

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, OCT. 18, 1856.

CHURCH AFFAIRS.

This past week has been occupied by the majority of the Clergy of the Diocese, in attending the business connected with the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Church Society, and with the business of the Diocesan Assembly, which commenced its first regular meeting, or Convention of the Clergy and Laity on Thursday morning at the Bishop's Chapel. The whole proceedings are of much interest, and will have consequences of great importance in the future history of the Provincial Church.

The Rev. J. M. Campbell delivered an excellent discourse on Sunday morning in St. Paul's, on behalf of the Diocesan Church Society, after which a collection was taken in aid of its funds, which amounted to £18 10 8. The sermon in the evening was preached by the Rev. T. H. White—and the collection taken amounted to £3 19 7. The Rev. H. DeBicis preached at St. Luke's in the morning, in the same behalf. The collection realized the sum of £10 19 3.

On Tuesday the Business Committee of the Diocesan Assembly met at the Episcopal residence, to prepare the business proceedings for the deliberation of the Assembly on Thursday.

Pursuant to previous notice, the Holy Communion was celebrated at St. Paul's on Wednesday morning, the Clergy and many of the lay representatives of the country parishes, being present. In the afternoon, at 2 o'clock, the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Church Society, for the despatch of business, was held at the National School. The meeting was numerously attended by the Clergy, all of whom are members by right of their office, and by the laity of the rural parishes, who had come to town purposely to take an interest in the ecclesiastical proceedings of the week.

The business of the meeting was opened with prayer by the Lord Bishop. The Annual Report was read, received and adopted. Various subjects of an interesting nature concerning the operations of the Society, were discussed. Five members were elected for the executive Committee in place of the outgoing members—a resolution passed providing that the next annual meeting should take place in June instead of October. Notice was also given of a Resolution to change the mode of election of Members of the Executive Committee at the annual meetings, and thanks were voted to the Clergymen who had preached the annual Sermons at St. Paul's and St. Luke's. The Society then adjourned to meet in the evening at the Temperance Hall at half-past 7.

The Temperance Hall was well filled in the evening, pursuant to adjournment. The Chair was taken by his Lordship the Bishop at 7 o'clock, and the meeting opened with the usual prayers for the Divine blessing upon the labors of the Society, &c. Much interest was manifested in the proceedings. The Bishop, in his opening speech, adverted to the various objects which had engaged the attention of the Society during the past year, and which its funds had been applied to promote—he instanced, as something new in its operations, the engagement of the services of a colporteur, with the design of disseminating useful literature, and Bibles and Prayer Books among the people. They had been fortunate in obtaining, during the college vacation, the services of one of the students in that capacity, and although the experiment had been necessarily limited as to time and to a small portion of country along the western shore, it had been eminently successful, as evinced by the great demand for Bibles and religious publications. He then adverted at considerable length to the gradual withdrawal of the assistance of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, adducing evidence in proof which ought to have weight with the most sceptical, of their intention to leave this Diocese to its own resources. This had been done in the Diocese of Toronto, and similar notification had been given in New Brunswick, and elsewhere. It was, therefore, the bounden duty of Churchmen to uphold the Diocesan Church Society as the means of supplying that assistance, of which they would soon be deprived. Whatever might be the claims of other Societies, they should look upon this as the Society of the Church, and as such identified with all its objects, its interests, and its wants. As such it ought to be first in their affections, and engage their chief support. His Lordship concluded an eminently practical and interesting address by calling upon the Secretary (Rev. E. Gilpin), to read the Report.

The Report thus disposed of, a series of Resolutions bearing upon the operations of the Society, were passed, prefaced and supported with excellent

speeches by the following gentlemen:—No. 1.—Moved by Mr. Tupper, of Aylesford, seconded by Dr. Drumm, of Bridgewater. No. 2.—Moved by Rev. Mr. Arnold, Sydney Mines, seconded by Richard Smith, Esq., of Rawdon. No. 3.—Moved by Col. Poyntz, of Bridgetown, seconded by Rev. Mr. Forsythe of Albion Mines. The Resolutions were interspersed with singing, and a collection was taken. It was generally remarked that the speeches were never more effective, and that the platform of the Diocesan Church Society exhibited upon the present occasion a high degree of oratorical excellence. It was the first appearance before the public in behalf of the Society, of several of the speakers—may they long be enabled to continue their exertions on behalf of so good a cause. The collection taken at the meeting amounted to £18 15 9.

After the passage of the Resolutions, a Doxology was sung, and the assemblage dismissed with the Apostolic Benediction.

DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY.

Morning Service was held at the Bishop's Chapel on Thursday, after which the Session of the Diocesan Assembly was opened by the Bishop with prayer. The Clergy took their places in the body of the Church, on the right of the chair, the laity on the left. It being ascertained that more than a quorum of both orders were present, the Assembly proceeded to business.

The Rev. E. Gilpin was chosen Secretary by the Clergy, and J. W. Rowley, Esq. by the Laity.

The Clerical Secretary called the roll of the Clergy, when 38 answered to their names.

The Lay Secretary called the roll of the Representatives from the various Parishes, when it appeared that 22 parishes had sent 27 Representatives.

A Committee was appointed to examine the Certificates of the lay representatives—which reported subsequently that all of them had been found correct.

