


Anglo-Saxon spirit, as we sometimes say, it is not the confluence of life at this centre from all peoples of the earth, which constitutes the basis for these great educational, charitable, beneficent institutions and influences. They come from Foreign Missions. And if we are ever blind to the value and glory of Foreign Missions it will be the worst example of civic ingratitude in the history of the world. Our just and humane legislation, our courts of justice, our republican institutions, our literatures, so far as they are enlightened and purified and purifying in effect, our hopes for the future, as well as our present prosperity and tranquillity, likewise come from Foreign Missions. These have been the builder by whom has been erected the entire personal, public, civic, and national development in which we rejoice today. And so it is natural that there should be an interest in Foreign Missions throughout the country—an interest in them not merely, though primarily and supremely, because they reach individual souls and lead them toward the celestial and immortal life; that would be an impulse to preach in the next village, to preach in any neighborhood. Souls are there needing the Gospel as precious as the souls at Benares or Bombay, in Japan or China, or anywhere else."

A LIVE CHURCH.

The *Speaker*, which fairly represents the opinion of intellectual Nonconformity in England, says, "There is a keen, and almost over-anxious desire to make the Church of England able to meet the new demands of society at almost every point." . . . "Those who are not members of the Church of England, and even those who have no sympathy with aggressive clericalism, can still note with admiration the unbounded energy and unquenchable enthusiasm with which the leaders in the Church are carrying forward their mission in the world."

In the Parliamentary report of the trustees of the British Museum many interesting additions are recorded, amongst which are sculptured slabs belonging to the fourth dynasty of ancient Egypt, B. C. 3700, one with a portrait of a deceased man wearing a wig, necklace, and tunic; also a set of foundation deposits from the temple of Queen Hatashpset at Der-el-babari, and a bronze shrine of Necho, King of Egypt. In the Babylonian section many objects of interest from the early empire have been acquired. Inscribed objects of Mulbabbar and Arad-Sin, early rulers of Babylonia, probably between B.C. 2500 and 4000, and a number of tablets inscribed with public accounts—lists of revenue and produce drawn up for the city of Ur, B.C. 2300.

BETHLEHEM.

HRISTMAS is drawing near, and among all the places in the Holy Land with sacred associations our thoughts centre most readily upon the little town of Bethlehem, the scene of the greatest event this world has ever witnessed.

It is in its connection with this event rather than anything in itself that our interest in the place lies; and yet it has its attractions. Its position on the top of a "long grey hill" of Jura limestone renders it conspicuous to the traveller as he journeys on the main road from Jerusalem to Hebron, it being only about six miles from the former. The ridge of hill, which runs nearly due east and west, is about one mile in length. The west end of it shelves down gradually, but the east end on which the town stands rises more abruptly and overlooks a plain of some extent; on either side of it there is a deep valley. In many parts the slopes of this ridge are covered by vineyards, fig-plantations, almond groves and gardens, shaded by rows of olive-trees, which betoken great fertility of soil and add much to the beauty of their terraced contours.

Somewhat separated from the town and standing on the extreme eastern part of the ridge is the great Basilica of St. Helena, "half church, half fort," which now groups together in its precincts three convents—Greek, Latin, and Armenian.

Bethlehem is one of the oldest towns in Palestine, and yet but little is known of its early history; we find it already in existence at the time of Jacob's return to the country, for it was near to it that he buried his beloved Rachel.

The event which marked it for veneration by the Israelites was the birth of King David there; and yet in spite of the importance given to it by this circumstance, it never rose to any great eminence, or became the scene of any remarkable action or business. Even after his elevation to the kingdom David did nothing to dignify the place or connect it with himself; the only touch of recollection which he manifested for it is in the story of his sudden longing for the water of the well by its gate (2 Sam. xxiii. 15), which the three brave men hazarded their lives to procure for him. Beyond this and its connection with the story of Ruth, the mention of it in the Old Testament is merely incidental. It is at the outset of the New Testament history that this little town suddenly springs into the fame which it has enjoyed ever since.

Travellers there at the present day find little or nothing in the small straggling village to arrest their attention, and proceed at once to the great pile of buildings, embracing the