

Messenger and Visitor

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The Convention and the Open Doors.

The meetings at Moncton in connection with the fifty-sixth annual session of our Maritime Convention will, we suppose, be generally considered to have been in essential respects at least fairly up to the average of such meetings in the past. It is true that a considerable number of our brethren whom we have been accustomed to see at the Convention, and whose presence and counsels are most highly valued, were, for one reason or another, not with us this year, and their absence was deeply regretted. Still it was a good Convention. Pastor Hutchinson and his people did their part nobly, and a very important part it is, toward making their guests feel at home and making the meetings successful. All the meetings were well attended and the interest in the business of the Convention continued until the close. All the interests of the body received a fair share of attention. The president discharged the difficult duties of his office with ability and courtesy, permitting little time to be wasted in fruitless talk over small details. The platform discussions were earnest and strong, and the discussions on the floor of the house were reasonably full and satisfactory. There was no failure of courtesy, while acrimony and censoriousness were entirely absent. The Convention addressed itself to the questions in hand in a very sober and sincere spirit, and, let us hope, under the guidance of the Divine Wisdom so earnestly invoked.

There is however one deeply regrettable fact which the meeting of the Convention served to bring out into strong light,—that is that while the opportunities open to the denomination for Christian service on every hand are becoming constantly larger, and the calls for help are becoming constantly more urgent, the benevolent contributions of our people are not showing any corresponding increase. The reports of our treasurers of Denominational Funds, it must be confessed, furnish much material for painful reflection. Some churches have certainly done well according to their ability, but how many appear upon the yearly report as having done next to nothing for denominational work, how many there are which with great advantage to their own spiritual condition, could have assisted in the Lord's work in the world to ten times the measure that they have really done! All our Boards are in debt, and there are growing deficits from year to year. This is in a measure discouraging, and especially to those whom our Convention has placed in positions of responsibility, charging them with the duty, as Boards and officers of Boards, of carrying on the denominational work in its various departments and interests. All this indicates on the part of many of our people a sad lack of earnestness in the work which God has committed to us. Too many seem to regard the call to bear a share in this work as a call to something involving hardship if not injustice, and they manage to put the matter away from them as if it was something in which they had no personal responsibility or concern.

We are persuaded however that this lack of interest on the part of so many individuals and so many churches is due rather to a lack of intimate knowledge of the work that is being attempted in the name of the Lord than to any essential unwillingness to take part in that work. If all our people could see our foreign mission work and realize its importance as it is seen and realized by our missionaries in India, there cannot be a doubt that every really Christian man and woman would want to have some part in that enterprise, and the contributions would come pouring into the treasury of the Board in such volume as would make it possible at

once to enlarge the scope of its work. So, in like manner, if we could all apprehend the importance and the urgency of the work on our home mission fields as it is apprehended by those who are engaged in that work, if we saw the importance and the great opportunities of our educational work as it appeals to those who have it in hand, if we could see the needs, the opportunities, the prospective rewards for investment of influence in the Northwest and the Grande Ligne as these are seen by those who are at work in those vineyards of the Lord, we simply could not refuse to respond to the appeals that come to us from these quarters, for we should feel that we could not endure to be shut out from participation in the work to which God is calling his people.

If we are sometimes disposed to resent the frequent and urgent appeals made upon the denomination for the means of carrying on its noble enterprises, it ought to cure us of any such disposition, to consider how large a blessing it means for us that these doors of opportunity are open and that so we are permitted to be co-workers with God in the work of redemption. Let us think what it would mean for us, if the Lord should arise and shut to these doors. What if it were no longer permitted us to send our sons and daughters, supported by our prayers and our money, to India or to any foreign land for the evangelization of the heathen. What if we were told that it was decreed that our denominational schools must dwindle and die and we should not be permitted to contribute a dollar to save them; what if the way were hedged up so that we could not help our weak home mission interests to grow strong and self-supporting; what if the gracious doors of opportunity now so widely open to us in Grande Ligne and the Northwest should be shut in our faces, so that we might no more have any lot or part in a work which must mean so much to all the interests of our own great country! What if all these doors should be flung to in our faces and we should be shut up to ourselves only—to think of ourselves, to pray for ourselves, to build ourselves fine churches, and listen to eloquent preachers, to live for ourselves, and spend our money for ourselves and for our children; but never, through sympathy and sacrifice, to have any part with our Lord in his great work for the redemption of men! Is there a man or woman in all the denomination with soul so dead as to be able to accept with anything but the bitterest lamentation such a condition, a condition which must mean atrophy and death to all spiritual life and effort? And yet how many individuals and how many of our churches are practically closing these doors against themselves, and thus, so far as they can, shutting themselves out from participation in that large abundance of spiritual life and health which God would bestow upon us as a people.

Editorial Notes.

—The Charlottetown Patriot says that the liquor sellers and liquor drinkers of the city are realizing that the prohibitory law is not a dead letter on the statute book, that its enforcement will be pushed and that behind it stands the weight of public opinion.

—As will be seen, we have devoted a very large part of our space this week to a report of the proceedings of the Moncton Convention. Our readers will we hope appreciate having so full a report. If this issue and last week's issue are preserved they will be found convenient for reference.

—Christianity is a warfare, and the Christian soldier is never to be off duty. There is no time to pause and look back until the time comes when one can say: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Even then he will be looking forward rather than backward. "The question always is," as Dr. Marcus Dods says in his reference to the fate of Lot's wife, "the question always is, not, what have you done? but what are you now doing? Up to the site of the pillar, Lot's wife had done as well as Lot, had kept pace with the angels; but her failure at that point destroyed her."

