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MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.

Interesting Papers and Addresses on Missions of the XIX Century

Service at St. Peter's Church—Report of Provost Welch's Sermon.

The fourth and last session of the Missionary Conference was held yesterday afternoon. There was a large audience, and the interest was well maintained. F. W. Hales, Esq., read a lengthy and carefully prepared paper on the subject of the Missions of the Nineteenth Century. He was followed by the Venerable Archdeacon Weston-Jones, Charles Palmer, Esq., Rural Dean DeBlair, Rev. Provost Welch, the Bishop and others. The addresses were spirited, eloquent, and full of interest; but we are compelled to withhold a summary report in order that room may be found for the splendid sermon of Provost Welch which will be found below. The sermon was preached last evening, before the Bishop and assembled clergy and a large body of the laity, in St. Peter's Church. The service began at half-past seven o'clock and was fully choral, Mr. L. W. Watson presiding at the organ. The service was taken by the Archdeacon of Prince Edward Island and the lessons were read by the Rev. J. T. Bryan, of St. Paul's Church, and His Lordship the Bishop of the Diocese.

REPORT OF THE SERMON.

Provost Welch took for his text,— Hebrews i-1, "At sundry times and in divers manners."

Hebrews xiii, 8, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and forever."

"At sundry times and in divers manners"—in these words, which more literally translated would run, "in many parts and in many ways," the whole of the Old Testament is summed up. In many parts and in many ways God had spoken. By Patriarch and Lawgiver, by Psalmist and Prophet, He had spoken to educate the world, to lead it out of its ignorance onward and upward to higher things, revealing Himself in different ways at different times to different men, till at last, when the fulness of time was come, all the converging lines of revelation met in the One Divine Person Incarnate, of whom the writer of the epistle says that "yesterday and to-day He is the same," adding, as if such a confession falls wholly below the truth, "Ye, He is the same forever."

But just as the incarnate God revealed Himself in many parts and in many ways, so there is a corresponding truth with regard to His dealing with mankind since the Incarnation. We are the heirs, it has been said, not of a stereotyped tradition but of a growing message. Jesus Christ is the same now and always. But the sameness is of infinity and not of monotony like the sameness of the desert,—of life and not of death like the sameness of the pyramids. He is the same, not because of any limitations, for He is infinite. He is all in all. If we find in Him what men in other ages did not find, it is not that He has changed, but that we have needs of which they were not conscious; and He, being infinite, can, out of His exhaustless treasury, supply them. The truth is, men have not yet discovered all He is, all that He might be to them. He reveals Himself still "in many parts and in many ways" and still He is "yesterday and to-day the same; ye, and forever."

Two thoughts, appropriate to this gathering, seem to take shape as we ponder on the words of the unknown writer:

I. The forms in which God's truth is expressed vary with the centuries and with the men to whom the expression of it is entrusted.

II. The truth itself, that which is expressed, remains unchanged; for Christ Himself is the Truth and He is yesterday and today the same; ye, and forever.

The forms vary. Let me illustrate by names which all will recognize at once. I say nothing of the Apostolic period, nor of that which immediately followed. Three centuries had passed since, in St. John's language, the Word who was in the beginning and was God had become flesh, when the Church was stricken to its very foundations by teaching which, in effect, declared that Jesus of Nazareth was neither God nor Man, but something between the two. In that crisis of the Church's fate there stood forth a fearless champion of the faith, Athanasius of Alexandria, who, Greek as he was by birth and education, Greek also in subtle thought and philosophical insight, wrote in his native Greek, the language fitted beyond all others for the expression of subtle thought, wrote too for men trained like himself in the culture of an older day, those treatises which are still the source of much of our best theology, and in which what has since been known and recognized as the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation was expressed as it never had been expressed before. A hundred years pass,

