

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST.

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for ever."—Heb. xiii. 8.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is written in the spirit and atmosphere of change. It was a transient time, and people did not know what was going to happen, and they had the feeling in any case that it was the unexpected that would happen. Christianity had produced a great revolution, and it was all the more effective and permanent that it was so quiet, gradual and unseen. Indeed when this epistle was written people were only beginning to realise the true revolutionary character of Christianity. It was everywhere dissolving old institutions, dissolving old landmarks, and finding only shadows in what had been hallowed in the worship of God for long centuries. It saw in the heavens and the universe only the outer garments of the Almighty, in the temple and its services a passing phase of the religious life, in the Levitical priesthood the promise and prophecy of the universal priesthood of believers, and Judaism itself as the shadow of the good things to come in the Gospel. The result at first was very disappointing and unsettling, and to have the old house of their faith and worship, where their forefathers found such rest and comfort, pulled down about their ears, was very alarming. This Epistle is full of the signs of distress and doubt everywhere; and amidst such perplexities and changes the writer feels that it is no easy matter to reassure his readers.

In all great movements it is so important to get to what is the heart of the movement, otherwise we shall never understand it. We often wonder how it is that people living in the thick of a great revolution are quite unconscious of it. We saw that in our late election; we see it everywhere on the pages of history. Carelessly we look at the preparatory indications of its coming, and when it comes we have no clue to its interpretation. That is why people were so bewildered and confused by the sweeping changes that Christianity produced. They could not understand it, but had they studied its character and traced its movements they could easily have seen to what it was tending, and where its strength lay. As it was, some thought it could not exist without the Mosaic ritual, the Aaronic priesthood and temple service; while others, who had caught a deeper glance of its purpose, thought the life and power and greatness of Christianity lay in its miracles, doctrines and teachers; but they, too, did not know where the heart of the Gospel was—it is in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and for ever." It was in Him and in Him alone, their deliverance and security were to be found. There is always the danger in a great spiritual crisis of resting on someone else or something else, rather than on our Saviour. We see that all around us in the worship of our fellow-countrymen; and it is because they have not yet found the one only Life, the one only Centre, and the one only Personality of the Gospel. We are so prone to take part of the life and work of Christ for the whole of it; and hence it is that we often talk as if justification by faith, the atoning work of the Cross, or eternity of punishment, constituted the whole of Christianity, whereas we are only getting to the heart of it when we know that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever." To these Hebrew Christians all seemed to be going—the world itself in the new teaching had become fleeting phenomena, the garments of Judaism had perished, the worship of the temple had ended in bankruptcy, and the old religion had been found empty of all reality and even their beloved teachers were dead, and even it sometimes looked as if the new religion would follow in the tracks of the old, and that nothing would be left with them amidst the persecutions and changes that had come upon them. But the writer of

this Epistle assures them that there is no need to despair, and that all is working according to God's plan for "the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain"—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today, and for ever."

It was surely well calculated to reassure these good people that are addressed here, to know that Jesus Christ was always the same. We are so changeable and uneven, the circumstances of life are so lumpy and broken, and its ties and associations so uncertain, that it is always such a comfort and help to know that there is one—our dear Saviour—always the same. But sameness becomes so dull and monotonous, and we are always trying to escape from it as if it was a kind of prison life. We change our clothes and food, we change our houses, we change our studies and pursuits, and even our friends and our theories of life, to avoid it; and nothing in the long run wearies us so much as sameness. How, then, is it that we never weary of Christ? He is ever the same to us. We change to Him, but He never changes to us. The truth is that while He is the same, we never find sameness in Him. It is only small people, small things, and small ways and ideas that produce a wearisome sense of sameness; but great men and big events and big ideas never do so. While Christ is the same in His essence and character, the infinite in His Divine nature and the unmeasurable expansiveness of His human life, make Him ever different and new and changeable in His manifestations and movements and actions. Like the light, He is ever the same; and yet never the same in influences and results. We know how differently the light affects everything wherever it comes, and yet it is always the same in itself. So it is that while Jesus Christ is the same in His personality, love, sympathy, power and holiness, He is so varied in His revelation and dealings with us, that we can hardly sometimes believe that He is the same old Saviour at all.

