the Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian Colleges—each having its separate faculty in Theology. The Synod of Manitoba and the North-west Territories, with its five Presbyteries, its seventy ministers and its 300 preaching stations, has become an important factor in promoting the highest interests of this great and growing country, and it was not without good reason that the General Assembly which met in Hamilton last year, appointed its next meeting to be held "in Winnipeg, and within Knox Church there."

In Winnipeg, accordingly, the thirteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada met on the 9th of June, at half past seven in the evening. At the hour appointed Knox Church was filled to overflowing. The retiring Moderator, the Rev. J. K. Smith, D.D. of Galt, conducted the opening services and preached a very earnest and able sermon from Zeph. 3:16, "Zion, let not thine hands be slack." He first referred to the importance of the work of the Christian church—the salvation of immortal souls, (2) The magnitude of the work in its various branches—in the home, the congregation, and in the mission field at home and abroad; (3) the solemn responsibility devolving upon all who call themselves Christians to take part in the work; (4) the urgency of the work; and lastly, the sufficiency of the promise of divine assistance to

those who earnestly and faithfully engage in the work. In closing, Dr. Smith referred to the losses sustained during the year in the deaths of such ministers as Messrs. Pringle, of Brampton, and Ross, of Brucefield, and also of many office-bearers and members of the church and in view of such loud calls urged all to increased and renewed efforts for the advancement of the Saviour's kingdom.

The Assembly having been duly constituted, the roll was called, when upwards of 250 commissioners answered to their names. Dr. Smith in a few well-chosen remarks thanked the brethren for all the kindness shewn to him during the year and asked the Assembly to elect his successor. On motion of Rev. R. H. Warden, seconded by Rev. C. B. Pitblado, Rev. DR. BURNS of Fort Massey Church, Halifax, N.S. was elected by acclamation.

### THE NEW MODERATOR.

DR. ROBERT FERRIER BURNS, is a son of the late celebrated Dr. Robert Burns, for many years minister of the Church of Scotland in Paisley, and afterwards professor in Knox College, Toronto. Our Moderator was born in Paisley, on December 23rd, 1826. Dr. Burns received his classical education in the University of Glasgow, attended two sessions in the New College Edinburgh, and completed his theological curriculum in Knox College, Toronto. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Toronto in April 1847. In July following, he was ordained first pastor of Chalmers' Church Kingston. In 1855 he was translated to St. Catharines. In 1866 he received the degree of D.D., from Hamilton College, Utica, U.S., and in 1867 became pastor of the First Scottish Presbyterian Church, Chicago. In 1870 Dr. Burns was called to the pastorate of Cote Street Church, Montreal; and on the 18th of March, 1875, he was settled in Halifax where he has since remained. Dr. Burns has thus had a varied and very extensive experience of church work, and in every place he has approved himself a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. He is an able minister, an excellent platform speaker, a brilliant writer, a large hearted, enthusiastic and genial man. Dr. Burns comes of a ministerial family, his father and grandfather being both distinguished ministers. The Rev. W. C. Burns, the eminent missionary to China was his uncle.

The retiring Moderator received the cordial thanks of the Assembly for the ability with which he had presided over the deliberations of the court, and for the admirable sermon preached by him at the opening of this session. Dr. Smith then submitted dispatches that he had received in answer to the loyal addresses passed by last General Assembly to Her Majesty the Queen, and to Lord and Lady Lansdowne. A few matters of routine having been attended, to the proceedings of the first day were brought to a close.

\* Manitoba by Rev. G. Bryce, 1882.