THE BISHOP'S CONVOCATION ADDRESS

To the Members of Christ's Body, the Church, in the Missionary District of Puerto Rico, Greeting:—Grace, Mercy and Peace be multiplied upon you.

To-day marks an era of progress in our work. We are assembled in convocation for the first time, to perfect the organization of our forces; not only for the sake of further advance, but also for the sake of carrying out the law and principle of ecclesiastical life in virtue of which we are not amere group of individuals, but a family; not a mere cluster of segregated parishes and missions, having no more cohesion than the dead timbers and fragments of wood that happen to have been piled up or thrown together haphazard; but as "a tree planted by the waterside", wherof each Parish and Mission is a living branch, some larger, some smaller, each made up of individuals who are as the twigs that bear the fruit all deriving their life through the trunk which is the Holy Church, through which we are joined to the Root and Stem of David; and that Root and Stem is Christ. There is this difference between dead timber and the living tree; that the tree "bringeth forth her fruit in due season", as the Psalmist says, and "its leaf shall not wither", as he further observes.

In the Church thus organized every part is interested in every other part. No branch can prosper without adding to the beauty and fruitfulness of the whole tree, no new twig can be added without enlisting the sympathetic interest of all the existing branches. No part can suffer through misfortune or through the lack of vital connection with the Root, without in so far forth enfeebling the whole tree.

In the laws or canons which we shall here adopt, it must be remembered, we are not creating the Church in Puerto Rico; we are not inventing principles for its guidance. We are simply recognizing and declaring the principles which already exist, which have existed from the day...
when first a feeble mission was planted in the town of Ponce, some 35 years ago, by the Mother Church of England; principles which may have lain dormant until there was a sufficient degree of strength in the plant to assert and formulate the existing vitality, but which are the secret of past growth, the essential of future progress.

In the four and a half years since the care of this work was entrusted to me, it has been necessary to do two things and only two, namely:—to nurse the existing missions, and establish new ones. But these two duties now involve an amount of detail which no one man alone can fulfil. The point of progress at which we find ourselves to-day could not have been reached had there not been faithful helpers to whose fidelity I take pleasure in acknowledging my obligation. The three missions which I found here have become ten, in the four years past, with three vigorous Mission schools. The feeble have grown in strength, but this could not have happened had there not been cooperation on the part of many members. For this cooperation, which is an essential principle of the Church's life and growth, I thank God, and ask Him to reward all who have joined therein, not only here in this frontier and colonial possession, but also in the home land, where the hardest part of my duty has lain, in making known to people from one end to the other of the Church's borders, the great need and opportunity open before us here. This has made it necessary that I should absent myself from the post of service to which I have been appointed, and for six months in the year go from parish to parish, and from city to city, asking the supply of your need. The response has been generous, the cooperation has been willing, and the results of the work have now to be reviewed. May God bless and reward all those who have helped me, and have not turned away their faces from the voice of my appeal. By their cooperation, often-times, I know full well, at the cost of a willing sacrifice but a sacrifice still, we have been enabled to do the following necessary things.
Starting out with the declared intention of raising $30,000 for Puerto Rico Equipment Fund, I have succeeded in raising some $28,000 of the amount, and have reason to believe the balance will not be long wanting. This has made it necessary that I should speak and make public and private appeals, send out hundreds of letters, and thousands of circulars, publish many magazine articles, and travel over much territory. I have had no vacation since I came to Puerto Rico in February of 1901, but have made, each summer, more than 100 addresses in the various parishes in the home land.

