

## Messenger and Visitor

Published in the interests of the Baptist denomination of the Maritime Provinces by

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Co., Ltd.

TERMS: \$1.50 per annum in advance.

S. MCC. BLACK

Editor.

85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Address all communications and make all payments to the MESSENGER AND VISITOR.  
For further information see page nine.

Printed by Paterson & Co., 107 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

### The Presbyterians in Canada.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada met in Toronto, June 14, in its 28th General Assembly. The Presbyterians of Canada are in the best sense of the words an eminently respectable body. They are accomplishing work of great importance in the interest of our common Christianity, and though as Baptists we are not in accord with all their views and all their practices, yet there is so much in common between us that we are glad to recognize them as brethren and fellow-workers, and heartily to congratulate them upon the high character and ability of their ministry, the devotion and benevolence of their people and the large measure of success which has attended their efforts in the several departments of Christian work to which they have put their hands. No apology, therefore, is needed for our devoting a little space here to the undertakings and achievements of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. However strongly convinced we may be that we are right in respect to the points of doctrine in which we differ from our Presbyterian brethren, we may all be willing to admit that in some matters of practical importance we could with advantage take a leaf from their note book.

The retiring Moderator of the Assembly, Rev. Dr. Warden, instituted a new departure in substituting for the time-honored introductory sermon, an address embodying a careful and comprehensive review of the work of the church during the year and the requirements of the immediate future. Appropriate and tender reference was made to the gaps made by death in the ranks of the ministry during the year—twenty-two in all—and in no preceding year, said Dr. Warden, have so many prominent men been removed. Among these are included Dr. A. B. Mackay of Montreal, Dr. Robertson, Superintendent of Northwest Missions, Dr. Laing of Dundas, and Principal Grant of Queen's University.

As to the year's growth and the present position of the Church, the address notes that: In connection with the 58 Presbyteries of the church, there are 1,368 ordained ministers, of whom 1,198 are pastors of congregations, professors in colleges, or filling positions to which they have been appointed by the Assembly. There are 783 self-supporting charges, embracing 1,152 congregations, and 203 charges—embracing 370 congregations—aided by the Augmentation Fund. In addition to these, there are 506 Home Mission fields, with 1,416 stations, at which the gospel is more or less regularly preached by Presbyterian missionaries. The elders number 7,559; families 118,114, and communicants 219,470, a net gain of 5,799 to the membership reported a year ago. The number of communicants received during the year on profession of faith, was 11,259, an average of 7 to each congregation. There are however, 208 congregations—not including mission fields—which report no conversions, no members received on confession of faith, and in this connection there is searching enquiry as to the reasons for this lack of increase,—is it due to any failure on the part of the pulpit to proclaim with power the whole truth as to sin and redemption, or to frivolity and selfishness on the part of professors of religion?

In the matter of their contributions to religious purposes the Presbyterians of Canada have a most praiseworthy record, and in this respect the past twelve months has well maintained the traditions of other years. Their contributions towards the salaries of their ministers last year was \$1,052,691 and for all denominational purposes \$2,857,489.

The property owned by the Presbyterian congregations in Canada amounts to a little more than ten million dollars, on which however there is an indebtedness of about a million and a half. Three years ago the Presbyterian Church in Canada undertook to raise a Century Fund of a million dollars as a thankoffering to God. Knowing the ability and liberality of the Presbyterian people, we are prepared to hear that the result "has in some respects exceeded the most sanguine expectations." While the \$600,000 asked for the missionary and benevolent work of the church has not yet been paid in full, the \$400,000 aimed at in connection with the reduction of debts on church property has been more than doubled, and this large reduction of local debts will doubtless indirectly greatly aid the general work of the church. It is especially worthy of notice too, that notwithstanding the fact that the larger portion of the Century Fund money was actually paid during the past year, the contributions of the denomination to the regular schemes greatly exceed those of the preceding year or any other year in the history of the Church.

The statement in reference to Sabbath School work show that there are 2,196 Sabbath Schools connected with the church—an increase of 147 for the year—21,717 teachers and officers and 182,335 scholars, an increase of scholars for the year of 626. This measure of increase, if encouraging, is considered hardly satisfactory. It is noted that last year, as for several previous years, there was a falling off in the number connected with the Christian Endeavor and other Young People's Societies, which is considered significant. The present membership of these societies connected with the Church is reported to be 26,319.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada makes provision for its aged and infirm ministers, and for the widows and orphans of ministers through two "schemes" for the relief of those classes. In connection with the scheme for Ministerial Relief there are two funds—the Eastern or Maritime with an endowment of \$40,000, and the Western with an endowment of \$192,000, which latter has just been increased by a donation of \$20,000 from Lord Strathcona. From these funds 101 ministers received last year \$500 each. In connection with the second scheme there are funds aggregating \$493,530 and paying last year 179 widows \$150 each.

