

Messenger and Visitor

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The Convention.

The Maritime Baptist Convention is meeting this year in its fifty-seventh annual session with Zion Church, Yarmouth. It is now fifty-six years ago that the Convention was organized at a meeting held in Germain St. Church, Sept. 19-21, 1846. The first President of the Convention was the Rev. Theodore S. Harding, and he continued to fill that office for the five following years. The last Convention at which Father Harding presided was held in Wolfville, in 1851. The preacher of the first Convention sermon, or at least of the sermon delivered at the time of organization, was Rev. E. A. Crawley, D. D., who would then be about fifty years of age and in the ripe fullness of his strength. His text was John 17:22, "*And the glory which thou has given me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.*" The Convention's first secretaries were Revs. I. E. Bill and Samuel Elder. These names are now all of the past, and to many readers they will recall sacred memories.

The first meeting of the Convention in Yarmouth dates back to 1857. At that meeting Rev. Joseph Crandall presided, as he had done at the two annual sessions of the Convention immediately preceding. It was Father Crandall's last meeting with the Convention, as his death occurred in February of the following year. Rev. Charles Tupper was the preacher of the Convention sermon, and the Secretaries were Revs. S. W. DeBlois and A. H. Munro. All these also are numbered among the departed. The journey to Yarmouth from other parts of the Maritime Provinces was not in 1857 the speedy and pleasant trip that it is to-day, and the number of delegates in attendance was only 46. There was then, however, a Baptist church membership of 18,976, a gain of 4,800 since the Convention was organized, eleven years before. Three times since then the Convention has met in Yarmouth—in 1871, 1881 and in 1890. The present is therefore the fifth occasion on which the Convention has enjoyed Yarmouth hospitality. At the second meeting in Yarmouth, J. H. Harding presided, Dr. H. G. Weston, President of Crozer Theological Seminary, who is still living, preached the annual sermon, Professor D. F. Higgins and Rev. W. B. Bogg were the secretaries, the membership of the churches had increased to 28,316 and the number of delegates to the Convention was 124. When the Convention met again in Yarmouth, ten years later, Dr. T. H. Rand presided, Dr. J. E. Hopper preached the sermon, Revs. E. M. Keirstead and G. O. Gates were the secretaries, more than ten thousand members had been added to the churches in the decade, and the delegation to the Convention had risen to 218. The fourth meeting of the Convention in Yarmouth was in 1890, when it met with the Temple Church. Dr. Goodspeed, now of McMaster University, presided. There were three Convention sermons that year, the preachers being Revs. J. A. Cahill, F. D. Crawley and W. C. Goucher. The delegation numbered 280. The membership of the churches for that year, as given in the Convention record, is 41,808, but as this is more than 2,000 less than the number for the preceding year and as it does not agree with the statistical statements published in the Year Book, it is evidently incorrect.

Yarmouth is one of the most attractive of our Maritime towns, and if money is not being accumulated there so rapidly as in the old days, when the commerce of the seas was all carried in wooden bottoms, and Yarmouth had a larger proportional share than at present in the shipping industry, the town now is not lacking in evidences of business

enterprises, and certainly it has lost none of its beauty. Its direct connection by steamers with Boston has tended to give Yarmouth something of the trim and brisk appearance of New England towns. Its up-to-date business establishments, handsome public buildings and private residences with their well-kept grounds, create a most favorable impression in the visitor's mind, while the prevailing verdure of its open spaces, velvety lawns and well trimmed hedges are his special admiration.

Ever since the days of Father Harris Harding who nursed the infancy of the Baptist cause in this part of the Province, Yarmouth has been largely a Baptist country. There are three Baptist churches in the town—but in this case as in some others, it would probably be better to have two churches than three—and just how many Baptist churches there are within a radius of ten miles of old Zion, the mother church with which the Convention is meeting, we will not undertake to say. Zion church has enjoyed the services of many able men in the course of her history. She has been without a regular pastor for a few months now, but has been fortunate enough to secure the services of Rev. Dr. Welton of McMaster as acting pastor during the summer months.

The House of Worship of the First Baptist Church, Yarmouth, where the meetings of the Convention are held, is a fine brick edifice, built about six years ago. Its main audience room is spacious and handsome; its large and commodious school room can be thrown into the main audience room when desired, and its numerous class-rooms and other appointments provide very admirably for the work of a modern church, and afford every convenience required for the Convention with its numerous Board and Committee meetings.

A few delegates had arrived as early as Wednesday, many more came on Thursday, and by Thursday evening quite a goodly number were on the ground, including the President of the College, members of the Board of Governors and other Boards, the President of the Convention and other leaders in denominational work. The Board of Governors held a meeting according to appointment on Thursday evening. There was also the same evening a public meeting of the B. V. P. Maritime Union. This meeting was not very largely attended, owing partly, no doubt, to the fact that there had been some confusion in the announcements as to the time at which the meeting would take place. The President of the Union, Rev. G. A. Lawson, was in the chair. Three addresses were given. Rev. C. H. Day of Kentville, spoke on "Conquest the Christian Ideal," Rev. Z. L. Fash of Woodstock, spoke on "The Christian Incentive to Conquest" and Rev. J. L. Miner of Charlottetown, spoke on "The Christian Equipment for Conquest." The subjects were very happily and logically related to each other. The speakers had evidently prepared carefully for the occasion, their treatment of the subject with which they dealt was strong and uplifting and the addresses were certainly worthy of being enjoyed by the largest audience that could be packed into the church.

THE INSTITUTE.

