

THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF
THE CONFERENCE

World Missionary Conference, 1910

(To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World)

THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF THE CONFERENCE

TOGETHER WITH
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE
EVENING MEETINGS

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PART I
HISTORY
OF THE
CONFERENCE

By the Rev. GEORGE ROBSON, D.D.

HISTORY OF THE CONFERENCE

THE PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE

Previous Conferences—Initial Steps—Constitution and Character of the Conference—International Committee—The Eight Commissions—Parallel Conference and other Meetings—Awakening Public Interest—The News Sheet—Finance—Prayer

PREVIOUS CONFERENCES

THE significance of the World Missionary Conference will be set in a clearer light by a brief retrospect of previous Conferences of an interdenominational character convened to discuss foreign missions. They originated apparently in the year 1854. The first was occasioned by the visit of Dr. Alexander Duff to America, and was held on 4th and 5th May in the hall of Dr. Alexander's Church in New York. It was attended by 150 members, including eleven missionaries and eighteen officers of various Missionary Societies and Boards. Besides the scriptural basis of missions, three questions of missionary policy were discussed:—the question of concentrating or scattering labourers, the question of different Boards planting stations on the same ground, and the question of multiplying and preparing labourers. The second Conference was held in London on 12th and 13th October of the same year. Members of all the principal Societies were present, but, as at New York, the range of

discussion was limited, the main result being the promotion of brotherly feeling and a helpful interchange of opinion on a few points.

In 1860 a Conference was held at Liverpool from 19th to 23rd March. It was attended by 126 members, of whom twenty were missionaries, one an Indian, the Rev. Behari Lal Singh, and several were officials of Missionary Societies. At the day meetings, which were private, a considerable number of topics were freely discussed; the evening meetings were public and were well attended. The volume containing the record of the Conference has still a fresh interest for students of missions.

Eighteen years later, in 1878, a similar but somewhat larger gathering was held in the Conference Hall, Mildmay Park, London, from 21st to 26th October. It consisted of 158 delegates, representing thirty-four Missionary Societies, eleven of them non-British. At this Conference missions were discussed geographically, with a view to exhibiting the extent and effectiveness of their work. The Report of this Conference is also still a most readable volume.

A great advance took place in 1888. In celebration of the centenary of modern Protestant missions, an attempt was made to convene a world-wide Missionary Conference. It included representatives from fifty-three British Societies, sixty-seven American Societies, eighteen Continental, and two Colonial. But the representation was not proportional. There were 1341 British delegates, 132 from America, eighteen from the Continent, and three from the Colonies. Five open Conferences and twenty-two sectional meetings were held in Exeter Hall and adjoining rooms, the meetings lasting from 9th to 19th June. The object of this Conference, which was designated the "Centenary" Conference, was to diffuse information regarding the missionary enterprise throughout the world, to promote fellowship and co-operation among those engaged in it, and to impress on the mind of the Church a sense of its importance and fruitfulness. The two volumes containing a full report of the Conference furnished a new and illuminating conspectus of missionary work throughout the world, and had a large sale.

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The success of this Conference suggested the holding of a similar gathering after ten years on the other side of the Atlantic, but for various reasons the convening of the Conference at New York had to be delayed till 1900. It was designated an "Ecumenical" Conference, not as claiming to be representative of all portions of the Christian Church, but because it represented mission work in all parts of the inhabited world. The Conference was composed of about 1500 delegates appointed by the American and Canadian Societies, together with about 200 delegates from British and Continental and other foreign Societies, and 600 foreign missionaries. They represented 115 Societies and forty-eight different countries. Meetings were held from 21st April till 1st May in the Carnegie Hall and various neighbouring churches—in all, over seventy principal and sectional meetings. The programme was encyclopædic as regards the variety of missionary topics dealt with in these meetings. The number of visitors from all parts was enormous, over 50,000 tickets being issued. The sectional and overflow meetings were well attended, and the Carnegie Hall, which holds 3600, was always crowded to excess. The two goodly volumes, containing, besides the story of the Conference, the papers read and addresses delivered, are a valuable treasury of information and argument relating both to the theory and practice of missions.

It is beyond the scope of this sketch to refer to conferences on the mission field or to the standing conferences or joint committees for counsel and reference which have been established on the Continent and in America and London. The former are dealt with in Chapter III. and the latter in Chapter VI. of the Report of Commission VIII.

INITIAL STEPS

After the New York Conference of 1900, the hope of another missionary conference after an interval of ten years was entertained by many, but for the realisation of this hope no provision had been made. The initiation of action seemed almost accidental. Early in 1906, the Rev. J.

