

NORTHERN MESSENGER

AND SABBATH-SCHOOL COMPANION.

VOLUME XXXI., No. 46.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 13, 1896.

30 Cts. Per. An. Post-Paid.

Alexander Maclaren,

THE NOTED SPEAKER AND WRITER.

The following sketch of Dr. Maclaren's life is from the 'Union Gospel News.' Dr. Maclaren is perhaps best known on this side of the Atlantic by his weekly Sunday-school lessons in the 'Sunday-school Times':—

One of God's agents, whom He has used in a wonderful way for the clear exposition of His Word, is Alexander Maclaren, a man who has gradually, unobtrusively and quietly come into prominence; a man whose personality is so exceedingly strong that only a glance into his benign face inspires confidence.

Alexander Maclaren was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1826. At the age of sixteen he was baptized by Dr. Patterson, his father being a Baptist preacher.

Soon after this event he left the 'land o' cakes' to pursue his ministerial studies in England. There he has remained ever since. Stepney has the proud distinction of being the place where he received his education.

Mr. Maclaren is now noted for his studious, thoughtful ways, and those characteristics were dominant points even in his early life. He was especially fine in languages, and obtained the prize in Hebrew and Greek a number of times.

In appearance Dr. Maclaren is very prepossessing. He keeps young, notwithstanding the many cares that have been heaped upon him, and looks far less than seventy years old. His face is long and thin; he has piercing black eyes and a broad forehead that indicates strong intellectuality.

Dr. Cuyler, who is his warm intimate friend, said that while in England he did not see a man, with the exception of Gladstone, who possessed so fine a head as Dr. Maclaren.

His first pastorate was at Portland square, Hampton; his second charge was as pastor of the Union Baptist Church, Oxford, Manchester, England, where he still remains, making a sojourn of thirty-eight years in one place.

Dr. Maclaren prefers the old authors, and his study wall hang portraits of Tennyson and Carlyle. His favorite writers, aside from those already mentioned, are Wordsworth, Emerson and Coleridge. To them he is deeply grateful for aiding him in his work, guiding it into new channels, and enlarging his power of perception. He says: 'No man of our time has ever seen him.'

When he speaks it is without a manuscript, and he has a chance to understand the depth of his arguments. As he speaks on his subject, his face lights up and glows with the intense earnestness of sympathy that pervades his whole being. The 'love of Christ melts into his life.' He concentrates his mind and thought upon each sermon, for he does not address his flock in the evening. That discursive effort of a week's diligent reading.

His sole aim in preaching is, and ever has been, to teach the Scriptures, and not to affirm or refute men's theories concerning them. In this task he more than fulfils the expectations of his hearers. His originality and excellent power of illustration have been of great value to him. To hear him is a constant delight, for the unexpected is ever sure to arise. Each new thought comes laden with a freshness that rivals in beauty of application any of the preceding ideas. His gestures are often clumsy, but are expressive nevertheless.

Dr. Maclaren is a popular preacher, pos-

capacity of 2,000, and the chairs are generally filled. When one knows the man it is not to be wondered at that people swarm to hear from his lips the story of Christ's love.

On account of Dr. Maclaren's ill-health, and his devotion to books, he does not see much of his congregation except on Sunday. An assistant helps him in his pastoral duties, and he is permitted to devote his time to literary pursuits.

It is with a tinge of regret that he speaks of his inability to come into closer communion with his flock. The congregation feel satisfied, however, being only too glad of the



REV. ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

sessing more than the qualities that are commonly attributed to such an one. He goes further than saying things that are merely pleasing to the ear. He gets a clear insight into the meaning of the Scriptures, and successfully conveys the idea to his listeners.

The hymns he gives out are from a book of his own compilation, while the only choir that blends its voices in God's praise is the congregation. In speaking of that feature of the service an eminent clergyman said, 'Quartettes are no more allowed there than in heaven.'

The church where he speaks has a seating

privilege of once a week hearing so talented a man.

As he talks each Sunday, a reporter is present, and takes down the address for a weekly Baptist paper. The sermon, if accurately reported, could go into the paper without correction. Dr. Maclaren would not find it necessary to go back and rectify loose sentences, for he has none. He is extremely logical in his line of thought, while each idea is expressed in the clearest, most forcible language possible.

It is extremely interesting to read comments concerning Dr. Maclaren written years