

## Religious.

## EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

DR. DUFF'S SPEECH.

On the first page of our last issue we gave an outline of the speech of Sir Culling Eardly at the recent meeting of the Evangelical Alliance; on "Religious Freedom on the Continent." We now give some extracts from Dr. Duff's Speech at a meeting called in connection with the Alliance for considering the Missionary enterprise, and giving an interchange of sentiments on the plan and conduct of a future general conference on the subject of Missions. Dr. Duff is a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, and has spent many years as a Missionary in India. We regret that our space will not allow us to publish the whole of his excellent speech. It was delivered in his capacity as Chairman of the meeting, and after having referred to the faint-heartedness that seems to be manifesting itself in some quarters in the cause of Missions, he continued:—

This enterprise has about it all the characteristics of a Divine amplitude and grandeur, compared with which all the mightiest enterprises of earthly monarchs and national associations are as nothing.

It is in reality not only the most venerable of enterprises, but it is the most ancient in its conception and design. It is not only as old as the globe which we inhabit, but it is as old as eternity. God is unchanging. We cannot doubt, with His Word in our hands, that in creation He contemplated our first parents and their descendants wrecked and ruined in a miserable fall, and the raising up of a new world of life, and light, and beauty out of this wreck and ruin of that fall. In time, this Divine purpose came to be gradually unfolded. It was announced in Paradise ere our first parents were banished as outcasts from its consecrated plains; it was onwardly developed through successive ages along a line of patriarchs and prophets till the fulness of time came—slowly, as we would think according to our poor human reckoning, very slowly and very strangely but still working on and developing according to the all-gracious purpose and design of the eternal God. As to its object, dear friends, how little do we try to realise it! God, in His infinite wisdom, permitted apostate spirits to come and disturb this earth, and be the agents and instruments in ruining man; so that instead of exhibiting the image of God which was implanted in man at the creation, what is now presented to the universe of God, in consequence of that fall, is but a multiplied image of the Prince of Darkness. Every soul of man is by nature a mirror reflecting the image of Satan—that is the real Bible truth. Men by nature are like their father, and their father is the Devil. But do we realise the horror of this in the universe of a holy God? Methinks that in the eyes of angels and archangels this must be the most revolting view of our present sinful condition. We may bring this in a simple way home to our own feelings. If we have a faithful likeness of a friend whom we love, how we prize and value it: but if the picture departs widely from the original it becomes hateful to us, and if the departure is so very wide that it amounts to a downright caricature, would we not be ready to break it in pieces, or hide it in a corner? Here, then, is one great object in connexion with this great work of redemption—to rescue these multiplied images of Satan out of his fatal grasp, and transfigure them by an Almighty power, which is in itself creative, into so many multiplied images of the great Creator. Now this is no small work.

In order to accomplish this, sin in its manifold forms and manifestations must be destroyed, and amongst the rest that awful sin of selfishness, against which our beloved friend prayed this day so earnestly—selfishness which creeps into the very bosom even of the Christian Church, and which reigns rampant not in the souls even of professing believers. It is then, that Jehovah needed our aid, but it is because we needed some such work as this to engage us in order through it and the accompanying influence of His Holy Spirit, to lift us up out of the bed and grave of this accursed selfishness; and until we enter into this spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice which is connected with the missionary work, we

shall never know in our own persons what the grandeur and elevation of the Christian character is. Christ comes to us, and says, "Go into all the world. But does He ask us to do what He had not done Himself? He came from heaven into this world of sin and woe. Herein is our weakness. We pray, "O Lord, raise up men who shall go forth into the heathen field;" and thousands thus pray without ever thinking that this may concern themselves, and that for aught they can tell their prayer ought to be answered by their saying, "Here am I; send me." Is there a readiness to act out the prayer? It is wanting exceedingly. Others pray in our churches continually, "Lord, furnish the means by which the heathen shall be converted;" and there may be sitting in those very congregations those who could themselves furnish the means. God may have bestowed His gifts, and then people pray, "Oh, bestow thy gifts that the heathen may be converted;" while there are those bending their knee in prayer who are possessed of the means if they only chose to give them. Yes there are congregations in this land on the members of which God has bestowed prodigious means, incomes of immense extent; and, perhaps, when many of the members lift up their hands in prayer they have, in vain ostentation, displayed upon them more in the form of jewellery or gems, than they ever gave for advancing the cause of Christ in a perishing world. Is not this mockery? We put up prayers that are mockeries, and yet expect answers. There is something utterly wrong and preposterously inconsistent here. Now, the spirit of missions is not anything peculiar to missionaries, but is, or ought to be, the grand characteristic of every Christian soul. It has been a deadly delusion in the Church of Christ to fancy that there is a set of men called out who are to manifest some peculiar spirit which other Christians may be without. We hold this to be the true doctrine that the spirit of missions is the spirit of Christ, and that the spirit of Christ is pre-eminently this—a seeking and saving of the lost. We have in Christ meekness, and gentleness, and every other grace; but we have something more than this. Oh! study His holy life; ponder that phrase, "Went about continually doing good;" He was everlastingly speaking out words of kindness, or doing acts of kindness and benevolence to arrest and arouse. When others slumbered He retired into the solitudes of Judea, went to the mountain tops with locks wet with the dew of heaven, still carrying out His work; for it was His meat and His drink to be unceasingly doing the will of His Father; and the will of His Father, in a high and peculiar sense, is that men should be saved through Him. This, I say, is pre-eminently the spirit of Christ, and we protest in the sight of high heaven that if believers do not manifest at least somewhat of this spirit in kind, they are deceiving themselves, and are not Christians at all. There are degrees of this spirit, and we ought to aim at the highest degree until the time shall come when it shall be laid down as an axiom or aphorism that no man or woman can be a Christian who has not, in kind at least, this spirit. Now, this being the spirit of Christ, let it be remembered that at the very threshold of Christianity Christ lays it down as an indispensable condition of entrance into His kingdom that men should take up His cross. What does that mean? Is it not the cross of self-denial—a readiness to deny one's self. And what is that? To give up one's favourite tastes and predilections, if need be, and these are endlessly varied—o have done, if need be, with all carelessness about this world's interest and with all that it contains—a readiness to manifest all this, and an actual manifestation of it if God, in the course of His Providence calls for it. This is the spirit of self-denial—to be unearthly like, to be Christ-like. But we all make reserves; we are ready to deny ourselves in some one thing, provided we are allowed to keep some other thing. Self-denial to one man, may be no self-denial to another. Look at the poor; they mistake wherein true comfort lies, and to give up the noxious drugs in which they so often infatuatedly indulged would be self-denial to them. Some men—to speak plainly—have an exceeding curiosity about books, antiquities, and the like, and perhaps, all their available means are expended on these things. Ay, but souls are perishing. When the question is, "Shall I gratify my taste for these gilded books and these antique-curiosities, or shall I devote my means to the saving of souls?" Self-denial would say, "Away with the perishable! Let me give to secure what is imperishable." There are others whose taste goes in another direction—the