Fairley Daly, Honorary Secretary of the Livingstonia Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland, writing about another matter to Mr. Robert Speer, Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York, asked incidentally whether the Mission Boards of America had any plans or views as to the holding of another Conference. This letter Mr. Speer submitted at the next stated meeting of the secretaries of the Mission Boards in America, and was instructed to reply that they would heartily welcome the holding of a Missionary Conference in Great Britain in 1910. Following on the receipt of this information, a meeting was held in Glasgow of the Conveners of seven Missionary Societies in Scotland, who resolved to invite the various Foreign Mission committees or boards in Scotland to appoint three of their number as delegates to a conference to consider the question thus raised. This conference was held in Edinburgh on 29th January 1907, under the Presidency of the late Lord Overtoun, and was attended by thirty-seven delegates representing twenty Missionary Societies. It was unanimously agreed that a Missionary Conference should be held in Edinburgh in June 1910, and to request the various Foreign Mission Societies in Great Britain and Ireland to nominate each two delegates, with an additional delegate for every hundred or fraction of a hundred missionaries supported by them beyond the first hundred, to form the General Committee, with power to make all the necessary arrangements. The first meeting of the General Committee was held on 12th June 1907, the Committee consisting of seventy-two delegates appointed by thirty-seven Societies. The Rev. James Buchanan, Foreign Mission Secretary of the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Rev. A. B. Wann of the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission, were appointed joint Secretaries, and a beginning was made in the appointment of the Executive. At the next meeting on 10th October 1907, Lord Balfour of Burleigh was elected President of the Conference, various committees were appointed, and it was also agreed to request the "Committee on Reference and Counsel" representing the Boards of Foreign Missions in

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the United States and Canada, to act as a sub-committee for the United States and Canada. This committee was afterwards enlarged, and became the Executive Committee for America. At a subsequent meeting, Lord Reay, Lord Overtoun, and Sir John H. Kennaway, Bart., were appointed Vice-Presidents of the Conference, and on Lord Overtoun's lamented death in February 1908, Sir Andrew H. L. Fraser, K.C.S.I., was appointed in his place. Communications were also opened with the Missionary Societies on the Continent, and their cordial co-operation was promised.

CONSTITUTION AND CHARACTER OF THE CONFERENCE

The initial steps were taken on the general assumption that the Edinburgh Conference would follow largely the lines of the New York Conference, with such new adaptations as the experience gathered at New York or the further developments in the missionary enterprise might suggest. But it soon became clear that the whole plan of the Conference demanded most serious consideration, if the opportunity was to be seized for rendering an effective service to the cause of missions. One fundamental question was the basis of membership. In no previous Conference had the membership been confined to officially appointed delegates from recognised Societies or the numbers determined on a principle of proportion; the representative character of the gathering had accordingly been comparatively indefinite. It was resolved that representation in the Edinburgh Conference should be confined to Societies having agents in the foreign field and expending on foreign missions not less than £2000 annually, and that such Societies should be entitled to an additional delegate for every additional £4000 of foreign mission expenditure. It is a notable fact that both America and the Continent, as well as Great Britain, sent the full quota of delegates to which the Societies were entitled under this rule. In addition to these delegates, about a hundred places were reserved for members specially appointed by the British, American, and Continental Executives.

Closely associated with the basis of membership was the determination of the character of the Conference. The Conferences of 1888 and 1900 had been chiefly great missionary demonstrations fitted to inform, educate, and impress. It was felt, however, that the time had now come for a more earnest study of the missionary enterprise, and that without neglecting the popular demonstrational uses of such a gathering, the first aim should be to make the Conference as far as possible a consultative assembly. It is a striking fact that when the British Executive Committee met to receive from their sub-committee the report which strongly advised this line of procedure, they at the same time received from the American Executive an entirely independent communication recommending practically the very same line of action. It was accordingly unanimously agreed to.

From the constitution and character of the Conference as thus determined, three things inevitably followed. They were formally recognised and given effect to at the meeting of the International Committee referred to in the next paragraph. The first was the determination of the subject-matter of conference. In view of the fact that the Missionary Societies to be represented were organised for work of varying scope and purpose, it was necessary to confine the purview of the Conference to work of the kind in which all were united; and accordingly the subject of the deliberations of the Conference was defined as missionary work among non-Christian peoples. The second was that to deal with all the important aspects of this work would be simply impossible, and that the discussion must be confined to the most urgent and vital problems confronting the Church in prosecuting it. And the third was that no expression of opinion should be sought from the Conference on any matter involving any ecclesiastical or doctrinal question on which those taking part in the Conference differed among themselves.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The decisions as to the constitution and character of the Conference involved a new line of preparation. What was

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now in view was no longer a local demonstration but an international school of mission study and counsel. The communication from the American Executive was accompanied by a suggestion that the framing of the programme for the Conference and the arrangements for carrying it out should be placed in the hands of an international committee, and the fitness of this suggestion was immediately recognised both by the British and the Continental Executives. An international committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of ten members from Britain, five from America, and three from the Continent. They met at Oxford (one continental delegate, however, being unable to attend) on Tuesday, June 14, in the Wycliffe Hall, kindly placed at their disposal by Dr. Griffith Thomas, the Principal, and continued together in residence there until Saturday, holding continuous meetings morning, afternoon, and evening, and spending much time in united prayer for the leading of the Spirit in all the preparations for the Conference. Three, or rather four, important matters were determined at Oxford. The first was the choice of the subjects on which the attention of the Conference should be concentrated. The second was the resolution to prepare for the due presentation of these subjects to the Conference by extensive enquiry and careful study on the part of Commissions appointed for this purpose. The third was the selection of the men and women who should be asked to act on the various Commissions; and the fourth was the appointment of a Secretary who should give his whole time to the work of preparation for the Conference. In connection with this last item, it may be explained that the Rev. A. B. Wann had left in the beginning of the year for Calcutta to fulfil a special request made to him to undertake the Principalship of the Scottish Churches College for the first year under the new arrangements; and that the Rev. James Buchanan, the other honorary secretary, had fallen seriously ill (he died in September), and was unable to attend the meeting at Oxford. At the last moment, Mr. J. H. Oldham, then Secretary of the Mission Study Council of the United Free Church of

Scotland, was asked to go to Oxford to act in Mr. Buchanan's stead. As the work to be done became clear to the International Committee, it was evident that a Secretary would require to be appointed who could give his whole time to it, and the conspicuous ability and spiritual insight shown by Mr. Oldham, as well as his high ideal of the proper aims of the Conference, so impressed the members of the Committee that by a common impulse they with one accord requested him to undertake this office. To guide the Secretary in carrying out the resolutions of the International Committee, and to maintain intercommunication between its members, as well as to act on its behalf in any urgent matter, a Central Advisory Committee of five members resident in Britain was appointed. The action taken by the International Committee was cordially approved by the different Executives, and some sub-Committees, which had been appointed in the earlier stages of the movement, were now either discharged or re-arranged in accordance with the method of procedure which had now been matured.