—If we were only humble and wise enough to accept the yoke of him who is meek and lowly in heart, how great we should become! For we should be yoke-fellows of the God-man and should grow up into the fulness of the stature of manhood in Christ Jesus. How small we are, how weak and unattractive and unimportant because of our pride, our avarice, our self-indulgence! We see how the unselfish life bleases and is bleesed, like a tree planted by the water courses, green and fruitful to old age. Wherever such life touches us it brings us blessing, whenever it finds expression in us for a day, for an hour, it lifts and gladdens all our horizon. We recognize the shallows and the miseries of the life that centres all in self, and yet how slow we are to learn the secret of Christ and to find in unselfish service the satisfaction for which all that is noblest in us thirsts.

The Convention.

(Continued from page three.)

to Foreign Missions. It was a graceful act on the part of these young men, and was duly appreciated by the Board in their stress during the year. There were other gifts to which reference might very properly be made, not only because they involved sacrifice, but also for the interest which has thus been manifested in this growing work. To all these generous donors the Board desires to express appreciation for the confidence thus shown in those who are administering this trust, and for their faith in the ultimate victory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LEGACIES.

These have not been as large as for some past years. The amount received from this source was \$316.55, of which \$50 were from the estate of the late Lydia Wheelock, of Lawrencetown, N. S.; \$10 (balance) from the estate of the late C. Connolly, of Jacksonville, N. B.; \$31.55 (balance) from the estate of the late Cynthia Dodge, of Centerville, Annapolis Co., N. S.; \$100 from the estate of the late William E. White, of Berwick, N. S.; \$25 from the estate of the late Emily Martell, of Mira, Cape Breton, and a refund of the Succession Tax on the G. P. Payant bequest.

The tenth Clause deals with Finances as follows:

FINANCES.

There have been received on general account the sum of \$14,980.80. Of this sum \$4,432 came from the Treasurers of Denominational Funds; \$2,506.84 from Nova Scotia, and \$1,925.64 from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. \$3,117.34 were received as donations to the work, of which \$1,502 were special gifts already referred to, and \$1,615 were remitted for Mr. Gullison's support, the balance, \$1,498, was forwarded to the Treasurer direct from various sources, \$1,069.45 coming mostly from churches and individuals. There were received from Legacies \$316.55, and from interest on Trust Funds other than the Bradshaw Trusts \$416.39, and from the Women's Baptist Missionary Union \$6,677.84, which is \$177.84 more than was voted by that body.

There has been expended the sum of \$18,500.56 on general account, which makes the deficit on the year's business \$3,518.76, to which must be added the deficit of last year, \$1,419.84, which makes the total deficit \$4,938.60. This will be reduced however by the amount to be paid over on account of Bradshaw Trusts Nos. 1. and II., \$763.23, making the deficit of the Board \$4,175.37.

On account of Famine Relief there have been received \$105.74, and there have been paid on this account \$82.34, which leaves a balance on hand of \$23.40.

From this statement it will be seen that the amounts received from the churches as such, are all too small when compared with the total receipts and with the requirements for the service.

The question has occurred to the Board whether the time has not arrived for devising some other means and the adoption of other methods by which the departments of work that are dependent solely upon the churches of these Provinces for support may be more effectively sustained. The Board is of the opinion that the time has come when each interest should stand upon its own merits and make its own distinct appeal to the churches without being necessarily bound up with other interests in such appeal, we ask therefore that a committee be appointed at this session of the Convention upon which the principal Boards shall be represented who shall take the whole subject into consideration and report next year.

Up to clause 10, the report had been adopted. Some discussion arose as to the wisdom of adopting the opinion expressed in this clause, and it was accordingly laid on the table for future consideration. Clause 11 presented estimates for the year amounting in all to \$22,698.55.

Clause 12, embracing quite an extended survey of the various mission stations, was adopted without reading.

Clause 13 summarizes the facts as follows:

From these reports we learn that there are 8 churches with a membership of 415. There were added by baptism 62, by letter 15, by restoration 4. The total additions were 81. There are eight male missionaries, seven wives of missionaries, and five single ladies. Of these there are at home on furlough two mission families and the wife of one of the missionaries on the field. There are three unordained pastors, 44 native preachers, 7 colporteurs, and 18 Bible women. There are 35 teachers of whom 20 are men, and 15 are women. There are 4 medical assistants. The total number of native workers is 95. There are 15 outstations and 65 villages where Christians live.

14. ENCOURAGEMENTS.

One of the principal features of the year's work has been in connection with the Hospital at Chicaco. It is doing grandly. Miss D'Silva is proving herself admirably qualified for the work which has been entrusted to her.

The mission to the Savanais is also another advance movement in the right direction. It throws some responsibility upon the native Christians, and makes them feel that they too have a work to do in giving a helping hand to others. It is a most significant fact that one of our own converts, B. Subrida, is the first Home Missionary appointed to this work, and the largest contributor to its funds is Miss D'Prater, who is doing such splendid work at the Woman's Hospital at Virazupatan.

Then there is the completion of the Tekkall bungalow, which makes seven homes for Mission families, upon each of which not less than \$3,000 have been expended. The Mission House at Palconda is an exception. Its cost was much less, and is not so substantial nor so commodious as the others.

We are getting about us in India a most valuable plant. There is material progress, and some measure of spiritual blessing has been enjoyed, "but for the showers we plead."

A new church has been organized at Palconda. Its membership is small 'tis true, but there is plenty of room for growth. "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few."