

the man who always speaks to a crowd.—*The Congregationalist*.

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The Primitive Principles of the Church.

BY BISHOP HAROLD BROWNE.

I SHOULD like very much, almost as my last words, to leave with you my strong expression of feeling that the Church of England can stand and flourish only so long as she stands on primitive principles. The very *raison d'être* of the Church of England, the very principle of her existence as in some degree a distinct body in the Church, is that at the Reformation she determined to return to primitive principles—that wherever there was corruption it should be thrown off, and that she should return to primitive practices. We have heard a good deal of late, owing to the death of the most eminent leader of a great school, of what that great school did for the Church. I am old enough to remember when the Tracts for the Times first came out. I do not say that they did not make a very great stir—of course they did; I do not say they did not bring a great many things comparatively new home to the mass of the clergy and laity of this Church; but I do say this, that something of the kind was in the air before Newman arose, a great genius, to put it into form and shape. I can

well remember that some of us in our early studies had our minds directed to the teaching of primitive antiquity; some of us not moving in the same direction—at least, not springing from the same principles as the great writers of the Oxford School went upon. If I may venture to say to you concerning myself, I well remember how my own mind was first directed to primitive antiquity long before I had read or heard of the Tracts. Some things had puzzled me, and I was induced to read the writings which were then to be obtained of the English reformers, having been told by those in whose school I had learned most, that they were much more to be relied on than the primitive Fathers, and I hoped to find much guidance from them. What struck me at first was this, that they all referred to primitive antiquity; that their great arguments against the Roman Catholics were derived from the writings of the Fathers of the Church. My own mind was so directed; I took, feebly it may be, but still I took to the study of primitive antiquity and of the early Fathers at the very time. And then came out the writings of the Tracts for the Times, directing our thoughts especially to primitive antiquity, and it is no great wonder that many of us were very much struck and carried away by what may be called the zeal of the Tract writers, because they turned our attention especially to the primitive antiquity which we had already learned to honor. I wish I could think that they and all their followers had still adhered to the principles of the primitive antiquity which we had al-