Nor does time nor eternity alter this Divine and human sameness in Jesus Christ. It is the golden thread that runs through yesterday, today, and for ever. Whether we interpret these three manifestations in the widest or narrowest sense, the result is the same. The scene changes from yesterday till today, and from today till the future; but Jesus Christ is still the Unchanging One. Whether "yesterday" is the period before creation, or the dispensations of Old Testament times, or the Incarnation and the ministry of Christ, or our own lifetime, or a twenty-four hours; and "today" creation itself, or the New Testament period, or the time of opportunity and blessing for all of us; "for ever" is common to all of them, and the point to which they are all tending; for at last all will gather around His throne, and at His feet, who is "the same yesterday, and today and for ever."

H.

TOLERATION FOR JEWS.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, under the influence of Oliver Cromwell, England granted toleration to the Jews. The anniversary has been kept at London, when interesting speeches were made. The chairman, Mr. Lucien Wolff, the Jewish historian, emphasized the fact that the re-settlement of the Jews in this country upon a basis of freedom was due to Oliver Cromwell, who was practising religious liberty forty years before Locke wrote his famous essay. The highest note, however, was struck by Mr. Bryce, M.P., who claimed that the history of the Jewish nation had affected the whole of mankind in all ages. He said—"The Jewish literature and religion had for thousands of years been the most powerful factor in the life of civilized mankind. . . . Greek literature had never at any time laid hold of the whole mass of mankind as Jewish literature had from the fifth to the sixteenth centuries."

NEW WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERY.

The quarterly meeting of this Presbytery met in St. Andrew's church, the Rev. R. J. Wilson acting as moderator. The question of establishing a ladies' college on the coast was discussed, the Presbytery seeming disposed to recognize the necessity which exists for such an institution, and a strong committee was appointed, with Rev. J. A. Logan, of Eburne, as convener, to deal with the matter. A circulating library will be established within the bounds of the Presbytery, by means of which the best theological literature will be in circulation among members. The Presbytery complimented the congregation of Wharmack on the publication of a volume on Presbyterianism in the early days on the Fraser river. Rev. Dr. Alexander Falconer was nominated for the moderatorship at the next general assembly, and the following commissioners were appointed to attend the meetings of the assembly at London, Ontario: Ministers, R. J. Wilson, Dr. McLaren, J. R. Wright, A. S. Grant, A. J. Logan. Elders, Jas. McQueen, J. H. Book, Alexander Philip, Alexander Duff, A. S. McGregor.

The annual meeting of the Westminster W. F. M. Presbytery was held in St. Andrew's church, Vancouver, and was opened with prayer, after which Mrs. R. A. Wilson, wife of the pastor of the church, warmly welcomed the visiting ladies. Mrs. Macaulay, of Ladner, having replied, Mrs. Henderson, acting president, read a letter of greeting from Mrs. Logan, president, and one from the honorary president, Mrs. Scouler, who is at present in Hamilton, Ont. "The Regions Beyond" was a most interesting and admirable paper, which was read by Mrs. McAdam. Mrs. Creelman, Vancouver, also read an able paper on the subject of "Mission Band Work," in which the ladies of the Presbytery are so much interested. The question box was put in charge of Mrs. McLean and Mrs. Draney. The questions discussed dealt chiefly with the work of the Mission Band, one of the questions being whether, in view of the many churchless foreigners arriving in Canada daily, Canadian church missionary work should not be confined to the heathen at home and the exploitation of the foreign field be left to the churches in the older countries. A portion of the afternoon was devoted to music. A missionary hymn, arranged as a part song, was sung by the children from the Mission Band of St. John's Presbyterian church, the Misses Doris Grainger, Agnes Daimier and Margaret Cockburn taking the principal parts, while a Japanese lady also sang. A hearty invitation was received from St. Andrew's church, Westminster, asking the Presbytery to meet there next year. At six o'clock, Mrs. McNaughton, president of the St. Andrew's Auxiliary, invited all the ladies present to sit down to "high tea," which was much enjoyed.

At the evening meeting, which commenced at 7.30 p.m., and was largely of a popular character, the moderator of the Presbytery conducted devotional exercises and the corresponding secretary read her report. Rev. Mr. McGillivray pastor of St. John's church, gave an address, an anthem was rendered by St. Andrew's Choir and Mrs. Knox Wright and Miss Jessie Stark sang solos.

The following are only a few of the titles recently applied to the Free Church party:—Wee Fries, Little Legals, Reactionaries, Separationists, Halsburgians, Schismatics.

One of Glasgow's legislature at the Town Council meeting recently declared that something or other "would come in our lifetime, and perhaps before it."

The marriage of Lady Mary Hamilton to the future Duke of Montrose will establish a record in one respect, inasmuch as three generations—grandmother, mother and daughter—will have married present and future dukes.