pride of life, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, called "the trinity of the world, absorb all." Methinks that the Christian Church is at this moment steeped in all the carnal regalements and self-indulgence connected with this awful trinity of the world; stepped—I know not how to express it—saturated therewith! The lust of the eye! God means that the eye should have its own enjoyment, and doubtless there is a time for enjoyment coming; heaven, the place of the redeemed, will have abundance to regale the sight as well as the other senses, in purity. But we are not in heaven now; we are in a lost wrecked, and ruined world; and it is not here that God has promised the Christian his plenary enjoyment in regard to any one taste, or faculty, or power. And so of all other appetences! But now-a-days, in the midst of our highly conventional, artificial civilization, men say, "We want to be like our neighbours." An intense worldliness has thus crept into the Christian Church—a secularity and carnality that is most overwhelming; and the only excuse that can be made is, that we are born and brought up in the midst of it, and scarcely ever turn our eyes round to look at it, or put ourselves outside in such a position that we can gaze upon it with impartiality. Is not the world bent upon sensible pleasures and enjoyments? Is it not bent upon building palaces, having them replenished with sumptuous furniture, and surrounded with stately and gorgeous equipages, and all the pomp and magnificence of earthly magnificence? I speak plainly, because I feel this most intensely. I ask you wherein in these respects do the rich professors of Christianity usually differ from the veriest worldlings, except in a very few rare cases? Now all this is the very opposite of that spirit of Christ which is to deny itself to the uttermost in seeking and saving the lost. One design of Christ, as already indicated, in connection with the redemptive economy is that the Church should hold up the faithful image of what He is; but the Church is, to a great extent, holding up instead that which is an image of Satan, and yet it is called by Christ's name. This is something more dismal than the world itself holding up that image. If then we hold up a base counterfeit or vile caricature of the image of Christ, is it not most criminal? Moreover, what is there in such a false image to allure or confound the world? It is so like the world, that the world, for the most part, is very well pleased with us, and is willing to compromise with us, to make concessions to us, to be "hail fellow, well met," with us, as we are wont familiarly to say, to shake hands, and live comfortably together; whereas, assuredly, if the Church held up the pure and spotless image of Christ, that world would be speedily confounded, as it was confounded in His own immediate presence, and in the presence of His disciples. You cannot hold up a burning image of holiness and self-sacrifice before the world's gaze without driving it to actual rage and madness, or bringing it down prostrate at the foot of the cross. There is no other alternative. Herein I believe is one of the chief causes why the world is not yet the Redeemer's world, instead of being Satan's world.

Look at the energy which the world puts into its enterprises. Project any scheme whatsoever—yes, I will venture to say, if any man of great ingenuity were to propound a scheme by which a machine should make its way to the moon, and showed some plausible method by which it might be brought about, hundreds and thousands would rally round it, no matter how chimerical the idea. More especially, if there be any scheme which offers to give a money return, you will have your millions poured out at once into the treasury of the world. Call for railways, or canals, or steamboats, or anything else—get up a company to dig at the mines or traverse the oceans, for the purposes of lucrative commerce, and millions are at once poured forth, and that by men who profess the name of Christ, and are often in His sanctuary, and partake even of His Sacraments. Yet these men, for the most part, care nothing about a perishing world! Oh! what is this but intense carnal selfishness! What must be the feelings of the angels of God when they look down on our sacramental occasions, and see thousands partaking of the elements that represent the broken body and shed blood of Christ, amongst whom are tens of thousands that never do anything for promoting the cause for which he died, and the great proportion of whom do nothing but what is a mere wretched