With the funds thus gathered, every dollar of which has passed through the hands of the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, who has kept a strict account thereof, it being my habit never under any circumstances to accept a fiduciary trust without some such safeguard, the following expenditures have been made:

For the purchase of land and erection of this church building in San Juan, out of a total cost (not including the Sanctuary window nor the furnishings) of some $28,000, the Equipment Fund has supplied, in round figures, some $12,000. The balance came as follows: From Mr. Geo. C. Thomas of Philadelphia, $6,000; from a building fund raised here $2,000, and on my own notes, $4,000. The balance, of $4,000, was advanced by the Board of Missions and has in part been extinguished by contributions for Puerto Rico, not otherwise designated. I believe there is a balance still awaiting that form of extinguishment of some $1,500. Last summer I succeeded in paying from the Equipment Fund $2,000 of my personal loan and $360 interest. Another note for $1,000, on which I borrowed that amount from a generous friend here in San Juan, is being gradually paid by the lender himself; and the remaining $1,000, which was loaned to me by the late Mr. Dumaresq, he left as a legacy to the Parish at his decease.

Of the articles of church furnishing which have been placed here, many of my personal friends in the States have been the donors. The plan of this building, its architecture and details, were the subject of study during the two weary years while we were waiting for a lease to expire on the house which stood here when we bought. I accept the responsibility and the criticisms which this building may involve, it being
due to the Vestry to state that the type of architecture employed was not in accordance with the wishes of the majority, they having consented to its erection under protest and in deference to my wishes.

Thus, to continue the history of the Equipment Fund, were expended toward the cost of the erection of this church about $12,000.

In necessary repairs of All Saints Church, Vieques, and in the purchase of a building that was being erected on land adjacent to the church, about $500.

For the purchase of a lot adjoining Church property in Ponce, which will forever prevent the shutting out of light and ventilation, by making the Church property face on three streets with a park on the south side, the Equipment Fund has supplied $4,000.

In the purchase of land and erection of the Bishop's residence in Rio Piedras, about $7,000.

In the cost of raising the money of the Equipment Fund, I have spent some $1,500.

There is on hand an unexpended balance, deposited with the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, of about $2,500.

With this balance I am in possession of a beginning toward a number of enterprises, reference to which will be made later on.

We have at the present time the following points at which we are holding services, either in the form of Parish organizations, or as Missions: (I try to follow the order of their ages)

1. Ponce, Church of the Holy Trinity. Rev. Wm. Watson, Rector; Re. Leonard Read, Assistant.
2. Vieques, All Saints Church. Rev. J.N. Dean, Minister in Charge


We have three flourishing Mission Schools, or Parish Schools, as follows:

1. In the parish of St. John the Baptist, San Juan. Miss Ana M. Reed, Teacher, assisted by Dolores Quiñones, with an enrollment of 75 children.

2. In the parish of the Holy Trinity, Ponce, Miss Frances Cuddy, Teacher, and Miss Sarah Davidson, Parish Helper, having 50 pupils.

3. At Esperanza. Miss Minnie L. Fordham, Teacher, with an enrollment of 30 children. At this point a night school for adults has also been held the past winter with some 25 pupils.

For the maintenance of the Church's work in Puerto Rico, the Board of Missions makes an appropriation of a little more than $10,000 a year. This appropriation is applicable only to the payment of salaries, the funds of the Board being insufficient for the acquirement of property. This is the reason why it is necessary for the Bishop to go north each year in quest of funds for the equipment and extension of the Church. All the property now held by us in Puerto Rico is vested in the Board of Missions, as Trusted, to hold the same for the use of the Church in Puerto Rico forever.
The funds of the Board of Missions are derived mainly from the contributions of the Parishes, in accordance with a system of apportionment, whereby each Parish is asked to contribute according to an estimate of its ability and willingness. For the first time, this Missionary District is asked this year to come into a share of this privilege, and to make a contribution, from the several Parishes and Missions, of $50. This amount, I see by a recent report of the Board, has nearly all been paid. Among the items of appropriation for the work here, the Board grants to the Bishop a discretionary fund of $400 a year. With this fund various needs of the Missions and Schools have been met. Under the Bishop's house at Río Pedras, I have had what I call an Episcopal carpenter shop. A native carpenter there has made, from designs which I gave him the past winter, some fourteen articles of Church furniture, including altars, lecterns, Prayer desks, etc. The cost has been about seventy dollars, and the value as indicated by catalogue and freight charges something like $200, effecting thus a saving to the Missions and the Bishop's discretionary fund of a considerable sum.