The Presbyterians have ever been foremost in making provision for an educated ministry. There are in connection with the Presbyterian Church in Canada five theological colleges, situated at Halifax, Montreal, Kingston, Toronto and Winnipeg, with an aggregate of 23 Professors and 109 students, of whom 46 graduated last year. The aggregate endowment of these institutions (not including that at Kingston which is large) is \$856,749, and the amount contributed for their support by the people last year was \$38,000.

Home mission work is carried on vigorously in all parts of the Dominion, but especially in the Northwest, with the aim of reaching not only the English-speaking people of the country, but "to give the gospel in their own tongue to all classes in the Dominion." The contributions of the people last year for home mission work were largely in excess of any former year, amounting to \$122,731, including \$9,000 raised by Students' Missionary Societies in the Colleges. A year ago in view of increasing needs of the work, an effort was made to get 100 congregations or individuals to contribute \$250 each, this being the average sum required, in addition to the contributions from the field, for the support of a missionary. This effort has met with such success that there are now more than 150 congregations and individuals who have each assumed the support of a home missionary. As a result of this generous response the committee having the work in charge are able to report that "so far as known, there is not at present in the entire wide field committed to their care a single district containing a settlement of a dozen Presbyterian families where there is not regularly maintained among them the ordinances of our church."

The report in reference to French Evangelization is encouraging. "There are 40 fields with 85 stations, at which the gospel is preached by our missionaries in French. Connected with these are 865 families and 1,108 communicants, of whom 144 were added last year. There is also a mission to the Italians in Montreal, in connection with which there

is a Mission day school. In connection with the Presbyterian College, Montreal, there is a French Professor for the training of French missionaries." The central schools at Pointe-aux-Trembles have had a wonderful history and a great influence in promoting the French work. Upwards of 5,000 young men and women have there received a liberal education, qualifying them to occupy prominent positions in professional life and in Christian service. In the session recently closed, there were 167 pupils, 30 of whom last winter professed their faith in Christ as a personal Saviour.

The Presbyterians aim not only to educate their ministers but to make adequate provision for their temporal wants after they have entered upon their work. The provision for aged and infirm ministers, widows and orphans has already been noted. There is also an "Augmentation Fund," the aim of which is to assure to every minister in the denomination a minimum salary of \$750 and a manse. This has not yet been reached in all cases, but progress is being made toward that end. The average contribution for stipend throughout the whole Church, including its larger and wealthier as well as its poorer congregations, is \$4.79 per communicant, and before a congregation can receive aid from the Augmentation Fund, it is necessary that it shall contribute a sum equal to an average of \$4.50 per communicant. As a matter of fact however, the augmented congregations contributed last year \$6.80 per communicant for support of the ordinances, or 50 per cent. in excess of the average contribution throughout the whole Church.

While the Presbyterians of Canada take so deep and practical interest in the home work, they do not fail in interest and in effort on behalf of the work of Foreign Missions. The Church is at present carrying on Foreign Mission work in the New Hebrides, Trinidad, Demerara, Formosa, Korea, Honan, India, and, at the last meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee, a missionary was appointed to Macao, in the southern portion of China, the district from which nearly all the Chinese in Canada and on the American continent have come. The number of missionaries from Canada on these fields is 99 and associated with them are some 268 native pastors, teachers and workers. The amount contributed for this work by the Presbyterians of Canada the past year was \$158,561, and the labors of the missionaries have been attended with a good degree of success.

It is evident from this brief summary that the Presbyterian Church in Canada is a vigorous and effective body, strong in faith, in organization and in devotion to the purposes for which it stands. A consideration of its undertakings and achievements ought to inspire in our hearts the spirit of friendly emulation. Of course the Baptists of Canada are far smaller in point of numbers than their Presbyterian brethren, but are we equal to them in zeal, in ability, in effective organization, in benevolence and, proportionally to our means and numbers, in achievement? The Presbyterians already far exceed us in respect to their contributions according to membership to their religious and benevolent work, but they do not propose to rest there. The retiring Moderator has suggested to the congregations that they should undertake to raise an average of a cent a day from every member of the Church, or a sum of \$3.65 from each member yearly. This would mean from the Presbyterians of Canada, contributions to the amount of some \$800,000 or more than double the contributions of last year. And seeing how well they have done in the past, one would not like to deny their ability to reach even that standard.

### Editorial Notes.

—Noting the claim of the notorious Dowle that he was triply foretold in the Bible—as "the Prophet foretold by Moses, the Messenger of the Covenant, and Elijah the Restorer," the *Independent* says—"There are a few mystical characters in the Bible yet to be appropriated, such as Maher-shalal-hashbaz, the beast of seven heads and names of blasphemy, and the other beast with two horns that spake as a dragon."

—It is said that a Baptist friend of the late Dr. Talmage once asked him his views on New Testament baptism. He replied that while he could not agree that immersion was the only mode, yet he certainly believed it to be the best. When he sprinkled nobody paid any attention, but when he immersed people were deeply impressed with the ordinance. Then his friend asked if it were not always wise to do a thing in the best way.