THE EIGHT COMMISSIONS

Eight subjects were selected at Oxford for enquiry and study by Commissions who should report to the Conference. It was agreed that each Commission should consist of twenty members, and that the Chairman of each Commission should guide its procedure and have the final decision of all questions which might arise. It was further arranged that the members resident in the same country with the Chairman should form the Executive of the Commission, and that the members resident on the other side of the Atlantic, one of whom should be Vice-Chairman, should form an advisory and co-operative council. This arrangement worked most harmoniously, and was found advantageous. To select the men and women for these Commissions was a task too important and difficult to be completed at Oxford, but so much progress was made that its completion by means of correspondence was not long delayed. It was a most

encouraging token of Divine guidance and favour that not more than one in fifteen of those asked declined the onerous service requested of him. In selecting the members, regard had to be paid to the fact that they would require to meet frequently for consultation and discussion. This prevented the inclusion of many missionaries actually on the staff of foreign service, but on every Commission there were those who had had large missionary experience, while it was obviously desirable that the main body of each Commission should consist of those whose outlook upon the world-field was detached from special experience or interest in a particular country. But in every Commission the earnest endeavour was made to gather up and present in summary form the results of the largest experience and best thought of missionaries in the field. As soon as the line of enquiry was determined on, a carefully drawn set of questions was addressed to missionaries all over the world, nearly all of whom had been recommended as suitable correspondents to the Commission by the Societies with which they were connected. The response from the missionaries was altogether remarkable, not only in respect of the generous willingness and interest manifested, but in respect of the care bestowed upon the replies and their intrinsic value. It is a striking testimony to the earnestness and diligence with which all the eight Commissions prosecuted their task, that they succeeded in completing their enquiries and framing and issuing their reports in time for their perusal by the members prior to the assembling of the Conference. The list of members of each Commission, as well as of its correspondents, is given in the volume containing its Report, but it may be well to record here the subjects and chairmen of the eight Commissions.

Commission I.—CARRYING THE GOSPEL TO ALL THE NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD. Chairman: John R. Mott, LL.D., New York. Vice-Chairmen: Pastor Dr. Julius Richter, Belzig; the Rev. George Robson, D.D., Edinburgh.

Commission II.—THE CHURCH IN THE MISSION FIELD. Chairman: The Rev. J. C. Gibson, D.D., Swatow. Vice-Chairman: The Rev. Bishop Lambuth, D.D., Nashville.

Commission III.—EDUCATION IN RELATION TO THE CHRISTIANISATION OF NATIONAL LIFE. Chairman: The Rt. Rev. Bishop of Birmingham, D.D. Vice-Chairman: The Rev. Professor Edward C. Moore, D.D., Harvard University.

Commission IV.—THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE IN RELATION TO NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. Chairman: The Rev. Professor D. S. Cairns, D.D., Aberdeen. Vice-Chairman: Robert E. Speer, D.D., New York.

Commission V.—THE PREPARATION OF MISSIONARIES. Chairman: Principal W. Douglas Mackenzie, D.D., Hartford. Vice-Chairman: The Rev. J. O. F. Murray, D.D., Selwyn College, Cambridge.

Commission VI.—THE HOME BASE OF MISSIONS. Chairman: The Rev. James L. Barton, D.D., Boston. Vice-Chairmen: The Rev. J. P. Maud, Bristol; Sir George W. Macalpine, Accrington.

Commission VII.—MISSIONS AND GOVERNMENTS. Chairman: The Rt. Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, K.T. Vice-Chairman: The Hon. Seth Low, LL.D., New York.

Commission VIII.—CO-OPERATION AND THE PROMOTION OF UNITY. Chairman: Sir A. H. L. Fraser, K.C.S.I., LL.D., Alyth. Vice-Chairman: Mr. Silas McBee, New York.

PARALLEL CONFERENCE AND OTHER MEETINGS

When it was decided that the Conference should be of a representative and deliberative character, the only doubt attaching to the decision was whether such a Conference would satisfy both the needs and the opportunities of the occasion. The question of supplementary gatherings was accordingly left over for future decision. It soon became evident that they would be necessary. The utmost accommodation available in the largest suitable place of meeting would not leave more than a thousand places free for others than delegates, and the consideration due to delegates' wives, missionaries, hosts and hostesses, and the press, would not leave room for even a most meagre representation of missionary helpers at home, to say nothing of the general