The Bishop addressed the Assembly, comparing the attendance of the three past years one with the other, showing that every year there had been an increase. This was in reality the 1st regular meeting of the Diocesan Assembly, and he could not forbear expressing his pleasure at the large attendance—at the last meeting it had been his opinion that it would be better that no meeting should take place this year, but members of the Assembly thought differently, and he was glad to find that they had judged aright of the interest in its institution. He was sorry however to state that the Diocese could not be said to be strictly unanimous in its favor, but the opposition was only kept up by a few agitators, who found but little countenance from the majority of the people, while of the Clergy only eight had expressed themselves as having any objection to its institution. The Bishop referred to the objections that had been urged to some passages of a letter written by him to the majority of the Parishioners of St. Paul's, which had been distorted into something very different to that he meant to convey, which was not that all those who were opposed to the institution of the Synod were careless of the Church's vitality, for there were no doubt some who objected from quite conscientious motives, whose zeal for the Church was unquestioned. It had also been asserted that a majority of the Diocese were opposed to the Synod; but he could only say that if so it was strange that such a number should appear here to take part in its business—if he thought so he should certainly not desire its continuance; indeed he would have no objection as a test of public opinion, that instead of its meetings being biennial, they should be called at such stated times as a majority of the parishes should desire. It was a mistaken idea to suppose that he had ever used any power that he possessed to influence the attendance of any of its members, every one of whom came freely according to the dictates of his conscience, and as a sense of duty prompted. His Lordship referred to the Canonical Oath, and to the objections that had been urged by writers in the *Church Witness*, who had charged him with claiming an undue obedience from the Clergy to their Ordinary. His Lordship entered into a justification of his views with reference to the oath, which it would be admitted must be binding in some sense that would justify his observation that it was not "an open question." He stated to the Assembly the course he had pursued with reference to these attacks, and again adverted to the writer of them stated with reference to his not having taken such an oath, that the records of the diocese had been examined to ascertain what instances of the kind existed, when it was found that only three clergymen appeared there as not having taken the canonical oath in this Diocese—the Rev. G. Townsend, Rev. George Morris, and Rev. Dr. Robertson. Of these the Rev. G. Townsend had affirmed that he had certainly taken the canonical

oath, and therefore in his case the omission must have been accidental. Of the other two it appeared that the Rev. G. Morris had never been licensed in this Diocese, and that the Rev. Dr. Robertson was inducted here without taking the oath or making any subscription—an irregularity which, had it occurred in England, might at any time involve serious consequences both to the Bishop and clergyman. All the arguments used against the expression in his letter really amounted to no more than he had stated therein—the oath must be considered as susceptible of any interpretation that it would bear—and any further discussion on the point was a waste of time. His clergy would bear him out in the assertion that he had never imposed any unnecessary burden upon them—and he had never yet had occasion to call upon any of them to do anything upon his canonical obedience—or infringed in any way upon the liberty he possessed of acting according to the dictates of his conscience. He regretted that the Editor of the *Church Witness* should have been induced to pursue a course that was calculated to produce strife where there ought to be harmony—and recommended to the clergy and laity to take care that their own paper, which pursued a moderate course, with no desire to mingle in controversial disputes, should not suffer because it would not follow the bad example of others.

The assumption on the part of the Parish of St. Paul's to elect their Chairman at Parish meetings, was then commented on. It might give occasion to other parishes to follow their example, and his sanction might be asked to their proceedings. In fact, however, he had not the least power to interfere, for whatever the Parishioners chose to do, it did not alter the law, which imposed the duty upon the Rector. If he delegated for the time his power to another it might not affect the legality of the proceedings, but the right still remained as before, and could not be assumed by others. It showed the weakness of the position of the advocates of the change in St. Paul's, that they declined an offer to test the question before the legal tribunals—and that they thought of applying to the Provincial Legislature for the power they did not themselves possess—thus in effect acknowledging that they were wrong.

His Lordship alluded to the objections to the Synod on the ground that it affected the Queen's supremacy, &c. In this case, all they had to consider was, were they acting against her Majesty's desire. His Lordship referred to the authorities that had been cited in favor of Provincial Synods, and quoted the opinions of eminent lawyers, and from Mr. La-bouchere's despatch, in order to prove that there was no immediate necessity for a law of the colonial legislature to sanction their proceedings. There was no ground to question their right to meet and consult upon their own affairs. They must not suppose that they would not meet with opposition—they would find it in every effort to do good or to dispel error—and he would have some doubt of the goodness of their cause, and be much astonished, if every thing went smoothly with their undertakings. Let them however take care that it did not proceed from themselves. Fair honest opposition should not disturb them, and might be productive of benefit if pursued in a spirit of moderation. They should pray that they may be actuated by a right spirit in all things. They had met yesterday together to commemorate the communion of the body and blood of our Lord, and as members of one communion he called upon them to act with brotherly love and affection towards each other. They were there to speak their honest opinion upon all matters that should come before them, and to act as they thought best for the welfare of the Church in this diocese.

His Lordship after concluding the address, of which the above is but an imperfect sketch, laid the Report of the Business Committee before the meeting.

The various Resolutions embraced very important topics, all of which were discussed with an evident determination to arrive at a just conclusion.

A Resolution separating the Church in P. E. Island from being represented in the Diocesan Synod for the reasons stated therein, was proposed for discussion at the next Assembly, and carried after some discussion.

A Resolution proposing Regulations for the trial of offending Clergymen, was passed unanimously by the Laity and by a large majority on the part of the Clergy. It was then proposed that the Report be printed for further consideration, which was met by an amendment, that the Report be discussed clause by clause by the Assembly, and afterwards printed for further consideration.

The Assembly adjourned at half-past one and met again at half-past 2, when the preamble and the several clauses of the Report underwent discussion, and were ordered to be printed in the *Church Times*.

Conversation took place on the disposal of glebe lands, and the Bishop submitted to the judgment of