

THE REVOLUTION OF 1688.

Dr. Burns, from the committee appointed to report on the bi centenary of 1688, presented a report recommending that Sabbath, November 4, be set apart as a day when special reference shall be made to this memorable occasion in British history, and also that, if practicable, meetings should be held on the Monday evening following. The doctor made an elegant speech in submitting the report, recounting the principal acts of the killing time when persecution and bloodshed were the fate of God's saints. The treachery and baseness of the Charleses and the heroic endurance of the Scottish Covenanters were portrayed in vivid language. Mr. R. Murray, of Halifax, then moved, and Dr. Cochrane seconded, the adoption of the following resolution, which was carried: The General Assembly avails itself of the fact that this is the bi centenary of the revolution of 1688 to record its admiration of the heroic endurance manifested by our martyred forefathers who were tortured not accepting deliverance and loved not their lives unto the death. The Assembly records devout gratitude to Almighty God for the great deliverance wrought for our beloved fatherland by the accession of William and Mary to the throne, and its unabated and unqualified adherence to those fundamental principles of civil and religious liberty, of which the revolution 200 years ago was the expression and embodiment. The General Assembly approves of the recommendations of the report, and would instruct ministers and Sessions to take order that effect be given to those in such manner as they deem best, to the end that our ancient testimony for truth and righteousness be maintained, the safeguard around the throne, as well as our altars and hearths, be preserved, and that freedom, civil and religious, which we have obtained for so great a sum, be transmitted in its entirety to the generations that are yet to come.

On Tuesday morning after devotional exercises the Assembly was duly constituted.

THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Dr. Moore, from the committee to examine and report on the remit sent down to Presbyteries anent marriage with a deceased wife's sister, gave in the report stating that of the forty-three Presbyteries in the Church, twenty-seven had sent in replies. Of these eighteen approved *simpliciter*, five disapproved, and four while disapproving, desire to give Sessions certain disciplinary power.

Dr. Cochrane, in rising to move a resolution, said that he did not intend to go into any theological discussion on the question. That had been done so often by able men that it seemed to him unprofitable to engage in it. For some twenty years this had been discussed and re-discussed in Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies. And not only so, a committee composed of our theological professors and most scholarly men have had the matter before them for years and reported their views to the Assembly. He sympathized very deeply with beloved brethren in the Church who held different views from the majority, who were exceedingly sensitive as to the Confession of Faith. These brethren would observe, when he read his motion, that he did not propose to touch the Confession of Faith in any shape or form, but simply to send down to the Presbyteries a remit as to whether liberty of opinion should be allowed in respect of the proposition to amend the Confession of Faith. This had been done already at the reunion of the Churches in the matter of the chapter referring to the civil magistrate; why not do so in this instance, and thus guard the conscientious convictions of all parties in the Church? The motion is as follows: Whilst a large majority of the Presbyteries which report on the remit on marriage signify approval of it, yet the number reporting is not sufficient to enable the Assembly adequately to ascertain the mind of the Church and finally to dispose of the question involved. The General Assembly therefore resolves that the *ad interim* act of last year be re-enacted and a remit sent down again to the Presbyteries to report upon to the next General Assembly, viz., "The discipline of the Church shall not be exercised in regard to marriage with a deceased wife's sister or deceased wife's niece." The Assembly is authorized in this by the fact that a large majority of the Presbyteries approved under the Barrier Act of the remit of the Assembly of 1886, touching the exercise of discipline in the cases referred to. Further, in this line of the deliverance of several Presbyteries on the remit of last year, the General Assembly does hereby resolve to send down under the Barrier Act the following remit:—Subscriptions to the formula in which the office-bearers of the Church accept the Confession of Faith shall be so understood as to allow liberty of opinion in respect of the proposition that "The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer in blood than he may of his own." The Presbyteries of the Church are therefore required to report on the above remit to the next General Assembly.

The Rev. D. M. Gordon, of Halifax, seconded the motion in a concise, logical and able speech. Mr. Sedgwick rose to a point of order, namely, that before Dr. Cochrane's motion could be entertained the Assembly should record that the remit had been rejected by the Presbyteries. Dr. Caven, Dr. Cochrane, Hon. D. S. Fraser and others, held that the remit had not been rejected. The Assembly was not in a position to ascertain the mind of the Church. At the close of this long preliminary discussion, in order to save the time of the court, Dr. Cochrane withdrew his motion until this was settled. The remit, so far as relating to changing the Confession of Faith, was then declared to be rejected, on the ground that it had not received the approval of a majority of the Presbyteries of the Church. Dr. Cochrane then renewed his motion, seconded by Rev. D. M. Gordon. Mr. Sedgwick again arose to another point of order as to the competency of Dr. Cochrane's motion, but the Moderator decided that it was perfectly competent. Dr. Moore moved in amendment as follows: That the Assembly receive the report of the committee; that, in view of the action of the Presbyteries, the remit is rejected; but from the number of replies received to the remit on the marriage question, it is clear that, though the Church at large does not lack favour on any proposition to change or amend the