Christian public. At the same time the requests for information as to admission which were pouring in from all quarters showed that the numbers desiring to attend would fill the one hall many times over. It was also obviously of importance that not only ministers and office-bearers, but leaders in missionary interest and effort in the ordinary membership of the Church, should have the opportunity of receiving the larger and clearer outlook and the fresh inspiration which might be communicated from contact with the foremost missionary workers and thinkers in the world. And further, it was felt that the special character of the Conference was not fully expressive of the scope of the missionary enterprise and of its appeal to the Church. However imperative its demand for careful study and united counsel by experts, it claimed also the earnest observation and thought of the whole membership of the Church. The enterprise cannot be carried forward without the interest and help of all, and therefore requires to be continually presented to the Church generally in ways fitted to teach a larger obedience and a stronger faith. These considerations determined the holding of a parallel Conference. The idea determining its general plan was that of a school for missionary study and stimulus. It was arranged that the Reports of the Eight Commissions should form the basis of addresses at the forenoon sessions, a series of addresses on the leading points of each Report being given by selected members of the Commission, while the afternoons should be allotted to sectional meetings, and the evenings to special addresses, as in the Assembly Hall. The place selected for it was the Synod Hall, so called from being formerly the place of meeting of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church.¹ This hall, though holding two or three hundred more than the Assembly Hall, was not so suitable for a deliberative gathering, nor did it possess so much convenient auxiliary accommodation. But it was eminently suitable for a large conference at which the speaking was entirely from the platform. In order to secure the attendance of those

¹ After the union with the Free Church, constituting the United Free Church, the property was sold to the Corporation of Edinburgh.

for whom this Conference was planned, the tickets of admission were allocated to the various Missionary Societies in proportion to the number of their official delegates, and the Societies were asked to place them in the hands of such local leaders and workers as were likely to be educated and inspired, through the meetings, to more effective service in the home field. By the co-operation of the various Societies, these aims were largely realised.

It became apparent, however, as the time for the Conference drew near, that even the Synod Hall meetings would not suffice to meet the requirements of the public who desired to share in the privilege and stimulus of the gathering. The Tolbooth Church or Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland, which holds about 1300, was most kindly placed at the disposal of the Conference, and arrangements were made for holding a series of public meetings in the evening which should be open to all and sundry.

There was a special development in another direction. Medical missions were duly dealt with wherever they fell under the observation of the Commissions, but those specially interested in medical missions felt that something more was necessary and would prove advantageous at such a time. Arrangements were accordingly made for the holding of a sectional Conference for the discussion of special questions relating to medical missions.

AWAKENING PUBLIC INTEREST

From an early stage of the preparations attention was directed to arousing the interest of the Christian public in the forthcoming Conference. This was necessary in order to secure a full and balanced representation of friends of missions from all quarters, as well as to enlist their prayers and support. It was necessary also in order to prepare the mind and heart of the Christian public for reaping the full benefit of such an occasion. The soil must be prepared for the good seed if a rich harvest was to be secured. The Church must know what was happening, look forward to the op-

portunity of the gathering, appreciate its significance, and be ready to receive its message. In two ways the endeavour was made to focus attention on the forthcoming Conference. The one was through the public press. The editors of many daily and weekly newspapers cordially welcomed interviews with representatives of the Conference, and many of them, from *The Times* downward, inserted a number of articles concerning it. Articles appeared also in monthly and quarterly periodicals both of a missionary and general character. Similar articles appeared in the American and Continental press.

The other method employed was that of public meetings. The visits of Sir Andrew Fraser, Dr. Richter and Mr. Oldham to America during the eighteen months preceding the Conference were utilised for this purpose. So also was the visit of Mr. Speer to Scotland to deliver the Duff Missionary Lectures early in 1910. It was naturally in Scotland that this method was most largely used. In upwards of a hundred places meetings, for the most part crowded and enthusiastic, were held to call forth the interest of the Church in the present crisis of missions.

THE "NEWS SHEET"

Something more was necessary than to awaken interest. It had to be conserved and deepened and guided into helpful action. It was seen that an effective means of securing this end would be to supply full information of all the arrangements for the Conference as they were matured step by step, and at the same time to set forth various aspects of its significance for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The better the plan and design of the Conference were understood, the deeper would be the interest, the clearer the vision of its opportunities, and the more earnest and definite the prayer on its behalf. This led to the publication of the *News Sheet*, a tastefully-printed, octavo pamphlet, of from sixteen to twenty-four pages with cover, which was issued monthly from October, 1909 to May 1910. It attained a circulation of over 8000, and was

not only greatly prized, but was most helpful in every way.

FINANCE

It was estimated that to cover the expenses of the Conference falling upon the Central Office, a sum of £7000 would be required. The American Executive generously undertook from the outset to meet all the outlays connected with the work of preparation in America, and such as might be involved in the presence of some of their delegates from the foreign field. The expenses on the Continent were also largely met by Continental resources. The appeal for the necessary funds met in Britain with a prompt and generous response, which, although not equal to the sum named, proved in the event sufficient to cover the actual outlay.

