

THE SYNOD OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

(Dominion Presbyterian Special.)

A fitting prelude to the business meeting of the Synod which opened at Moncton on Tuesday evening, October 2nd, was the conference for deepening spiritual life and promoting an evangelistic spirit which began on the previous evening and was continued during the morning and afternoon following. The convener of the committee in charge, Rev. Anderson Rogers, presided throughout and did much, by his earnest words at fitting times, to maintain the fervent tone of the meeting. The large attendance of ministers and elders and the heartiness with which so many took part was evidence of the interest taken in this, for us, new departure. The first address was delivered by Rev. Jas. Falconer of Halifax, on "God's Willingness to Bless." It was most eloquent and inspiring. He took as his theme the three Crosses as illustrating a pastor's dealing with the impenitent and the penitent and presenting Christ as the Saviour. A fine discussion followed interspersed with hymns and prayers. The emotional fervor would have convinced a Methodist that Presbyterians had been much maligned when termed cold or undemonstrative.

The conference was resumed on Tuesday morning, when addresses were delivered by Rev. Dr. Fotheringham, St. John, on "God's Compassion for Perishing Men," Rev. Dr. Tufts, Stellarton, on "The Power of Christ's Name," Rev. A. D. Sterling, Kensington, on "Recollections of how God Impressed Sinners," and Principal Falconer, Halifax, on "Bubble Study as a Source for a Revival of Religion." No time was allowed for discussion, which was felt to be a mistake, so the conference reassembled in the afternoon, an extra session not down on the programme. At this meeting the questions of revival services and gathering results of preaching were exploited and many hopeful, practical methods, illustrated by facts, were suggested. A similar conference is to be held next year at Halifax.

The sermon of the retiring moderator, Rev. Dr. Miller, Yarmouth, was intensely interesting. Although we confess a prejudice in favor of the old-fashioned "gospel sermon," yet such discourses as that of Dr. Miller, who, indeed, follows the example set by the late Dr. Warden in 1902, are very stimulating. Dr. Miller's text is doubtless forgotten, but not a few will paste his sermon in their scrapbooks. Presbyterianism in Nova Scotia received little nursing in its infancy from the mother church or from missionary enthusiasm. But it came of a sturdy stock and grew in organization and strength. Dr. Miller confined his review to the period since the union of 1875 and brought out the following encouraging facts. During the last thirty years the numerical strength of Presbyterianism in the Maritime Provinces has increased twelve per cent.; the number of congregations, over forty per cent. Home mission fields have increased from seventeen to forty-one, and the preaching stations from forty-seven to one hundred and ten. The ministers in active service have risen from a hundred and fifty-two to two hundred and thirty-two. Families have increased hundred and thirty-one per cent. and fifty-eight per cent; and communicants ninety-three per cent; Sabbath schools a scholars eighty-one per cent. In 1878 we had two foreign mission fields, New Hebrides and Trinidad, on which there was a total expenditure of \$12,000; today we have four fields, Demara and Corea being added, with sixteen ordained missionaries, seven lady missionaries, three ordained native pastors, besides native teachers and catechists. The total expenditure last year was about \$42,000, in addition to \$46,000 contributed in Trinidad by native Christians, proprietors of estates, and government grant. Twenty-three years ago,

when the augmentation scheme was launched, only one congregation out of three came up to the minimum standard of stipend, now the number of those which reach, or exceed, that standard, has increased two hundred and sixty per cent. There are also fifty-eight augmented congregations and twenty-seven mission charges whose ministers receive \$700. The total contributions towards pastors' salaries has almost exactly doubled in the thirty years. Contributions for congregational purposes have more than doubled, as have those for the schemes of the church.

The Rev. Joseph Annand, D.D., missionary in the island of Santo, New Hebrides, was unanimously and enthusiastically elected moderator. Dr. Annand was born at Gay's River, Halifax County, N. S. He graduated in 1872 and went immediately to his life's work in the New Hebrides. For two years he labored on Efate, when he removed to Aneityum, making a third removal later to Santo. One can hardly realize that in the gentle, diffident man, with the happy, smiling face, he is looking at a hero who has three times mastered a barbarous tongue that he might tell in it the message of salvation and has on countless occasions faced death in its most horrid forms, not for gain or glory, but in order to save a dying race from death eternal. He is now principal of the seminary at Tangona, near Santo, where native converts are trained for missionary work. The Synod is honored in having such a moderator. This is Dr. Annand's second furlough in thirty-four years. The last was twenty-one years ago. He is still in the maturity and strength of his powers, both of mind and body.

