

Moosonee Diocesan Conference

UP to the year 1872, the chief oversight of Protestant Church work in the Northwest territories (that vast area of Canada between the Quebec border and the Rocky Mountains and north of the United States border and the C.P.R. line from Fort William to Sudbury) was given to one Bishop of the Anglican Church, who was responsible to English missionary societies and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was called the diocese of Rupert's Land. In 1872 the present diocese of Moosonee was detached and defined. Since then nine other dioceses have been formed and the former diocese is now the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land, while the diocese of Rupert's Land is only coterminous with the old boundaries of Manitoba. The area of Moosonee diocese is 600,000 square miles and its people are of three distinct types—white settler, Indian native and Eskimo.

For the first time since 1872 there has been held a conference of the Bishop, clergy and lay workers in this huge area. It was held on Wednesday, May 16th, at Cochrane. The clergy present were Archdeacon Woodall, Revs. J. D. Paterson, R. C. Pitts, A. Marchant, H. Ackland, H. Cartlidge, G. F. Knox and the laity, Messrs. G. B. Nicholson and Bamforth, of Chapleau, Houge, of Matheson, Hodgson, of Iroquois Falls, Ebbitts, of Porquus Junction, Jemmett and Woodbury, of Timmins, Liddicoat, of Nahma, Robson, of Abitibi, and Greer and Dempsey, of Cochrane.

After the celebration of Holy Communion at 9.30 a.m., the conference met in the schoolroom of the church, and, after the appointment of Rev. R. C. Pitts as secretary, listened to an instructive address from Bishop Anderson. The Bishop dealt with the work of the Church among the white settlers, Indian natives and Eskimos, its vastness and its importance and the difficulty of adequate executive control. He also submitted a financial statement for 1916 which showed an expenditure of nearly \$20,000 on the diocesan work over and above parochial finances. His Lordship also spoke of the desirability of a better organization, of increased support from general missionary funds, and of Sunday School development. A committee was appointed to consider and report on this address, and the afternoon session was devoted to their recommendations.

In the interval lunch was served by ladies of Holy Trinity at which delegates, both ladies and gentlemen, were present. Several happy little speeches were made on this occasion, but perhaps the most pleasing event of all was a standing vote of congratulation to the Bishop on his having that day attained to the eighth anniversary of his consecration.

The afternoon session of the conference endorsed the following recommendations from the committee on the Bishop's address:—

1. That the conference express its appreciation of the address and statement submitted by his Lordship.
2. That the conference is of the opinion that the time has arrived when the interests of the Church in this diocese can best be served by the organization of a Diocesan Synod, and that his Lordship should be requested to appoint a committee to draft a constitution and submit the same through his Lordship to all of the organized parishes through the Rector or clergyman in charge, and to all missionaries throughout the diocese for confirmation or suggested amendment, and that the final consideration of such constitution and Synod organization be dealt with at a further

conference to be called by his Lordship after he has received such confirmation or suggestions, within one year if possible.

3. In the meanwhile the conference feels that as soon as possible a secretary should be appointed to take off his Lordship's shoulders the detail work of the diocese.

4. That the Bishop appoint a committee to prepare for presentation to the M.S.C.C. a statement in detail of the extraordinary needs of this diocese, both in its white work and its Indian work, and that an effort be made to have the diocese fully represented by delegates from the diocese at the next meeting of the Board of Management of the M.S.C.C.

5. That the Bishop appoint three district Sunday School secretaries to meet the needs of the three geographical districts of the diocese—viz., Chapleau, Timiskaming and the North and that these three secretaries form the Diocesan Association.

In the course of the afternoon Rev. G. Knox and Mr. J. M. Greer went as delegates to the W.A. conference, in session at Bishopthorpe, to carry their greetings and appreciation of W.A. work. The W.A. replied by sending Mesdames Anderson and Nicholson to reciprocate. Two other important resolutions were passed by the conference before adjournment:—

1. That this conference make vigorous representations to the Northern Ontario Relief Commission with regard to the claims of the different Anglican parishes in the burned area for relief.