{PRAYER

Undoubtedly the most important and the most fruitful of all the preparations for the Conference was the prayer offered on its behalf. From the very first the prospect of such a gathering stirred the hearts of those who were looking forward to it with a conviction of the greatness of its possibilities, which compelled to prayer. The first official statement and appeal which was sent out contained an earnest request for prayer. This was largely responded to, and in some places prayer for the Conference was offered regularly in weekly gatherings for two years before the Conference met. The response from the mission field was very marked. About 2000 missionaries were communicated with in connection with the queries of the different Commissions, and all of these were specially invited in the communications addressed to them to help together by prayer. A small letter-pamphlet was prepared fully a year before the Conference setting forth the call to prayer, and enumerating various topics so arranged as to be suitable for use as a weekly cycle, and of these upwards of 40,000 were supplied free. Early in 1910, another similar pamphlet adapted to the more matured arrangements was issued. These were supplied to all who

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asked for them, and more than 33,000 went into circulation. And at Whitsuntide, in response to special appeals sent out by the Archbishops of the Church of England, the Moderators of the Scottish Churches and representative men of other Churches, Sunday 15th May was very widely observed throughout the land as a day of special intercession on behalf of the Conference. At the Edinburgh Office for several months before the Conference, the secretaries and assistant heads of the staff met daily for prayer. In the whole process of preparation, there was a continual experience of the guiding and helping hand of God, which was nothing less than a continual and growing experience of answer to prayer. Difficulties were overcome, perils were averted, disappointments proved stepping stones to better events, needs were met, and from point to point new encouragements were given which strengthened faith and formed an incentive to ask for still greater things. The Conference can only be interpreted aright by those who recognise in it the answer to world-wide, united, and constant prayer.

GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE CONFERENCE

IN this account it is not intended to attempt either a pictorial description or a complete narrative of the proceedings, but simply such brief notes as may be useful for keeping in memory the setting and the special features of that great gathering.

Edinburgh was a fitting place of meeting. In the earlier missionary enterprise which evangelised Europe no country was more prominent than Scotland, and no country has in proportion to its size contributed to the evangelisation of the world during the last century so large a number of distinguished and devoted missionaries. The beauties of the capital of Scotland, as well as the romance of history clinging to its ancient castle and palace and buildings, made it an attractive gathering-place for those from other lands; the hospitality of its citizens transformed the city for them into a Christian home; and the bright sunshine, which was broken only by a brief thunderstorm one afternoon, enhanced the welcome of the city and the comfort of the members in attending the meetings.

Never has there been such a gathering in the history of the Kingdom of God on earth. Larger numbers have often assembled for religious purposes, but this was an assembly in which every delegate represented a proportionate contribution of men and money to the cause of missions. Forty-six British Societies were represented by slightly over 500 delegates; sixty American Societies also by rather more than 500 delegates; forty-one Continental Societies by over 170 delegates; and twelve South African and

Australasian Societies by twenty-six delegates. These Societies represented practically every type of doctrine, worship and polity included in the Church of Christ, with the exception of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. They came into conference, none surrendering its distinctive testimony or practice, but all recognising in the evangelisation of the non-Christian world a common task in which they stood related as fellow-workers. Never before had the Continental Societies been so fully represented at any missionary gathering. And never before did the representatives of the older churches of the West meet with so many representatives of the young churches of the East. The latter were present from Japan, Korea, China, Assam, Burma, India, and Ceylon. With two exceptions, all the addresses were delivered in English, and even the Japanese delegate, who on these occasions used an interpreter, afterwards spoke in remarkably good English. An unusually large proportion of the delegates were men of personal distinction, well known by name, if not by sight, for eminent service rendered in the mission-field, in literature, in church work at home, or in public affairs. One of the delightful surprises repeated more than once daily in the Conference was to hear a well-known name announced from the Chair, the name of one who in any gathering would have merited a seat of honour, and to see in response a delegate emerge quietly from a humble place in some crowded back bench.

Such a gathering naturally excited the deepest interest wherever its character was understood. Evidences of this came from all quarters. A most sympathetic and appreciative message from the King was read at the opening of the Conference: and the reply to this message, signed not only by the British, American and Continental officials, but also by representatives of the delegates from Canada, Australia, and the Union of South Africa, and by representatives of the delegates from the native Churches in Japan, Korea, China, Assam, India and Africa, was received by the King with great interest. At the Municipal Reception of the delegates on Monday evening, Bishop La Trobe read

a notable message¹ from the Imperial German Colonial Office. A letter was also received from Ex-President Roosevelt, and was read to the Conference. A valuable letter from the venerable Dr. Warneck of Halle, and another of a beautifully fraternal spirit from the Roman Catholic Bishop of Cremona were sent to individual delegates, who referred to them in the Conference. Besides these, there were a host of messages of greeting and welcome from representative ecclesiastical and missionary bodies, as well as from eminent individuals. Much of this interest was undoubtedly awakened through the well-informed and sympathetic articles which had appeared in the London *Times* and other leading newspapers, as well as in monthly and quarterly magazines of all kinds in Great Britain, America and the Continent. The interest of the members was shown by the presence of some eighty reporters, including three from the *Times* office and a few sent specially from America.

The hall selected for the meeting was singularly suitable. In 1901, after the union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church forming the United Free Church, the old Assembly Hall of the Free Church, which had proved admirably adapted for a deliberative gathering, was greatly enlarged so as to furnish ample accommodation for the Assembly of the enlarged Church, but the general design remained unchanged. There is no regular platform; but on a dais on the northern side dividing the length of the hall, and raised some four or five steps above the floor, is the Moderator's desk and chair, with two chairs on either side, and immediately in front, a couple of steps lower, is the Clerk's table with five chairs before the Moderator's desk, and room for about twenty more within the railed

¹ It was as follows:—"The German Colonial Office is following the proceedings of this World Missionary Conference with lively interest, and desires that it be crowned with blessing and success. The German Colonial Office recognises with satisfaction and gratitude that the endeavours for the spread of the Gospel are followed by the blessings of civilisation and culture in all countries. In this sense, too, the good wishes of the Secretary of State of the German Imperial Colonial Office accompany your proceedings."

