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"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit."

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## Religious.

### The Evangelical Alliance.

A few weeks since we gave a brief notice of the General Conference of the Evangelical Alliance held at Amsterdam during the last two weeks of August. Some further extracts from the Correspondence of the *Christian World* will doubtless be full of interest to our readers.

#### THE CONFERENCE HALL.

The hall in which the Conference meets from day to day is situate in one of the most pleasant parts of the city, and is surrounded by a large garden whose shady walks have been especially grateful during the scorching, mosquito-stinging weather. The hall is not unlike St. James's, and will, perhaps, accommodate as many persons. It has been fitted up for the Conference with great taste and care. Around the galleries we see the coats of arms of all nations, and underneath them, in gilt letters, the names of reformers, martyrs, and statesmen. Facing the platform, which is very large and contains a small pulpit for the reading of papers, is the motto of the Evangelical Alliance: "In necessariis, unitas; in dubiis, libertas; in omnibus, caritas." Behind the platform is an orchestra filled every morning by school children, who, with the assistance of a harmonium and a brass band, lead off those famous German chorales with which all lovers of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" and "Elijah" are familiar. The singing is sonorous, but very slow. After a chorale the Scriptures are read and prayers offered by two brethren from different countries, after which the chairman announces the order of the days proceedings. Here so and so is to take so long; Monsieur so and so, so long. There is to be an adjournment at one for an hour, after which the afternoon will be spent in listening to another series of papers. Dinner will take place at four, and in the evening there will be sectional meetings held in various rooms of the building. This is the order of the day, and all days have been alike in this respect. To the English visitor the proceedings of the past week have been as vague, not to say oppressive, as any German commentary that was ever written. No foreign speech, however important, has been interpreted, and the ordinary admirer of the eloquence of Exeter Hall has been well nigh stunned by the amount of Dutch, German, and French drummed into his aching ear. After a while, growing wiser by experience, Exeter Hall only enters the Conference Hall when his own tongue is being spoken, and this course is generally adopted by people of all nations. It is quite edifying to see the rush made out of the hall when English is about to be spoken. The French language is the most popular in the assembly among general visitors; but of course to the Dutch no language is like their own; according to them of all tongues the Dutch is the best for poetry and religion. In consequence of the confusion of tongues the large refreshment room adjoining the hall is a modern Babel from morning till night, and whatever drowsiness there may be in the Conference, outside there is always plenty of life. Until the Conference was four days' old smoking was not forbidden in this room, into which the hall opens by glass doors; consequently we breathed an atmosphere of disinfectant.

#### "MEN I HAVE MET WITH."

Amidst a multitude of stars of unknown magnitude, it has been pleasant to look upon a few planets whose shining has long attracted the admiration of many lands. Here is Dr. Krummacher, a Saul among the prophets in respect to stature, and possessing a voice, which if Elijah the Tishbite possessed, Ahab might well be startled. Blessings on the flaxen haired old Divine, with the bright grey eyes shining through his spectacles like the sun through windows, and who shakes hands with you with the grasp of Vulcan. Sitting under a broad chestnut-tree in the gardens, not far from a murmuring fountain, is one who is noticed by everybody, and who is almost over-looked by German pastors young and old. He is of middle height, very slight build, more than seventy years old, and almost blind. You can see that he wears magnifying glasses rather

than spectacles, and a wig peeps out beneath a broad-brimmed hat. He is Dr. Tholuck, and surely he alone was worth coming to Amsterdam to see. The respect paid to him the loving affection with which his old students gather round him, his walk and talks with them in the garden would immediately remind a Homerton student of Tholuck of England the late Dr. John Pye Smith. Walking by with a great cigar stretching out at right angles from a face almost as brown, with his hands in the pockets of a loose, long paletot, with turned down collar over a black neckerchief, the knot of which is indescribable, with a little patch of white whisker on an otherwise cleanly shaven cheek, with black eyebrows and deep blue eyes, with a merry laugh that presently can be heard fifty yards off, is Professor Lange, his whole appearance being hearty, but quite unhomiletical. Professor St. Hilaire, of Paris, is another of the popular celebrities of the Conference. He is past the prime of life, but his handsome features, his musical voice, his perfect grace as an orator, make him appear almost young still. Dr. E. de Pressensé is received with cheers whenever he rises to speak. He is rather stout, short of Krummacher by a head, and his long straight hair is of an iron grey. He is dressed in black neckerchief, and short lustre frock-coat, and sitting down for two hours together nursing his chin in a great broad hand, he looks the sleepiest, dreamiest being imaginable. But when his name is called he rises from his chair with almost startling quickness, ascends the little pulpit and, leaning upon one arm, he begins to speak with great rapidity, using the other arm to give those back-handed shakes, especially with the forefinger, which, I suppose, no one but a Frenchman can succeed in doing gracefully. He increases his rate of speed in speech, until several portions of it were performed at a run of not less than two hundred words per minute. M. Bersin I think I described in my last. Among young ministers he is counted the rising pulpit orator of France. He has a whiskerless, almost feminine brown face, lighted up by two great brown eyes shining beneath a broad forehead.

#### THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE.

This has been of a varied character, and in one way or another has occupied from nine in the morning until nine at night every day. We have heard greetings from Turkey, and have been assured that now the Turkish law was on the side of religious liberty; that the Sultan may read the Bible presented to him the other day without violating the law, and that should he become a Christian he is in no danger of losing his head. A voice from Spain stirred the hearts of the assembly in reference to the thralldom in which the people of that unhappy country were plunged. From America there came friendly salutations, and a hearty invitation several times repeated, to hold the next general Conference of the Evangelical Alliance in New York. Canada joined in the invitation, urging that the present alteration in the constitution of that country was very much like the Evangelical Alliance,—the provinces being all governed by separate governments, but being at the same time under one head. England, through Mr. John Finch, the Treasurer of the British branch of the Alliance, gave the right hand of fellowship to the various representatives present. These were the salutations, and they were among the most interesting and intelligible portions of the proceedings. Then we have had reports of the religious condition of various countries, and of methods of religious work. Canon Battersby described the religious condition of the Episcopal Church of England. Rev. J. Howard Hinton read a paper upon Evangelical Nonconformity, Rev. W. Robertson upon the Scotch churches; Dr. Tholuck, of Halle, upon the religious condition of Germany; Professor St. Hilaire upon France; Professor Doedes upon Holland; Pasteur Anet upon Belgium; and Pasteur Meille upon Italy. We have had discussions upon theology and philosophy, introduced by papers from the Rev. T. R. Berks, Pasteur Bersier, Professor McCosh, Dr. G. J. Vinke, and Professor Hertzog. "Christianity and the Nationalities" has been another of the subjects expounded, the Dutch historian and statesman, Mr. Groen Van Praistor making an

eloquent speech in favor of the Christian nationality. Then we have had papers or addresses upon Christianity and human misery. Over this discussion the Rev. Dr. Guthrie presided, and addresses were delivered by Rev. J. H. Wilson, Rev. F. Tucker, Mr. John Stabb, and others. Thus the week has gone on; every day there has been a mass of information laid before the Conference, the greatest part of which has been utterly unintelligible to English visitors. The Dutch have had more than their share in their proceedings; but as this is the first time of their connecting themselves with the Alliance, and as they are in their own city, one must not say too much about it.

On the previous Sunday several sermons bearing upon the forthcoming Conference were preached in the English Episcopal Church, the French, Presbyterian, and national churches. The sermon in the morning in the French Church was especially interesting, and attracted an overflowing congregation. The preacher on the occasion was M. Bersier, considered to be the greatest pulpit orator of France. He is about thirty years of age, perhaps, of noble presence, and possessing a voice with such a clear metallic ring in it that its quietest tones were distinctly heard throughout the spacious building. The reverence of the worshippers was profound. As soon as the service was opened by "Let us pray," the whole assembly was hushed into a silence that was almost oppressive, so deep and general was it. Holland is famous for its organs, and the one in the French Church formed no exception to the rule. It was well played, and the psalmody, consisting of German chorals, was exquisitely beautiful. M. Bersier's text was taken from the book of Nehemiah—"Come let us build up the walls of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach." It was pleasant to hear in a strange land that the Church was a company of faithful men, the corner-stone of which was Christ Jesus the Lord. The "walls" of this church, however, viz., the Holy Scriptures, had been fearfully broken down, almost destroyed of late. They had been broken down by false criticism, by science, falsely so called, and through the breach made many had gone out of the church; some to free England, with its independent churches; others to Rome; others alas! alas! to open scepticism. Now, Nehemiah building again the walls of Jerusalem was an example to all earnest Christians in the present day. His example called upon all Christians to be heartily united in healing divisions, that the Church might be no longer a reproach. The grief of Nehemiah as he surveyed the ruined Jerusalem should be our grief as we witnessed the dissensions and weakness of Christendom. As individuals and as churches we should lament our faithlessness. With the example of Nehemiah before us we should learn a spirit of self-sacrifice and be inspired by a spirit of faith to do our work for God as Nehemiah of old did his.