and we find Augustine writing for other men and in another tongue, writing too from a point of view widely different from that of Athanasius, proclaiming Christ Jesus to be the one Mediator and the immortal Just One. Come down to a period nearer our own than Augustine's age was to the earthly sojourn of the Master. Three hundred and eighty years ago, Europe was stirred to its lowest depths by the republication of a truth which, by that time, had been almost forgotten, the truth of individual responsibility, or the absolute necessity of personal faith for personal salvation in this world and in the world to come. Europe, I say, was stirred to its lowest depths and it was stirred by the voice of Martin Luther, who mingling no doubt, much novel error with the ancient truth, yet did preach Christ crucified as the sinner's only hope. This truth of personal responsibility is one which, faithfully taught, taught as St. Paul taught it, demands so much from the learner that it is in constant danger of being forgotten again,—perhaps willfully forgotten. At any rate a good many people in the Church of England had forgotten it so soon as the beginning of the Eighteenth Century; and John Wesley was raised up to re-affirm it with all the power which God had given him. But in those two great movements,—the Reformation and Evangelical Revival, as it is called,—while individual responsibility was much insisted on, the social side of Christianity was almost, if not entirely, ignored. It was, to a certain extent brought into prominence in the next great movement in our communion—that which is known as the Oxford Movement and which is inseparably connected with the name of Pusey, by which men were taught to regard themselves, not as isolated individuals, but as members of the great Christian societies the Holy Catholic Church, and sharers, in the great Christian Commonwealth the Communion of Saints that knows no limits of time or space. And in these later days men have come, or are coming, to see that just as the individualism of the Reformation period is, by itself incomplete, so the narrower socialism—I use the word in no political sense—the socialism of the Church is also incomplete,—that the brotherhood of man may not be limited by creed; and though you and I, by virtue of our baptism, wherein we were made members of Christ and in a very special sense, children of God, are brothers in a common faith, yet it is also true that we who believe in and love the Lord Jesus Christ are brothers in a common humanity, both with those who have never heard His Sacred name and those who, to their own immeasurable loss, have rejected Him. Diverse, indeed, have been the forms, as diverse as the tongues in which, each to his own generation and to the generations to come,—Athanasius and Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Pusey, Frederic Maurice—have given the message entrusted to them by God Himself. Each has shown some of the aspects of the truth which men had not seen before or had lost sight of. Each, being but human, may have mingled with the truth he proclaimed something of error and delusion; and yet the truth proclaimed at Alexandria, at Constantinople, in Germany, in England, in the fourth century, the fifth century, the sixteenth, eighteenth and nineteenth is always one—is always Christ, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. Again, the methods of external activities, if I may so speak, differ and must differ from age to age. We have heard, during this conference, of those missions from Iona which evangelized Northumbria, and from Northumbria which evangelized a great part of England. It is, to use an illustration, full of interest to read in the prayer of Bede how Hilda gathered the faithful servants of Christ into Christian homes over which she ruled as a mother in Israel and how kings like Oswald and Oswy recognized the law of Christ as in all things supreme in the guidance of their public policy no less than in the ruling of the individual life, while one of them, at least, would go with his Bishop on a missionary tour and interpreted Aidan's Celtic into the English of his subjects. I have stood, if you will for one moment pardon a personal reference, on the spot where Oswald planted the standard of the cross; I have preached in the great Church at Hartlepool which stands on the site of Hilda's ancient home; I have lived and worked for years on Tyne and Wear, the rivers on the banks of which Bede spent all his life;—and I make bold to say that though our methods are not, cannot be the same as

the methods of Aidan, of Hilda, of Cuthbert and the rest of all that noble band, yet just so far as we preached and worked faithfully, we preached the same truth, though in another tongue, which they preached and we worked for the spread of the same Kingdom which they strove to spread, though in ways very different from theirs.

"For God fulfills Himself in many ways."

(2) But though there have been—as we know there have—different expressions in different times of the One Truth; if (as we cannot but believe) there are others still to come, yet the truth itself abides unchanged.—Jesus Christ, yesterday and today is the same yea and forever. We are all familiar with the infinite variety of the face of the sea. We know how its expression changes from what an ancient poet called its "many twinkling smile" as it dances with joy in the sunshine and answers to the smile of Heaven, to the dark angry frown as it heaves and tosses in some awful storm. Yet all that infinite variety is only possible because, far down, out of sight, lie the unchanging, untroubled depths. Those far-off days of which we have been thinking are our own days, the days to come,—how diverse have been, are, and will be the characteristic expressions of the life in each; and yet, though the expressions are different that which they express is, I repeat, always one.—Jesus Christ is yesterday and today the same, yea, and forever. For illustration of this fact I may recall the story of Felicitas, at the end of the second century, who declared that she dreaded not the tortures of the amphitheatre "for it will be Christ who will suffer in me and for me, because I suffer for Him"; and St. Hilda on her death bed receiving the Benediction of the Holy Communion calling around her the handmaids of Christ and bidding them weep "with all the peace of the Gospel" and then, even while she spoke these words, welcoming death with joy, or rather adieu Bede, "in the words of the Lord Himself, passing from death to life." Listen to the words of one who, in his lifetime, was recognized as having a reputation throughout Christendom as one of the foremost scholars and theologians of our own day, words written more than twelve hundred years since Hilda entered into life and only published after himself had passed beyond the veil: "I believe from my heart that the truth which the Gospel of St. John more especially enshrines,—the truth that Jesus Christ is the Word Incarnate—the manifestation of the Father to mankind—is the one lesson which duly apprehended will do more than all our feeble efforts to purify and elevate human life here by imparting to it hope and life and strength,—the one study which alone can fittingly prepare us for a joyful immortality, hereafter." Then pass in spirit from the study of the scholar in one of those great centres where the world's best thought and learning finds a home to the heart of Equatorial Africa and hear the Uganda boys choosing, firmly and gladly, a most torturing death rather than deny the Lord that bought them. And in the days to come, if still Jesus Christ makes Himself known in many parts and in many ways, there will be no break of continuity because His religion to the individual personal, human soul, is the foundation of all that is done in His Name. The form of what is done may not, will not, be always the same; but the spirit is ever one. After all, human nature and its needs are, at bottom and essentially, always the same; and only He the Christ-man, can fully satisfy them.

The work of Christ's Church is like one of the great cathedrals which are the glory of the motherland. It has been built in successive ages; the architecture varies from century to century,—but all rests upon the one foundation. While we may not slavishly imitate the past, it is the weight of folly and the extreme of danger to ignore it.

III. "In many parts and in many ways;" "the same yesterday and today and forever;"—the remembrance of these two truths, which yet are one, will sustain us in the face of the perplexities and difficulties which confront us, as we look at the great task still laid upon the heart and conscience of the church, and still, after eighteen centuries of effort, not nearly half fulfilled, of making disciples of all nations. One has not to be very far advanced in years to be able to perceive an enormous improvement in the way in which church people generally regard the subject of missions. It is perfectly, true, as was remarked not long ago in one of the Church papers in England, that the man who nowadays thinks foreign missions uninteresting

(Continued on third page)

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