enclosure. The benches immediately in front of the table rise gradually as they recede to the other side of the hall, and the benches on either side, accommodating the larger portion of the Assembly, also ascend as they recede. A speaker rising at any point can thus easily address the whole audience and directly face the larger half. At a slight elevation behind the Moderator's chair is a long gallery extending about two-thirds of the length of the hall, and this gallery together with the whole of the floor of the house was reserved for delegates. To right and left were higher galleries reserved for wives of delegates and for missionaries, and facing the Moderator's chair was a large gallery appropriated to hosts and hostesses and the public. The Assembly Hall with the spacious corridors surrounding it is part of a fine block of buildings, including the New College and the High Church. On entering by the main gateway from the Mound, delegates passed through the fine College quadrangle, with its statue of John Knox on the left, to the staircase leading up to the front corridor of the Assembly Hall. On the left was the High Church, which was open continually for quiet meditation, prayer, and rest. On the right were classrooms which were utilised as a special Post Office and for Committee purposes. At the end of the front corridor at the top of the staircase, and on the same level with the Assembly Hall, was the Rainy Hall, which served as the refreshment room, and off the corridor were a large writing room, enquiry office, bookstall and other rooms, the beautiful library over the main gateway being reserved for the Business Committee. Generous friends provided for the decoration of the College quadrangle and the corridors of the Assembly Hall with plants and flowers, and transformed the little upper quadrangle beside the Rainy Hall into a pleasant garden with numerous seats for the comfort of the delegates in the intervals of the meetings. At many Conferences the attendance fluctuates, but the attendance at this Conference remained practically solid from beginning to end, and the determination to miss nothing seemed to grow as the Conference proceeded, and culminated in its closing meeting.

The course of the meetings can be told shortly. Mention may be made of four meetings prior to the Conference proper and outside of it, though having special reference to it. On the afternoon of Monday, 13th June, a prayer-meeting was held in the Assembly Hall, which was very largely attended, and over which Sir Andrew Fraser presided. The same evening, the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Town Council gave an official reception to the delegates in the Museum of Science and Art in Chambers Street. Fully three thousand guests were present. After the formal presentation of the delegates, the Lord Provost delivered a brief address of welcome, which was responded to by Dr. Arthur Brown, New York, Chairman of the American Executive, Bishop la Trobe, Chairman of the Continental Executive, and Lord Balfour, the President of the Conference. On Tuesday, 14th June, a special service was held at noon in St. Giles' Cathedral, at which a very large number of delegates and visitors from all lands were present. The preacher was the Rev. A. Wallace Williamson, D.D., minister of St. Giles, who preached an impressive sermon on the text, "The field is the World." The whole service was appropriate and helpful. The same afternoon, in the M'Ewan Hall, the University of Edinburgh recognised the holding of the World Missionary Conference as a fitting occasion for the conferring of honorary degrees on some of its distinguished members. The Vice-Chancellor, Principal Sir William Turner, presided, and in presence of an audience which filled the hall from floor to ceiling conferred the honorary degree of D.D. upon:—The Rev. K. C. Chatterji, India; The Rev. W. Douglas Mackenzie, D.D., President of Hartford Theological Seminary; The Rev. F. L. Hawks Pott, D.D., Principal of St. John's College, Shanghai; Pastor Julius Richter, D.Th., Germany; The Rev. Canon C. H. Robinson, M.A., Editorial Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; Robert E. Speer, M.A., Presbyterian Board of Missions, U.S.A.; The Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, D.D., Foreign Secretary, London Missionary Society; Herr J. Warneck, Foreign Secretary, Rhenish Missionary Society; and of LL.D. upon:—The

Archbishop of Canterbury; General James E. Beaver, U.S.A.; The Rev. T. Harada, President of the Doshisha, Japan; The Hon. Seth Low, LL.D., New York; Professor Carl Meinhof, D.D., Professor of African Languages at the Colonial Institute, Hamburg; John R. Mott, M.A., General Secretary, World's Student Christian Federation.

The opening meeting of the Conference was held at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, June 14th, under the Presidency of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, solely for the purpose of constituting the Conference. The Business Committee was appointed; the Standing Orders and rules of debate were adopted; Dr. Mott was unanimously chosen to be Chairman throughout the day sessions of the Conference, when the Reports of the Commissions were under discussion; Mr. Oldham to be Secretary of the Conference, and the Rev. J. H. Ritson and Mr. Rowell, K.C., Toronto, Clerks of Conference. The business was transacted within half an hour.