Confession of Faith, there is a serious difference of opinion regarding these marriages, and it is desirable to relieve the consciences of those who seek liberty and to guard the interest and peace of those who adhere to the Confession in its integrity. Therefore, resolved, that it be left to Sessions to deal with cases as in their judgment may be most conducive to righteousness and peace. Mr. Sedgwick seconded the amendment. A very long and breezy discussion followed. Dr. Fraser submitted two motions, one to lay the whole matter upon the table and another to pass on to the next item of business. The Moderator ruled the one out of order and the other was voted down by 119 to twenty-seven. The discussion then took a fresh start, and Dr. Caven, in a singularly clear and telling speech, supported Dr. Cochrane's motion. He traced the history of this question of marriage with a deceased wife's sister, through canon law, putting little value on the edicts of Popes who forbade other marriage relations besides that in question. He held that our appeal must be to Scripture and that alone, and because he did not find it forbidden in Scripture, he approved of liberty being given the Church in the matter. The discussion was continued by Drs. Proudfoot and McCrae in favour of Dr. Cochrane's motion, and by Drs. Reid and Murray in behalf of Dr. Moore's. Drs. Cochrane's motion was carried over Dr. Moore's by a vote of 139 to twenty-four. A number of dissents were entered by permission of the Court.

STATE OF RELIGION.

The Assembly heard in the evening the reports of the committees on the State of Religion and Temperance. The report on the State of Religion was given in by the Rev. G. M. Clark, in the absence of Rev. J. A. R. Dickson, the Convener. The recommendations of the committee as adopted by the Assembly are as follows:

1. That elders have districts assigned to them in all our congregations of which they shall have oversight, for their furtherance in the divine life.
2. That it be an instruction to Sessions to take greater pains to ascertain what proportion of families within their bounds observe family worship.
3. That inasmuch as it is evident that the memorizing of Scripture by the young in our homes and in our Sabbath schools, is not as general as could be desired, Sessions be asked to bring the subject to the attention of parents and superintendents and teachers.
4. That Presbyteries be recommended to prepare a Scheme of evangelistic services adapted to reach all congregations; ministers, elders and members to assist in conducting them.
5. That Sessions be asked to consider whether more might not be done to inculcate Temperance principles on the young by a more general institution of Bands of Hope, and the circulation of Temperance pledges.
6. That special care be taken by ministers and Sessions to instruct the young people of the congregation in the standards of the Church.
7. That in connection with the sixth recommendation, in order to encourage our young people to study the standards of the Church and the Word of God, a committee of three be appointed to issue examination papers on the Shorter Catechism and the Confession of Faith, and any portion of Scripture that may be selected; each of which shall entitle the successful candidates to a diploma (card, lithographed, issued by authority of General Assembly, as in Scotland, signed by Moderator and examiners).

TEMPERANCE.

The report on Temperance was presented by Rev. A. F. Tully, in the absence of the Convener, Rev. P. Wright. Mr. Tully made a telling speech, which was received by the Assembly with repeated manifestations of applause. At the close of Mr. Tully's speech Rev. W. A. McKay moved its reception, and among other things said deep interest was taken in this subject from one end of the Dominion to the other. He dwelt on the importance of education and law going hand in hand. In doing this great work we should know no name but the name of Jesus, but laws are necessary on this as on Sabbath observance and other matters to give expression and force to Christian conviction. To preach total abstinence and then set up temptation to drunkenness at every street corner is a manifest absurdity. As well pray Almighty God to stay the scourge of the pestilence when it appears in the land and then go to work and distribute as wisely as possible infected clothing over all the country as to pray to the same righteous God to save our country from the terrible curse of intemperance and then vote for a law that protects and fosters a traffic that is a chief source of intemperance. We believe in moral suasion and we believe also in prohibition. We should pull the poor drunkard out of the river, but we should also fight the crowd who are throwing the people into the river. He strongly denounced the license system as a framing of mischief by a law, and showed its political failure to restrict the traffic in England, the United States and Canada. Prohibition, not license, was the remedy demanded. As Dr. Guthrie said, "The knife must be plunged into the heart of the cruel monster." He dealt with specific legislation on this matter as required by the Word of God. He drew a most hopeful picture of the future of our country, and made an earnest appeal to the fathers and brethren to go forward in the cause of God and humanity. Rev. Mr. McKay seconded the motion for the reception of the report, which was agreed to.

TEMPERANCE RESOLUTIONS.

