

total of 2,053,700. Protestant societies report 577,000 in Africa, 700,000 in Asia, 280,000 in Oceania, and 688,000 in America, or a total of 2,245,700. Dr. Warnock remarks:—"I must confess that these figures surprised me. Considering the grand and imposing organization of the Catholic Church, the larger number of its missionaries, their rapid method of receiving into church communion larger numbers, and the great advantage enjoyed by the fact that they have been at the work many centuries before our work began, I had thought that numerically their mission success would vastly exceed that of the Protestants. Leaving out of consideration Asia, where chiefly those who are descendants of converts of earlier centuries in China and India swell the number in the Roman Catholic reports, it must be seen that everywhere else the mission work of the Evangelical Church is far in advance of that of the Roman Catholic."

The World's Missionary Conference.

LETTER FROM REV. A. T. PIERSON, D.D.

LONDON, June 11, 1888.

MY DEAR DR. SHERWOOD:—Saturday, at five o'clock p.m., the great World's Conference on Missions assembled in Exeter Hall. Great as were the expectations that had gathered around the occasion, they were all surpassed by the reality. It had been the thought of the committee that, before entering formally upon the business of the convention, a reception should be given to the delegates, affording an opportunity for free, familiar and social intercourse and acquaintance. Tables were set at the opposite ends of the great hall, capable of accommodating hundreds of persons, and after supper a few words of welcome were to be spoken, and a short prayer and praise service was to conclude this first general meeting.

But all these arrangements proved inadequate, they were divinely displaced by the unexpected throng that crowded Exeter Hall and made locomotion almost impossible. Where *thousands* had gathered *hundreds* found but little room for freedom of movement; and so we all rejoiced to have the well-planned arrangements give way to the necessity of readjustment, and we conformed to circumstances. We were glad to stand where we hoped to sit, to fast where we expected to feed, and to be held as in a vise where we meant to go about and shake many loved hands.

As I stood on the upper platform and looked over that august assemblage, I said to myself, This is indeed the grandest ecumenical council ever assembled since the first council in Jerusalem! What a fitting commemoration with which to mark the completion of the first century of modern missions; what a fitting inauguration with which to introduce a new century of evangelism!

The promise of our Lord is: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Such a promise and such a gathering must challenge the faith even of a very weak disciple. For when were the conditions of the promised presence more amply fulfilled! If there be such a thing as meeting "in His name," surely it is to be found here. From the East and the West, from the North and the South, from every continent and the isles of the sea, representing every Christian denomination, missionary field and missionary agency or organization, delegates have gathered. The veteran missionary secretaries are here, the war-scarred soldiers who have fought for fifty years the battles of the Lord. They come as the maimed and scarred

martyrs gathered at the council of Nicea, over 1,500 years ago. The authors of great books on missions, the editors of missionary magazines which chronicle the progress of the campaign of the ages, the eloquent pleaders by tongue and pen for the speedy evangelization of the world, the translators of Scripture into the many languages and dialects, missionaries from all lands, and natives who have been converted and transformed into evangelists, pastors and teachers—these are here. Godly women, representing the legion of women's boards and auxiliary societies which have come to the front and kept at the front in the march of modern missions, are also here. Again we say, and deliberately, there never before was such a gathering "in His name." Christ has waited nearly 2,000 years since he gave His last command, before He has seen His whole Church gathering by chosen representatives to plan a world-wide campaign for His gospel; forgetting all minor differences or divisions in rallying about the one ark of the covenant, and in obedience to providential and gracious signals, sounding the trumpet for a new onward, forward march!

It was obvious from the first that the Master of assemblies was in the midst. After a season of mutual introduction the Earl of Aberdeen—a very courteous, noble, simple, unpretending Christian man, yet in comparative youth—took the chair and called the great assembly to order and announced the opening psalm:

"All people that on earth do dwell"

Those who would set an operatic quartette upon the stilts of high art to "perform God's praise" should have heard two thousand people sing Old Hundred then! And those who have been known to admire eloquent prayers addressed to the audience should have heard the beloved Webb Peepoe, as he led the vast audience in prayer that took hold of the very horns of the altar in importunate and earnest pleading for such a blessing as should surpass exceeding abundantly all we ask or think. It was a marvelous prayer, because it was so self-oblivious. He prayed in the Holy Ghost, and in praying with him we all draw near to the mercy-seat where God is enthroned. The blessing he asked had already come.

After a few graceful words of greeting from the Earl of Aberdeen, the Rev. Dr. Underhill, the veteran Secretary, now retired from active supervision, gave a *resumé* of the various steps and stages by which, since the first comparatively private conference in 1854, in New York City, with Dr. Duff, the thought and plan of a world conference had grown in scope and in realization. Ten years ago a conference similar to this had been held at Mildmay, but it had no such cosmopolitan character, and was but a herald preparing the way for this colossal gathering. To give any adequate idea of this masterly address we should be compelled to reproduce it entire, and even then the aroma of a flower is not more elusive, as to the printed page that may represent the form and even hues of a blossom, than is the ethereal atmosphere that invests such an address from such a man! Rev. Mr. Wigram of the Church Missionary Society then spoke, followed by the Rev. Dr. A. C. Thompson, the beloved representative of the American Board, who in a singularly graceful speech in behalf of the American delegations, left absolutely nothing to be added by the rest of us. Remarks were made by representatives of the German and French Societies, and by the Secretary, Rev. James Johnston. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission led in prayer and the assembly adjourned. It was difficult to part. Handshakings innumerable followed, until slowly the great crowd separated, reluctant to leave a place manifestly filled with the Holy Ghost.