The details of this and the following meetings are recorded in the printed Minutes. These may, however, be supplemented here by a few notes of a general character. The Conference was singularly fortunate in its Chairman. Dr. Mott presided over all the meetings for discussion with promptitude and precision, with instinctive perception of the guidance required, and with a perfect union of firmness and Christian courtesy, of earnest purpose and timely humour, which won for him alike the deference and the gratitude of the members. No less acknowledgment is due of the foresight and care with which the arrangements were made for every part of the proceedings by the various Committees and friends charged with different departments of the work, and above all is such acknowledgment due to the Secretary, Mr. Oldham. Seldom, if ever, has there been a Conference in which details of procedure or arrangements apart from the main work of the Conference were so little obtruded on the attention of the members or so briefly disposed of. Much of this saving of the time of the Conference was due to the issue of a *Daily Conference Paper* which was delivered by the early post at the private addresses of the

members, and which contained the Minutes of the previous day's proceedings, all official notices and various unofficial intimations; there was thus no necessity for reading these from the platform. A feature of the discussion was the operation of the rule which allowed three-quarters of an hour to the Chairman or other representatives of the Commission presenting the Report for the day, and restricting all other speakers to seven minutes. On the fifth day a proposal to limit the speakers to five minutes failed to obtain the necessary majority, but no proposal was made to extend the time. This rule enabled the Conference to hear, without any sign of impatience, any speaker whose remarks were not relevant or helpful, but such speakers were few indeed. It often cut short a speaker to whom the Conference would gladly have listened longer, and in one or two cases the voice of the meeting demanded a slight extension of time. But on the whole, the rule proved a genuine help to the Conference. It constrained the speakers to dispense with personal references or superfluous matter and to put their points tersely and clearly; it secured the maximum of speakers within the available time, without excluding what was of importance in the contribution of each.

The conduct of the devotions of the meetings was a matter of careful preparation. For the offering of praise a selection of forty-five hymns had been printed in the handbook; it contained hymns in most common use in different branches of the Church, as well as a few selections from the Scottish version of the Psalms. In addition to the morning worship with which each day's proceedings opened, half an hour of the morning session was set apart for special intercession, and this was regarded as the "central act" of each day's proceedings. Before the beginning of the Conference, men were selected out of different nations and societies to conduct this special act of intercession both in the Assembly Hall and in the Synod Hall; and they came each one in the grace of fullest personal preparation to the leading of this service. On the very first day the whole Conference caught the spirit of this great united act,

and from day to day they felt increasingly its uplifting and binding influence, until now in the memory of the Conference, according to the testimony of not a few, it stands out as the most sacred experience in the great succession of sacred days, the times in which the Conference met most consciously and intimately with the living God. Nor was this experience the whole profit of these half-hours. God heareth prayer. Of all the doings of the Conference, dare we say that any was more important or more effective, or shall be found at last more fruitful, than this of petitioning God together on behalf of the lands in which His servants are seeking to spread the knowledge of His name, and on behalf of the infant Churches there, and all the workers in the cause of missions?

This union in intercession did much to confirm and deepen the sense of unity and spirit of brotherly love which in a remarkable degree characterised the Conference. The very composition of the Conference and the purpose of its assembling of necessity quickened the sense of unity in Christ into a living force in every heart, impelling to brotherly esteem and love, making forbearance and patience easy amid diversity of view, and lifting the proceedings into a harmony unclouded by a single regrettable incident. To many it taught not only a new conception of the Church of God on earth, but a new experience of "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus." Very significant was the way in which the secular press accepted and chronicled this remarkable presentation of unity as if nothing else were to be looked for.

Only to one meeting of the Conference need any special reference be made, that of Tuesday, 21st June, the day of longest daylight in the northern summer. From the outset of the Conference the question was before many minds whether the Conference would simply meet and dissolve, leaving nothing behind it but the reports of the Commissions and the spiritual influences of its meetings? Or would it take such action as might lead to further and permanent co-operation in the missionary enterprise? Commission VIII put the whole question formally before the Conference

by its proposal for the appointment of a Continuation Committee to perpetuate the idea and spirit of the Conference and embody it in such further practical action as should be found advisable. The proposal was welcomed on every side. It was felt that it would stamp an aspect of unreality upon the Conference if it simply dissolved without an act of patent obedience to the heavenly vision it had seen. The agreement among the Societies, both as to the end in view and their need of one another to attain it, compelled an agreement as to practicable common action in the future. The vote was not hurried. During the whole forenoon the motion was discussed from various standpoints; then the luncheon hour allowed opportunity for any further consultation which any might desire. Meanwhile, prayer for the guiding of the Holy Spirit in the Conference was being offered without ceasing in a little prayer-meeting in the Hall of the High Church, where during the latter days of the Conference from early till late a changing group of suppliants were led by a succession of brethren, each of whom took charge for half an hour. At the afternoon session of the Conference the discussion was resumed, and nearly an hour passed before the Chairman asked whether the Conference was prepared to vote. On his putting the motion for the appointment of a Continuation Committee a mighty "Aye" came from all parts of the hall. When he called for those of an opposite opinion to say "No," there was a dead silence; and on his declaring the motion carried, the whole assembly rose and with full hearts sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." And so the bonds which had been woven during the months of preparation and during the meetings were not to be heedlessly cast loose again. The members of the Conference had recognised that they should hold together in love and counsel and prayer, and in such practical co-operation as should be found desirable with due recognition of their diversities in faith and practice.

It was scarcely possible for such a Conference to part without giving voice in some way to its sense of the call of the present time to the whole Church to come forward with

new consecration and faith in the work of making disciples of all nations. Nor could it leave unsaid its sense of the great task devolving upon the infant Churches in non-Christian lands and its desire to aid them with all the sympathy, help and love due to fellow-members of the body of Christ. Hence the Conference adopted and sent forth two messages, one to the members of the Church in Christian lands and another to the members of the Christian Church in non-Christian lands. These are recorded on pages 108-110.