2. That Archdeacon Woodall and Messrs. S. J. Dempsey, Hough, Ebbitts, Hodgson and Poole be a deputation to meet the N.O. Relief Commission.

Although Rev. E. J. Peck, D.D., was unable at the last moment to get to Cochrane, and, therefore, several who intended to take in the missionary meeting in Holy Trinity schoolroom on Wednesday evening, stayed away, yet those who were present were entirely satisfied with three excellent addresses from three experts in Indian missionary work. Archdeacon Woodall spent several years in Indian work around Hudson's Bay, Rev. H. Cartlidge is going back to resume the work which he has been doing for three years past, teaching and ministering to Indian scholars and students, and Mr. G. B. Nicholson for some 30 years has watched the Indian character as it has come from its primitive elements under the influence of the white man and trader. All who heard could not question for a moment the claim of Indian Mission work. The meeting was presided over by the Bishop, and missionary hymns were interspersed with the speeches.

NEW WESTMINSTER SYNOD.

(Continued from page 347.)

R. Trumpour and H. J. Underhill; lay, Messrs. A. McC. Creery, J. H. MacGill, J. R. Seymour and A. D. Taylor; substitutes, Messrs. G. L. Schetky, A. J. B. Mellish, H. D. A. Birmingham and J. D. Hall. General Synod—Clerical, Archdeacon Heathcote, Revs. Dr. Seager, A. H. Sovereign, H. G. King, E. R. Bartlett, W. H. Vance; substitutes, Revs. G. H. Wilson, W. R. George, F. E. Perrin, C. B. Clarke; lay, Messrs. A. McC. Creery, J. H. MacGill, J. R. Seymour, Chancellor Taylor, F. Burd and G. H. Cowan; substitutes, Messrs. J. A. Birmingham, A. J. B. Mellish, J. R. Payne, H. H. Lister. Board of Missions—Clerical, Revs. G. H. Wilson, F. Plackett, A. W. Collins, S. Féa; lay, Messrs. F. W. Stirling, F. J. Burd, G. L. Schetky, A. P. Black; appointed by Bishop, Rev. M. H. Jackson and Mr. J. Arnould.

Prayer Book Studies

By
Dyson Hague.

THE SO-CALLED ATHANASIAN CREED.

THIS famous Confession of Faith is in the form of a Canticle, or Church hymn. Bishop Gore says it ought to be considered a Canticle rather than a Creed, and in the pre-Reformation service it was called a Psalm, and was sung with the other Psalms. It sets forth the glory of the eternal Trinity, and the truth about Jesus in His Deity and Humanity. It was originally written because myriads of Christians were weakening in their faith with regard to Christ as true God and true man, and it is of special value in these days, when so many think that it does not matter a little bit whether men think of Jesus as Divine or not. Nobody knows when or where or by whom it was written. There are two things, however certain. First. It was not written by Athanasius. Second. It sets forth so clearly what Athanasius believed that he probably would have subscribed to every word of it. In order to clear the way to an intelligent understanding of this great historical Creed, it is well for the Churchman, and especially for the younger Churchman, to grasp certain introductory axioms. Its composer assumed that the supreme thing in life, the only thing worth while for **time and eternity, is faith—the faith** (1 Tim. 6: 12, R.V.); and that the definite body of truth taught by Christ and His Apostles, and received as a sacred deposit by each successive generation of Christians, was to be held fast, and never to be betrayed (1 Tim. 6: 20 R.V.). And further, that this faith of Christians was, and is, ever in danger; and that subtle foes—without and within were, and are, ever endeavoring to undermine the sacred trust of transmitted truth, and to turn men from its acceptance. Now this was especially the case in the fifth century. It was an age of awful crisis for the Faith. The Truth was in danger. It was a day of life or death. Like an overwhelming tide, the Ostrogoths, the Visigoths, and the Vandals swept from the Central Empire zones over the whole of the South and West of Europe, and, surging across the Mediterranean, spread desolation over the lands in North Africa. Their barbarisms equalled, if they did not surpass, the present-day atrocities of the Germans in Belgium, Poland and Serbia, and of their allies in Armenia and Palestine. Their path was a path of blood and fire. Wherever they went they left a trail of horror. And the strange thing was that these Vandals were Unitarians in doctrine, and persecuted with the most incredible ferocity all who held our simple faith in the Holy Trinity and in the Divinity of Christ. The story of those persecutions is like a modern page from the history of the Belgian atrocities, or of the Spanish Inquisition. Bishops were burned. Clergy were tortured. The laity were degraded, mutilated, and enslaved. Mothers and maidens and sweet little children were ravished, tortured, and slain with the sword. But they fought the noble fight, and kept the faith. And as they writhed in bodily torture, transcending modern grasp, they cried from the flames: "Dread Gehenna and hold Christ fast;" "By the majesty of God, by the Day of Judgment, by the brightness of the coming of Christ, hold fast more firmly the Catholic faith;" "Fear the eternal punishments—hold gallantly to the faith." It was the fulfilment of Luke 12: 4-5; Matt. 24: 21. Gloriously they suffered, gloriously they died, rather than surrender one item of the faith. In this easy and indifferent age it's almost impossible to

