

ficeable that all through the debate, while there were abundant references to usage and historical principles, there was no appeal to the New Testament. The discussions were pre-eminently able, well-sustained, logical, and interesting. No one who listened to them with ability of appreciation, could fail to feel that they were indeed memorable. As proof of the fact that the subject went through a process of evolution, it may be stated that the following was the report of the committee of five:—

The Committee to whom was referred the resolutions reported by the Committee on the Pastorate and Ministerial Standing, beg leave to make the following report, viz.: That in place of the said resolutions the following be substituted, and we advise their passage:

I. Resolved, That standing in the Congregational Ministry is acquired by the fulfilment of these three conditions, viz.: (1) Membership in a Congregational Church; (2) Ordination to the Christian Ministry; and (3) Reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational Churches, in accordance with the usage of the State or Territorial organizations of Churches in which the applicant may reside, and such standing to be continued in accordance with these usages.

II. Resolved, That all Congregational Ministers thus in good standing in their respective States who have been installed by Council, or who have been regularly called to the pastorate by the specific vote of some church, have formally accepted such position, and have been recognized as such by some definite act of the church, should be enrolled as pastors; and we advise that all our denominational statutes, and direct that, so far as possible, our Year Book conform to this principle.

This report was signed by such names as Henry M. Dexter, Alonzo H. Quint, A. Hastings Ross, J. K. McLean, Nathan P. Dodge.

After successive discussions day after day until the sixth day, and the appointment of a third committee whose report led to a very lengthy discussion, lit up with volleys and cross-fires of amendments and substitutes, the following resolutions defining pastorate and ministerial standing, were adopted:

Resolved, That standing in the Congregational ministry is acquired by the fulfilment of these three conditions, viz.: (1) Membership in a Congregational Church; (2) Ordination to the Christian Ministry; and (3) Reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational Churches, in accordance with the usage of the State or Territorial organization of churches in which the applicant may reside, and such standing is to be continued in accordance with these usages: it being understood that the pro re nata council is an ultimate resort in all questions.

Resolved, That all Congregational ministers thus in good standing in their respective States who have been installed by Council, or who have been regularly called to the pastorate by the specific vote of some church, have formally accepted such position, and have been

recognized as such by some definite act of the Church, should be enrolled as pastors; and we advise that all our denominational statutes, and direct that, so far as possible, our Year Book conform to this principle.

Resolved, That the National Council commends to the churches in accordance

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the importance of properly called ecclesiastical councils ordinarily selected from the vicinage, and especially the great importance of installing ministers to the pastorate by councils where it is practicable or conducive to the purity of the ministry and the prosperity of the churches.

Resolved, That the State organizations and local organizations of churches are recommended to consider such modification of their constitution as will enable them to become responsible for the ministerial standing of ministers within their bounds, in harmony with the principle that the churches of any locality decide upon their fellowship.

Resolved, That the Year Book designate pastors who have been installed or recognized by councils called to examine the pastor and induct him into office, by the letters P. C., and pastors otherwise inducted by the letter P., it being understood that these changes shall be first made in the Year Book for 1888.

Dr. George R. Leavitt, of Cleveland, on behalf of the Committee on Ministerial Supply, which had been instructed at the former council to prepare a report on the subject, presented a paper on the question: "Would the Interests of the Churches be Served by a Relaxation in the Customary Tests for Admission to Membership?" The customary tests, he said were of two classes—of doctrine and of experience. The former included the fundamentals of Christian faith; the latter was comprised in the church covenants prescribing such matters as proof of a sober and godly life and pledges of faith, love, and fellowship. There were also the unwritten tests applied by personal examination, by which the candidates' lives were scrutinized. The standard was high. In some instances pledges were demanded against card-playing, dancing, theatres, and any work on the Lord's day, except acts of necessity or mercy. Should these tests be modified? In support of modification it was urged that the doctrinal tests required too much intelligence in the candidates; that children and uneducated people failed to fully comprehend them. It was also urged that the practical tests required too much self-denial. In illustration of the latter point it was noted that the people excluded from church-membership included editors and reporters of Sunday newspapers and players of progressive euchre. On the other side, it was urged that the doctrinal tests are biblical and comprehensive and that the practical tests are necessary in testimony of conversion and a Christian life. Summing up, the report was emphatically against relaxation.

The report was immediately accepted and a vote of