Last year the Halifax Presbyterian Ladies' College was subjected to severe criticism and a strong committee was appointed to enquire thoroughly into the matters complained of and the general character of the work done. The investigation was very thorough and the report gives the college a high commendation. The Board of Directors requested the continuance of the committee for the purpose of co-operating with them and bringing the college into close touch with the church. The attendance from nearly the beginning has averaged between four and five hundred. The value of the educational "plant" is set at \$102,531 with a mortgage of \$25,000.

Rev. Dr. Mowatt, chairman of the Board of French Evangelization, was present. His clear, vigorous and trenchant address was much enjoyed and the funds of the board should be benefitted by his able advocacy. Dr. Mowatt's statement that Protestantism is dying out in Quebec has been contradicted by a Montreal gentleman. We would like to believe the latter, but we fear Dr. Mowatt is right, and if that be so, the only hope of liberty and truth for that province lies in the success of one board and similar Protestant agencies.

Dr. E. Smith, Musquodboit, presented the report on Augmentation. During the past year 59 congregations were assisted. The receipts for the year totalled \$10,297.06. The committee asked the church for \$11,000 for the current year. The proposal to increase the minimum stipend from \$750 to \$800 was heartily adopted. The cost of living has increased, during the past ten years, in some places from fifteen to twenty-five per cent.

The Synod availed itself of the power delegated to it by the Assembly and added a slight increase to the salaries of the professors in Pine Hill. Principal Falconer now will receive \$2,100 and Prof. Currie and Magill \$2,000, with free house in each case. A vigorous debate took place regarding the state of secular education. It was stated, amid applause, that if there was no public school and no one else can be procured, the minister

must teach the children to read and write. There are sections where schools are closed and the young are growing up in ignorance. Presbyteries were instructed to collect information regarding the condition of education within their bounds and forward the same to the convener of the committee on education.

WE THANK THEE.

For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass, so fresh and sweet,
For song of bird and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear and see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!
For blue of stream and blue of sky;
For pleasant shade of branches high;
For fragrant air and cooling breeze;
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!

—Ralph Waldo Emerson.

CAUSES OF RITUALISM.

Dealing with the recent report of the commission on the Church of England, the Belfast Witness says:

The causes of Ritualism are deep-seated, and we do not expect that these causes are seriously dealt with by the Commissioners. At all times it has been the tendency of Churches to substitute external religious forms for internal spiritual life. In a materialistic and irreligious age this tendency becomes most marked. Just as in the autumn, when life is on the wane, the forest clothes itself in the golden tints and rich colors of decay, so it is with Churches when they are weary of the Gospel, and are poor in the power of the Spirit. They enter upon a period of religious ornamentation, and develop the pomp and ceremony of religious forms. Rich vestments, elaborate services, sensuous ritual take the place of the Word of God and of the Holy Spirit. Worshipers are taught to attach more importance to the rules of ecclesiastical life than to the weightier matters of the Gospel, faith in Christ, obedience to God, and a sanctified and humble character. All that a Commission can do is to inquire into excesses and irregularities, and pronounce upon them. The causes which produce these lie outside their purview, and can only be dealt with in another way. We fervently hope that the Ritualistic scandals will be removed. But we still more fervently hope that a revival of pure and undefiled religion will speedily supervene. All the Churches need a baptism of faith and spiritual power. Such a baptism will bring about a return to the simplicity that is in Christ. Then congregations will turn away from the pomp of religious art and hunger for the realities of the Christian life. "Sirs, we would see Jesus," will be the cry of congregations to their clergy, and Christ will cleanse the temple again of all the tricks and merchandise that have invaded and degraded the house of prayer. The English Church has had a great history, and in many a dark day has been one of the most powerful bulwarks of the Protestant Reformation. We are not disposed as yet to despair of it, although so much has happened to shake our confidence and chill our love. Perhaps the report of this Commission will mark the dawn of a better and brighter day, and if it do, none will rejoice more than ourselves.

An eminent scholar, and a popular teacher of the Bible, says the Herald and Presbyter, has written notes on the Sabbath school lessons for a weekly journal for sixteen years. He says he has never during that time received one letter expressing appreciation of his work or gratitude for any service he has rendered in that work. No doubt there are Sabbath school teachers who could match that statement, and yet who believe their work has not been in vain.