

OUTLINES OF SERMONS.

Preached at the opening services in connection with the Conference.

(1) In ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL the REV. DR. MCCONNELL, of Brooklyn, preached from the text, St. Mark xvi. 17. He outlined three successive phases of Christianity : (a) The period of theological agitation in the first four centuries, when the effort of the Church was to say intelligently and clearly what it believed the truths of Christianity exactly were ; the period of Eastern ascendancy, and of Orthodoxy. (b) The stage of organization, which found its best form in the West ; the ecclesiastical phase of Christianity ; the period of Catholicity. (c) The Reformation period ; the period of personal experience of truth ; the phase of Evangelicalism. Next the preacher pointed to present signs of dissatisfaction. (a) The large number of *good* men and women who live their religious life outside of the Church and outside of all organized Christianity whatsoever. (b) Increasing unrest in regard to the formulas and doctrines of the Church, expressing itself in cries for revision of creeds and of confessions of faith. (c) The increasing difficulty of "conversion," it being by no means so common as it was a generation ago for men and women to pass through those successive stages of emotion called by this name. The preacher then asked whether these things might not be the birth-throes of a new phase of Christianity even now being born in our midst. He pointed to the marvellous interest in the *Personality* of Jesus Christ which has grown up in recent years. The titles of the theological books of to-day nearly all express a spirit that is best described in the cry, "Back to Christ." There