

THE TRIENNIAL NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
AMERICAN CONGREGATIONALISTS.

SIXTH TRIENNIAL SESSION.

The Council met in the Union Park Congregational Church at 10 o'clock last Wednesday morning, October 13. For a half-hour before the time announced, the lecture-rooms and prayer-rooms on the ground floor of the church presented a busy scene. Delegates were thronging in, looking up their credentials, inquiring about accommodations, greeting their friends, talking about Des Moines and enjoying the prospect of a most interesting convention. Every accommodation was provided, from the post office and telegraph instrument just inside the door, to the committee room and correspondence table in the rear, and it did not take long to bring order out of what at first glance seemed to be almost chaos. At 10 o'clock the Council was called to order in the large auditorium upstairs. Around the front of the gallery were suspended thirteen wreaths of evergreen with names dear to the hearts of every member of the denomination: Robinson, Davenport, Edwards, Dwight, Mather, Storrs, Brewster, Bacon, Sturtevant, Stuart, Goodell, Carpenter and Hammond. The omission of other names, especially those of Finney and Beecher, was regretfully noticed by some, but it was hardly possible to make a galaxy large enough to embrace all the distinguished worthies of the denomination.

After some preliminaries, the Council proceeded to secure a permanent organization, and nominations for the office of Moderator were declared in order.

Dr. E. P. Goodwin, nominated, as he called him, "the Lieutenant-Governor of the Congregational State of Connecticut, Lauren A. Cook," who was elected by a large majority over other nominations.

Gov. Cook, in taking his seat, said: "Gentlemen of the Council,—I feel perfectly grateful for the great honor you have conferred upon me by thus electing me as your presiding officer. It is an honor which ought to satisfy the ambition of any man. Ours is the historical church of this country. And you are met here in the metropolitan city of the West, not, as I understand, to legislate for, but to counsel, to advise, to assist the churches of our land. Your Christian profession is a guaranty of the spirit in which you will perform your duties. I ask your kindly forbearance for the errors that I may commit as presiding officer, and now await your pleasure."

Rev. John K. McLean, D.D., of California, and Rev. Benjamin A. Imes (colored), of Tennessee, were elected assistant moderators. Hon. C. A. Denny, of Mass., and Rev. A. W. Wild, of Vermont, assistant registrars.

Prof. Geo. R. Fisher, of Yale, preached the opening sermon from the text, "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." A good key-note.

The Lord's Supper was administered at the close of the sermon by Dr. Z. Eddy and ex-President Chapin.

On Thursday morning, Rev. Dr. Goodwin gave a most appropriate address of welcome. Then came reports from the Publishing Committee, American Missionary Association, American Board of Commissioners for the foreign missions, and the Knowles Bequest of \$10,000, for the relief of disabled ministers. Of these interesting documents, it is impossible to give even a synopsis, in a brief report like this.

Dr. R. G. Hutchins read the report of the Committee on the Pastorate and Ministerial Standing, in which the following resolutions were recommended:

I. Resolved, That standing in the Congregational ministry is acquired by the fulfillment of conditions: (1) ordination to the Christian ministry, and (2) reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational churches.

II. Resolved, That Congregational ministerial standing should be lodged in our associations or conferences of churches, and that our local conferences and State organizations should make such modifications of constitution as may be requisite to the assumption of so grave a responsibility; and that we deem associations of churches competent to ordain men to the Congregational ministry.

III. Resolved, That while we do not regard installation as essential to the pastorate or an indispensable or certain safeguard of the ministry, we would still encourage its use among our churches, in deference to time-honored practice and as *promotive* of the purity of the ministry, the fellowship of the churches, and the sense of permanency and tender sacredness in the pastoral relation.

(2) That, as to many of our churches and ministers no hallowed associations commend installations, while others see practical objections to it, we would give our hearty endorsement of councils of recognition called from neighboring churches to examine a pastor-elect and assist in inducting him into office, such recognition possessing, as we believe, the essential advantages of installation.

(3) That the full weight of the influence of this Council is given in reprehension of "picked" Ecclesiastical Councils; which are sometimes practically "packed" Councils, called to advise concerning the standing of ministers or the mutual relations of ministers and churches; and that in our judgment, Councils for such purposes ought generally to be called from the vicinity.

IV. Resolved, That we advise that in our denominational statistics the distinction between pastors and acting pastors, and all other distinctions intended to designate the special relations of ministers to the churches they serve, be henceforth dropped.

V. Resolved, That the simplest method of securing uniformity in conditions of membership in Congregational ministerial associations seems to be the requirement, on the part of such associations, that all mem-