The recommendation of the Temperance Committee after slight alterations by the Assembly were adopted as follows: (1). That since Christ alone can uplift and bless the race, purify and save society, and make us a temperate and peaceable people, we give ourselves, in promoting the Temperance cause, with renewed consecration to the preaching of the Gospel; and that we hold up Christ in our pulpits, prayer meetings, Sabbath schools, Bible classes and families as the only Saviour from sin, and the only guide to true character. (2). That the Assembly declares that the general traffic in intoxicating liquors is contrary to the

Word of God and to the spirit of the Christian religion; that total Prohibition would be the most effective form of Temperance legislation; that it is in the highest degree expedient that the State should pass an efficient Prohibitory law, and therefore the Assembly urge upon all the members to use all legitimate means to secure such legislation. (3). That this Assembly, with renewed earnestness and emphasis again expresses the hope that electors, in their choice of representatives, will elect only able and good men, who are well known to be in sympathy with Prohibitory legislation. (4). That this Assembly calls on all its pastors, elders, teachers and members to use their utmost influence against the deadly power of the saloon, by their public utterances and private life, by personal effort and example on behalf of Temperance, and by a watchful care of the young gathered in our Sabbath schools and homes, so as to awaken the conscience of the indifferent, and save those who are tempted or fallen. (5). That the Assembly's Temperance Committee be instructed to take all proper measures to secure the co-operation of the other Churches of the Dominion with a view of petitioning the Dominion Government in favour of entire Prohibition at the earliest possible date; and, co-operation being secured, to prepare a form of petition to be signed by our people. (6). That this Assembly expresses its cordial approval of the provision which has been made in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec for scientific Temperance instruction in the Public schools, and trust that the other Provinces of the Dominion the same blessing may speedily be conferred on our children and youth. (7). That this Assembly gratefully recognizes the noble service rendered to the cause of Temperance and Prohibition not only by the religious press, but also and equally by the leading secular journals of our Dominion, and would hail this fact both as an element of great power in the conflict with evil and as an evidence of an advanced and healthy public sentiment.

There was an animated discussion over several of the recommendations of the report participated in by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, W. T. Herridge, Hon. D. C. Fraser, Dr. McCrae, Mr. Paul, Rev. G. Bruce, Dr. Campbell, Montreal, Mr. Davis, Rev. C. Tanner, Dr. James, Rev. D. M. Gordon and others.

The report on Systematic Benevolence was received and adopted, and Dr. Caven was re-appointed Convener for next year.

CONFERENCE IN MONTREAL.

In reference to the Conference in Montreal next September, Dr. Cochrane moved and Dr. Reid seconded the following resolution: The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada express their gratification at the proposed Christian conference to be held in Montreal next October under the auspices of the Montreal Evangelical Alliance, and express the hope that by the blessing of God this conference may result in advancing the cause of truth and afford a basis for co-operation in such departments of Christian work as are common to the evangelical Churches of this land.

BRANTFORD LADIES' COLLEGE.

Dr. Laing read the report of the Brantford Young Ladies' College, after which the following motion by Dr. Cochrane, seconded by Mr. R. Murray, Halifax, was unanimously adopted: That the report be received, and that the General Assembly express gratification at the continued success of the college and the efforts of the Board of Directors to maintain a high standard of education in the institution, and commend the college to the confidence of the Church, inviting parents and guardians to avail themselves of the privileges offered for the care of the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth of the Church, while their intellectual training is carefully attended to. Further, the Assembly would suggest that in future the Board of Directors should give a short statement of the financial condition of the college, so as to satisfy such as are interested in it and give additional ground for confidence. The Assembly also nominates the following gentlemen, from among whom six shall be elected at the next annual meeting to act on the Board of Directors for the ensuing year: Rev. W. Cochrane, D.D.; W. Watt, R. Henry, W. Nichol, M.D.; A. Robertson, William Grant, C. B. Heid, Thomas McLean, R. Russell, A. Spence, J. Sutherland, Alexander Turner, and appoint as visitor of the college for the ensuing year the Rev. H. McQuarrie, of Wingham, Ont.

THE BOOK OF FORMS.

Rev. Dr. Laing submitted the report on the Book of Forms. On motion of Mr. Johnston, of Fredericton, N. B., the following deliverance was adopted: That the whole report of the committee, with the interlineations adopted by the committee, be printed and sent down to the Presbyteries to be considered and reported upon by the same committee, which is hereby re-appointed by this Assembly, and they to report to the next Assembly. It was agreed that Rev. Dr. Laing be presented with \$100 for the great labour bestowed on the Book of Forms. That gentleman, however, declined to accept anything more than his expenses in the matter.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Rev. James Fleck, of Montreal, presented the report from the committee on Sabbath Schools. This report shows the following statistics: In the Synod of Hamilton and London there are 3,201 teachers and officers, an increase of 236; 28,667 scholars on roll, an increase of 1,380; \$15,374 has been collected in the schools for all purposes, an increase of \$1,332. In the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, 3,764 teachers and officers are on the roll; 33,730 scholars on the roll, being an increase of 3,067; collections during the year, \$17,077. In the Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, 774 teachers and officers; 6,353 scholars, an increase of 1,993; total collections, \$1,040. In the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa, 2,124 officers and teachers; 19,232

Continued on page 426.