In the evening the inaugural sermon was preached in the *Nieuwe Kerk* by Professor Van Oosterzee. The *Nieuwe Kerk* is a magnificent cathedral, 315 feet long by 210 wide. It contains an immense oak pulpit of most elaborate workmanship, also seventy-five large painted windows. The choir is separated from the nave by means of a grating of massive brass, placed upon a base of black and white marble. Behind the choir is a stately mausoleum, erected in honour of the celebrated Admiral de Ruyter. The hero is here represented lying on a sarcophagus, the head resting on a piece of cannon; in his hand is the staff of command. A sculpture in bas-relief, between two black marble columns, represents a naval combat. *Fame* sounding her trumpet, *Prudence* and *Constancy*, the arms of Holland and the other provinces, together with standards and flags, are cleverly introduced, and combine to give the mausoleum a most imposing appearance. The praises of this "terror of the sea," who cleared the way for the easy navigation of the Dutch along the coasts of the Atlantic, who subdued the insolence of pirates and fought in fifteen regular battles without ever being vanquished, and who did too many notable deeds to be chronicled here, are well sung in a Latin epigraph inscribed in gilded letters. There are other mausoleums, tablets, and monuments well worth describing. The service in the

*Nieuwe Kerk* attracted an immense congregation, and the rush to get in was not unlike that witnessed when Professor Kingsly preached in the nave of Westminster Abbey or Mrs. Spurgeon at the Agricultural Hall. I cannot say much about the reverential behaviour of those attending. They laughed and talked, and wore their hats; but the singing of one or two German chorals could not have been more magnificent. After hearing the sonorous voices of two or three thousand men singing in unison, one can well understand how the old Cathedral at Worms was shaken when the friends of Luther sang their famous "Ein feste berg." Professor Van Oosterzee is a stout, whiskerless, ruddy-faced preacher, wearing a black gown and very broad bands. He has a fine voice, and his pulpit action was perfect. His sermon was delivered with great animation and appeared to interest those of the congregation who could understand it. His text was most happily chosen, being the following from the Acts of the Apostles:—"And from thence we fetched a compass and came to Raegium, and after one day the south wind blew, and we came to Puteoli, where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days, and so we went toward Rome. And from thence when the brethren heard of us they came to meet us as far as Appiforum and the Three Taverns, whom when Paul saw he thanked God and took courage."

Some of the "sectional" meetings of the Conference were of a very interesting character. In one of these the question of the observance of the Lord's day came under review. It was the wish of the British organization of the Evangelical Alliance to speak as decidedly in Amsterdam as in Geneva about the Continental mode of spending the Sabbath. M. Alexandre Lombard, of Geneva, spoke with great earnestness and ability upon the subject. He said he advocated the cause of the Lord's day not merely as a day holy unto the Lord, but from a social point of view. He expressed his hearty desire that the Conference should not separate without something being done to improve the observance of the day on the Continent. He thought committees should be formed in the various towns and countries of the Continent, and referred to what had been done in Neuchatel and other places after the Conference of 1861 at Geneva. He wanted to see an international league established for the purpose of directing general attention to the subject, and of stirring up continental governments to release working men from their seven day's toil. Eventually a resolution was unanimously adopted calling upon the different representatives of different countries to use all their influence upon their return home to bring about a better observance of the Lord's day.

#### CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

On Monday morning the Conference resumed its business, the subject for the day being Christian missions and nationalities. Professor Gees and Pastor Zahn read papers, and were followed by the Rev. W. Fairbrother. He commenced by asking which principle in the missionary work was the most to be recommended—the Baptist principle, which aimed at forming congregations of true believers only, and according to which baptism was administered to those who were considered as truly converted to God; or the principle of so-called national churches? In other words should it be the object in missionary work to bring souls to Christ individually, or should they try to Christianize nations? The speaker said that, viewed simply in relation to the laws of thought and the outlines of the Christian faith, the first of these modes of operation appeared to be the most likely to be successful. He then reviewed some of the principal features of modern Protestant missions. The main feature of the Moravian system was a scheme of Christian colonization, the acquisition of lands as centres of Christian instruction, but the idea of a central church and the purity of its fellowship had ever been maintained with scrupulous care. The success of their missions was an instructive fact in ecclesiastical history. Other Protestant missionaries had adopted another principle. The missionary was the messenger of the churches from the older lands of Christendom and the ambassador of Christ. He might found a Christian settlement, but his occupancy of it, or even the occupancy of his