

THE MISSION FIELD

CLEANINGS FROM THE CALCUTTA CHURCH CONFERENCE

(From the Indian Churchman.)

The following remarks were made by Mr. Mitchell, at the recent Calcutta Conference—

Before however I go any further, I must ask you to let me refer, very briefly, to the well worn subject of our special difficulties. We can hardly hope for success unless we thoroughly understand their nature. Foremost amongst them stands the vast extent of the Diocese of Calcutta. This of course has been to some extent remedied of late years, and we have now nine Bishops working in India in place of the four who divided the country between them in 1877. But still I question if the world in earlier times ever saw such a Diocese as Calcutta still is, extending as it does from the Cathedral city, eastward to Assam, westward to the Central Provinces, and northward to Delhi and Ajmere. In fact, roughly speaking, the Bishop of Calcutta can even now travel eastward, westward or northward from his Cathedral for close upon a thousand miles without leaving his own Diocese. Then we have to consider the difference of race, language and interest. Bengal and the North-west are radically different. Assam and the Central Provinces have scarcely anything in common, while Chota Nagpore, Santahia and some other places, are each of them separate countries, which might well claim their own Bishops and their special arrangements for Church work. A third and very serious difficulty is the continual change that is going on. The Church here has scarcely passed out of that early state of the Church in a heathen country, when it is an exotic body, and the largest part of its members are in many places, ever on the move. Very few of the Europeans and East Indians in this country can say with any certainty, where they are likely to be this time next year, if God spares them so long. This is a most serious drawback, and tends to repress Church life in many ways, leading too to that isolation which is one of the most serious difficulties to be dealt with in any attempt to organize a really active Church life in India.

These are only some of the difficulties which surround us and I have put them very briefly; but they will help us I think to realize the magnitude of the problem before us. But what is it we are looking forward to when we talk about the organization of the Church in India? Few perhaps have thought out the matter. To take this Diocese alone, we have some 70 English clergy ministering to Europeans and Eurasians, and about 50 engaged in Missionary work. We have upwards of 50 Native priests and deacons mostly engaged in pastoral work, while there are a few European and Native clergy employed in Educational labours. As regards the

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THE BISHOP OF TRURO ON MISSIONS.

The Bishop of Truro, speaking from the chair at the annual meeting of the Church Missionary Society in Truro said:—

That they would never lift up Missionary meetings to their proper level, and would never really take an interest in Missionary work, unless they continually strengthened their faith and quickened their zeal by going back to the very beginning—the origin of Missions. By our Lord Jesus Christ this world was created; to Him in some special manner, in the great mystery of the mutual relations of the Three Persons in the Blessed Trinity,—to Him the care of this world had been in some peculiar sense entrusted when it had fallen under the power of the great Prince of evil—the enemy of God and man. It was He who, at the cost of His own life's Blood, came forth from His eternal home to redeem it. Until they had realized something at any rate in their own souls of what was involved in this great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ; until, however feebly and imperfectly, they had been taught by the Holy Spirit what they owed to Him Who gave up His life as the ransom of fallen humanity, they would never strike the keynote of all that was being done of any

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