It was an epoch-making Conference; and the closing meeting was memorable. The arrangements for it had been left over to be determined in the light of the proceedings of the previous days. Neither programme nor speakers were announced, but the hall was more densely crowded than ever. It was a simple and solemn service of thanksgiving, a renewal of personal dedication and prayer in which the presence of God was profoundly realised and the culminating emotions of the members found expression in the closing doxology—

“Now blessed be the Lord our God,
The God of Israel,
For He alone doth wondrous works,
In glory that excel.

And blessed be His glorious name
To all eternity:
The whole earth let His glory fill.
Amen, so let it be.”

ASSOCIATED MEETINGS

The Parallel Conference—Evening Public Meetings—Medical Missionary Conference—Meetings in Glasgow—Church Services

THE PARALLEL CONFERENCE

On the evening of Wednesday, 15th June, the Parallel Conference was opened in the Synod Hall in Castle Terrace. As already explained, it was a Conference representative of home workers for foreign missions. It was not arranged with a view to discussion, but simply with the view of setting before them, in the light of God's purpose and of the facts of the present day, the needs, methods, and urgency of the foreign mission enterprise. The hours of meeting were similar to those of the Conference in the Assembly Hall, and the "central act" of intercession had its corresponding place in the proceedings of the forenoon session. But otherwise it resembled an organic series of public meetings. At the forenoon sessions there was a presentation of the leading facts and findings in the Reports of the eight Commissions, the speakers being chosen from among the members of each Commission; and the topics of the evening meetings were also largely analogous to those in the Assembly Hall. The arrangements for the afternoon varied. On Thursday and Friday there were general meetings at which the great mission fields were passed under review. On the Saturday afternoon there was a meeting for men only, the first of a series of four such meetings, the others following on Saturday evening and on Sunday afternoon and evening. These formed a special

week-end series to which large numbers of business men came from various places. Meetings for women only were held in St. George's United Free Church on Saturday evening and on Monday afternoon. The afternoon meetings in the Synod Hall were devoted, on Tuesday, 21st June, to Medical Missions, on Wednesday to Missions to the Jews, and on Thursday to Bible Society and Literature work. In the second week the Tolbooth Church was also utilised in connection with the Parallel Conference,—on Monday and Tuesday afternoons for meetings for ministers, on Wednesday afternoon for a meeting for children, and on Thursday afternoon for a meeting in the interests of the Young Peoples' Mission Study Movement. At all these meetings the attendances were large, practically filling the halls and churches in which they were held, while the evening meetings in the Synod Hall were crowded. From the greater diversity in the character of the meetings and in the composition of the audiences it is impossible to present the same general view of the impression produced as in the case of the Conference itself. But the testimony of the delegates to the Parallel Conference was almost equally emphatic as to the new visions and fresh inspiration received, and as to the anticipations of far-reaching results from the influences diffused among home workers for foreign missions.

EVENING PUBLIC MEETINGS

In addition to the meetings connected with the Parallel Conference, a series of public meetings was held in the Tolbooth Church, which is also the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland. These were addressed by leading members of the Conference from all lands and attracted crowds which filled the church every night to overflowing. In the three halls together, the Assembly Hall, the Synod Hall and the Tolbooth Church, fully 6000 people gathered every night for the eight successive week-nights to listen to addresses on missionary topics.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Medical Mission work, like Women's Work and the dissemination of the Scriptures, is kept in view in the Reports of the various Commissions, as it stands related to the various problems selected for discussion in these Reports. But it was felt that in addition to what was said in these Reports, and in addition also to the general presentation of the importance and value of Medical Missions at the afternoon meeting in the Synod Hall, it was desirable to take advantage of so great an opportunity for a Conference of medical missionaries and experts upon points of special interest connected with their work. The first and third sessions of this Conference took place in the Edinburgh Café in the early mornings of Monday and Tuesday, 20th and 21st June, and the second session on the Monday evening in the hall of the Royal College of Physicians. A brief record of this Conference will be found on pages 113-120.

MEETINGS IN GLASGOW

The proximity of Glasgow to Edinburgh, and the possibility of conveying the influence of the Conference to large numbers there without involving the absence of delegates from more than a single session of the Conference, led to an arrangement for a series of meetings in the Western Capital during the second week. Three meetings were held daily, namely, a meeting for business men, addressed by business men, at 1.15 p.m. in St. George's Church; a general meeting at 3 p.m. in the same place; and a public meeting in St. Andrew's Hall, the largest in the city, in the evening at 7.30 p.m. At all the meetings, places were reserved for representative mission workers from many towns and districts about Glasgow. All the meetings were well attended, and in the evening St. Andrew's Hall was crowded. Many of the most eminent delegates readily undertook the service of addressing a meeting in Glasgow, and the impression produced by the series of meetings warrants the belief that they greatly helped the ends of the Conference.

CHURCH SERVICES

On Sunday, 19th June, there was only one meeting of the Conference. It was held at 8 p.m., after the ordinary Church services were over. In the morning at 9 a.m. there was a Communion Service in St. Giles' Cathedral to which delegates and other visitors were invited by the minister and kirk-session. The invitation was largely responded to by members of many denominations and different nationalities, and the hour was felt to be one of hallowed fellowship. In this connection, it may also be mentioned that there was a daily Celebration for members of the Anglican communion at 8 a.m. in the Church of St. John the Evangelist. On Sunday, 19th June, the great majority of the pulpits in Edinburgh were occupied both morning and evening by delegates to the Conference, and on the following Sunday, after the Conference had closed, a very large number of delegates preached in churches and addressed public meetings in numerous towns and villages throughout Scotland.