grasp the spirit and the attitude of these African Christians, who felt that the faith of Jesus Christ was like a standard of their King, and that they should joyfully die rather than yield it to the foe. To the tolerant mind of the twentieth century Churchman it is ridiculous to think that men should risk torture and flame for the trivial distinctions of heterodoxy or orthodoxy. What does it matter, anyhow? It is only a tweedle-dum, tweedle-dee of theology. But to the Christians of those heroic days, who reproduced the spirit of Heb. 10: 31-39, it was life or death! Now, it was then, in an age when men were dying rather than surrender, that someone, nobody knows who; somewhere, nobody knows where; somehow, nobody knows how, composed and published for his own and succeeding generations that wonderful body of theological truth which we call the Athanasian Creed. It may have been Hilary, or Ceasarius, or Honoratus, all Bishops of Arles, in Southern France, or it may have been Vincentius, the monk of the little island of Lireus; or Vigilius, the African; or it may have been a number of them in succession, touching and re-touching, revising and re-revising what somebody originally composed—the latest theory. But whoever did it, it is a most elaborate composition, and represents very high, very deep, and very heavy theological thinking. Anyway, whenever we are tempted to growl, inwardly or outwardly, at our worthy Prayer Book compilers, and say: Whatever did they put that in the Prayer Book for? What is the good of it, anyway? let us remember that when men and women and children were willing to die rather than give up the faith, this old Hymn about the faith of the Trinity was written with the desire that the Church might faithfully guard her trust, and never, by any small compromise or surrender, give up its faith in the Trinity and in the Deity of Christ.

But, says the layman, I cannot understand it at all, nor can anybody, as far as I know. Why should we have to repeat such

The Layman's Complaint. words as Trinity, and Co-eternal, and Reasonable soul, and

confusion of substance, etc., when nobody can begin to understand their meaning? Of course, you cannot understand them. You are not asked to understand them. If you tried to understand them you would be like the old preacher, who said that he would explain the Trinity to his people on the coming Sunday, and a day or so afterwards saw a small boy on the seashore filling a hole in the sand with his little spoon. "What are you trying to do, little boy?" asked the preacher. "I am trying to put the sea in this little sand-hole." "Why, that is an impossibility," said the preacher. And then it dawned upon his mind that he was being taught in a picture-lesson that it was impossible, too, for his small head to contain the knowledge of the Being and Nature of the Infinite God. The fact is, nearly all the trouble with regard to this Athanasian Creed arises from mistaken emphasis. The incidence of Church thought nowadays is on understanding and explaining truth. But in the days when the Athanasian Creed emerged the incidence of Church thought was upon the guarding and the safe-keeping of truth. The age in which we live needs, above all things, to sit at the feet of a man like Pascal, the great French philosopher and scientist, and learn that the last attainment of reason is to know that there is an infinity of things that surpass it, and that our science is a drop and our nescience is an ocean in which that drop is whelmed (Wight's "Pascal," pp. 191-277). We are not asked as Churchmen to explain these

(Continued on page 354.)