In view of the fact that the Board of Missions is facing a deficiency in its revenues amounting to about $125,000, as well as the fact that those revenues are raised by contributions of Parishes which have their own maintenance to provide for and in view of the further fact that some of the larger Parishes of the Church do not contribute in proportion to their wealth, the bulk of the revenue being received from Parishes of moderate means, it is incumbent on us who enjoy the benefits of their sacrifice, to work along toward a measure of self-support as radially as circumstances will allow. I am happy to believe that this is being done in some of the Missions and Parishes; notably this one, in San Juan; and I would not be thought to ignore it in reminding you that the sooner we cease to be recipients of the bounty of the Church, the sooner will other parts of the field be reached that are quite as needy as we, and that the road that leads to self-support is the road to self-respect.
You will be asked to appoint a Committee, among others, to establish and increase an Endowment Fund for the support of a Bishop. At present your Bishop receives none of his support from Puerto Rico, except as your apportionment, which is $50 this year, enters into the annual expenditures of the Board of Missions, and, in some small fragment, returns to you as a portion of the Board’s annual expenditure of a little over a million dollars for the cause of Missions in all the world. I venture to hope that this Committee will confer with the Treasurer of the Board of Missions and obtain valuable advice as to the best way of helping in the support of the Episcopate in Puerto Rico.

I have during the year visited each of the Parishes and Missions above enumerated, as well as the schools; in some I have made more than one visitation, as will be seen from a perusal of the record of Episcopal Acts, which will be appended to this address, when it is published. At present therefore I will confine myself to the list of Confirmations subsequent to the latest entry in the journal of last year, which was dated August 31, 1904.

**CONFIRMATIONS**

Sept. 18 1904, at Holy Trinity Church, Minneapolis, for the Bishop of Minnesota .................................................. 1
Jan. 26, 1905, at St. Thomas Mission, Ponce .................. 1
Jan. 29, " at St. Mary's Mission, La Carmelita .......... 36
April 2, " at St. John's, San Juan ......................... 12
April 14, " at St. John's, San Juan ...................... 1
May 7, " On board the U.S. Training Ship "Prairie"...13

Total, .......................................................... 64

As the various Missionaries and Teachers are to have an opportunity, together with other workers, to tell of the work entrusted to them, at an appointed time to-morrow, I will not take time now to say more than this, that I know their work and wish the other members to know it too. I know their trials and their sacrifices; their courage, and the difficulties under which they are laboring, and I am sure it will give us all new strength and new hope to hear them, to sympathize with them, and to wish them God-speed.
The Canons of the Church make it the duty of the Bishop to record his Episcopal acts, and it is customary to publish such record in connection with his annual Address. For further details of my work, therefore, I will refer you to the journal, which will be published after the meeting of Convocation.

A resident Bishop having been chosen and consecrated for Cuba, I am relieved of that extremely pleasant addition to my responsibilities, and I ask God to bless the new Bishop of Cuba, and those who labor with him in that most interesting Missionary District.

Turning from this imperfect outline of the past to the prospects of the future, I ask your attention to the following five places, where our Church services will be opened as soon as I can find the men and the means.

(a) On the Military Road, some 7 or 8 miles west of the town of Bayamon, in the barrio of Candelario, where I am offered four acres of land, on condition that I build a church there within one year. I have visited the district and arranged to hold a Mission Service there next Sunday, and shall probably accept the offer.

(b) At Pueblo Viejo, a similar offer has been made and will probably be accepted. I am hoping to go there for a similar service on the following Sunday; that is, May 21. This might be connected with Candelario as one mission.