Friday was occupied with meetings of the Institute. The first session was held at ten o'clock. The President, Rev. G. R. White, was in the chair, and after a short time spent in devotional exercises, the first paper was read by Rev. W. L. Archibald, Ph. D. The subject of this paper was "The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Mosaic System." The aim of the paper was to show to what extent the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was indebted to the Mosaic writings. This interesting subject, involving matters of profound importance, was treated with much ability and in a way to hold the close attention of the audience. A short but interesting discussion followed upon the conclusion of the paper.

The second paper of the morning was by Rev. I. W. Porter, who announced as his subject "The Function of the Imagination in Preaching." The writer dwelt first upon the importance of the faculty of imagination in its psychological relations, and proceeded to show its special importance to the preacher both in the preparation and delivery of his discourses. This excellent and helpful paper was also heard with much interest, and received brief discussion. Dr. Keirstead especially called attention to the value to the preacher of poetic and other literature as affording stimulation and material for the imagination.

At the afternoon session the Institute had the privilege of listening to two able papers by two professors of McMaster University. The first paper was by Rev. Dr. Goodspeed, and dealt with the subject of "Evolution and Theology." It discussed the subject at considerable length, and, as would be expected, with much force of argument and lucidity of expression. The paper was heard with deep attention and received warm commendation in the discussion which followed.

The second paper was by Rev. Dr. Welton. "Its subject was Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament." It was in fact a critique of Dr. George Adam Smith's book on that subject. The essayist held that Dr. Smith largely ignored the real point at issue between the radical and conservative critics—the historical trustworthiness of the Hexateuch. Dr. Welton's paper was evidently received with general favor. Notes of thanks to the essayists were heartily adopted, and a motion was also passed requesting Dr. Goodspeed and Dr. Welton to allow their papers to be published by the Institute in pamphlet form. Another paper by Dr. Goodspeed, not read, on President Strong's Ethical Monism, was included in the request for publication.

The officers of the Institute for the year were elected as follows: Revs. H. R. Hatch, President; Vice-Presidents, Rev. E. B. McLatchey and Rev. J. L. Miner; Secretary, Rev. D. H. Simpson; Executive, Dr. Keirstead, Rev. G. R. White and S. McC. Black.

At the evening session there was first a sermon by Rev. David Hutchinson of Moncton. The large audience room of the church was well filled. Rev. Dr. Welton presided. The preacher's text was Romans 1:16, and he showed in forcible and convincing words that there is no reason why the Christian people of this day should be ashamed of the gospel in view of its Author, its doctrines, its fruits and its consolations. The preacher's tones had the ring of strong conviction and he was heard with deep interest and doubtless with large profit.

After the sermon, another address was presented. The speaker was Rev. Allen T. Hoben, Ph. D., his subject "The New Apologetic."

Mr. Hoben had been announced to speak in the afternoon, but as he had not been able to arrive in time, his address was postponed until the evening. The speaker said that the subject of his address as announced was another name for what is sometimes called the high criticism, but which he preferred to call the historical method of biblical interpretation. He described the different methods of criticism—known as the literal, the mystical, the allegorical and dogmatic in comparison with the historical method which latter he held to be the really scientific method and adapted to give the best ultimate results. In the discussion which followed some dissent from the speaker's views of the higher criticism was expressed, but in the vote of thanks and in the handshaking afterwards expressed sympathy with speaker, which, if it did not imply unreserved acceptance of his views, was none the less hearty on that account. There was a general feeling that the discussions of the day had been of much interest and value.

The Convention opened, according to appointment, at ten o'clock a. m. Saturday, with President J. J. Wallace of Moncton in the chair. After the singing of a hymn, Rev. C. W. Corey, of Liverpool, read the 91st Psalm and Rev. J. B. Ganong of Hillsboro offered prayer. The rules of order were read by the President and the Nominating Committee was appointed, consisting of the following named brethren: Revs. W. N. Hutchins, W. L. Archibald, Alexander White, H. B. Smith, Dr. Keirstead, E. E. Daley, H. R. Hatch and J. L. Miner, and Brethren Andrew McDonald, T. R. Black, T. S. Simms, B. H. Eaton, Dr. McKenna, and J. T. Clark. A number of visiting brethren being present were invited to seats in the Convention. Among these were Rev. Dr. Vedder, President of Crozer Theological Seminary, Mrs. Vedder, Rev. Geo. B. Titus of Brockton, Mass., Dr. Goodspeed of Toronto, Rev. George Richardson of Hamilton, Ont., Rev. J. A. Gordon of Montreal, Rev. Dr. Welton, Rev. Ira Hardy, Rev. W. T. Stackhouse of Winnipeg, Principal Brittain, Rev. W. F. Armstrong of Burma, and the officers of the W. B. M. U. At the invitation of the President a number of the visitors came to the platform and briefly addressed the Convention. The Secretary read a communication from Dr. Joseph McLeod of Fredericton, inclosing a resolution adopted at its last annual meeting by the Free Baptist Conference of New Brunswick in reference to a resolution adopted by the Baptist Convention last year, inviting the Free Baptist body to co-operate in Foreign mission work and education. The resolution, while expressing goodwill and appreciation for the Baptist body, expressed the opinion that co-operation on the lines indicated was not at present practicable. The Committee on Nominations reported through Rev. W. N. Hutchins, naming Rev. Dr. E. M. Saunders of Halifax, as President of the Convention. This nomination was unanimously adopted, and the president elect was welcomed to the chair by the retiring President. Dr. Saunders spoke of his recent illness, from which he was not yet fully recovered, and of the desire he had had to meet with his brethren again if only to be a silent participator in the proceedings. He was grateful that he had been permitted to come to the Convention, and heartily thanked his brethren for the confidence they had expressed in him. On account of his physical weakness he could accept the office only on the condition that the duties of it might be discharged chiefly by the vice-presidents.

The report of the Secretary of the Convention was pre-