(c) At Aguas Buenas, an offer of land has been made, with the promise of $50 toward the erection of a church. I hope to be able to accept this also.

(d) At Semil, an hacienda not far from the town of Juana Diaz, an urgent request for the ministrations of the Church has come, and I am hoping to supply the need by making that point a mission in connection with the Mission at Aguirre as soon as I can secure a clergyman for the work at the latter point.

(e) At Hormigueros, Mr. Bland thinks of establishing the Church as soon as his work at Mayaguez will allow.
Besides these points of growth in the numbers of our Missions, I am negotiating for the enlargement of the church at Vieques to double its present capacity. This work I expect will be done at once. Under Mr. Bean, the Minister in Charge for the past 26 years, much faithful service has been rendered at Vieques, which it is a pleasure to recognize. But Mr. Bean having entirely lost the use of his eyes, I have obtained for him a pension which will enable him to retire; the Rev. Mr. Leonard Read taking up the work at that point as soon as I can ordain him to the Priesthood, he having been ordained Deacon by me on the 2d of last February, in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Ponce.

At La Carmelita, steps have been taken, and land secured on a 99 years' lease, for the erection of a suitable church, and the laying out of a burial ground, it being necessary now to carry the dead from that place to Ponce, a distance of some 15 miles, mostly by mountain trail where no wheeled vehicle can pass, I have made an appropriation of $100 toward this church building, and am expecting to help along the work as fast as means at my disposal will permit, until the whole is completed. Thanks are due to Mr. Van Leenhof and to the Company of La Carmelita, and are gratefully rendered.

On the lot recently acquired by purchase, in Ponce, I am expecting, with the cooperation of the Rector, Wardens and Vestrymen, to begin the erection of a suitable School building and Teacher's house, as soon as plans can be perfected. The Church building there is sadly out of repair, and I am hoping soon to get the funds necessary for the erection of a new one.

But the work which seems most conspicuous in its need is the Church Hospital. In the outskirts of the city of Ponce, we have bought four cuerdas of land, high and well adapted for the purpose where it is contemplated to erect the Memorial Hospital of St. Luke, the Beloved Physician, in memory of Dr. Charles Henry Thomas. Thomas was my room-mate at Yale College, many years ago, and in my senior year, when I fell sick with typhoid fever, he put aside all other duties, and gave himself to the care and nursing of his sick friend and class-mate. It is due to his care and attention, together with the ministrations of other well-remembered friends, that I regained my health, under the providence of Almighty God, and it is only right that I should do what I may be able to perpetuate his memory, by continuing the work of healing the sick, to which he gave the best years of his noble, self-sacrificing life. Of the need of good hospitals in
that part of Puerto Rico I need not speak at length. It is planned to make this a hospital of up-to-date features, whose benefits shall be bestowed on those who need them, regardless of race, creed, political or any other discrimination. The plan involves probably some years of work and the raising of one hundred thousand dollars, of which half is for the buildings and equipment, and the other half for an endowment, the income to be expended in maintenance of the hospital. It is expected that the revenue arising from the fees paid by such as are able to pay, will be sufficient to meet the balance of the expenses. A Committee has been formed, consisting of the Bishop, the Rector of Holy Trinity Church, the Physician (Dr. Carl Vogel), and the two Wardens of the said Parish, who are to serve as the local board of Trustees. The title to the land is already vested in the Board of Missions.

Among the things that will occupy your attention is what is known as the Thank Offering of the Men of the Church for the 300 years of Church Life in this western hemisphere. This offering will be made at the next General Convocation, which is to be held at Richmond, Va., in October, 1907. The Women of the Church made their triennial offering for Missions last October, and it reached the sum of $150,000. They are in the habit of making such offerings every three years, although this is the largest amount they have ever given. It is devoted to the training and support of women workers in the Mission field. The Children of the Church make and offering of more than $100,000 each Lent. Last year their Lenten offering, for general missionary work, amounted to $117,000. The returns for this year are not all in.

Now, granting that what the women and children give is supplied by the men, (which is not true entirely, but has some truth in it,) the time seems to have come for the men of the Church also to be up and doing something on their own part and of their own free-will. It is hoped that the offering at Richmond will reach the sum of $500,000; and there is nothing startling in that idea, when once it is remembered how abundantly money is spent by the sons of the Church for business enterprises or for pleasure. And in case such a hope should be realized, perhaps it may be made possible for the Treasury of the Board of Missions to so supply the needs of the various parts of the Missions field, that the Missionary Bishops will not be obliged to leave their proper duty and become financial agents for the solicitation to the funds where with to meet the requirements of the advancing frontier line of the Kingdom of God.
Under the provisions of the General Canons of the Church, I selected, when I became bishop, the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of West Virginia to be and continue our law, as far as applicable, until the House of Bishops otherwise order. A new draft of a Constitution and Canons has now been prepared by me, which you will be asked to consider, amend and adopt, subject to the approval of the House of Bishops which meets in New York, June 9. I will not present occupy your attention with any discussion of these proposed enactments, excepting to say that since they will provide for the appointment or election of various customary officers and committees, I trust that those who find themselves thus called to new service will feel that the call is not of men but of God, and that each will honor his office by an earnest and faithful discharge of its responsibilities. The Church in Puerto Rico has enjoyed the cooperation, as I have said, of many fellow-workers, whereby it has advanced, not rapidly perhaps but surely and safely. In extending that cooperation we shall multiply our strength. This is not a mere "clergyman's church". It requires the service of every member. There is no obligation resting on a minister to be at his post in the chancel which does not require the presence of every man, woman and child in the pew, on the committee, in the guild, at the auxiliary, or wherever the duty may be.

To the end that you may be intelligent workers in the Master's Vineyard, I do earnestly and affectionately recommend that every family subscribe for and read some Church paper. The Spirit of Missions, at $1 a year, is within the reach of all. The Churchman, Church Standard, Living Church, Southern Churchman,—some one of these excellent publications should be in every house, if you are to know anything whatever of the progress and affairs of the progress and affairs of the Kingdom of God. I have been pained to find how many of our Church people neglect this means of informing themselves in regard to the subject of deepest importance. In a Baptist, Methodist or Presbyterian family, a denominational paper seems to be regarded as a necessity, and the
necessity is recognized and met; but in many of our Church families it is not so. It seems to be assumed that accurate Church information may be evolved from the inner consciousness or absorbed from the secular newspaper. This is an egregious mistake, resulting in a startling amount of misinformation or absolute ignorance touching things of most vital interest and importance, on the part of people otherwise well informed.

The time has come when it is a disgrace to a Churchman to know about the Japanese general and not even to know the name of the American Bishop in Japan; to know about the wheat product of Dakota and be ignorant of Bishops Hare and Mann; to be posted concerning the gold mines of Alaska and devoid of information touching the heroism of Bishop Roe; to know of the acts of Congress and not to know of the Chicago-Lambeth Declaration of the Principles of Christian Unity. Inform yourselves, be zealous with a zeal that is "according to knowledge." Thus will your service reduplicate its efficiency and your fighting be not as the fighting of "one that beateth the air".

Should this lead to a deeper study of the Church's history, her doctrines, discipline and worship, so much the better.

Should it lead to the discovery that theology is not a dead subject, and worship no lost art, should it reveal the fact that religious thought is keeping pace with the advancing progress of science, that also would contribute to the sum total of your happiness, since it might make you aware that the limited apprehension of divine truth which belonged to a former and more limited age has been outgrown, and that there is a larger grasp of the beauty and truth and power of the ancient gospel in the minds of thinking and reading Christians today than ever existed before.

The truth has not changed in religion any more than in science. But men have climbed to higher altitudes, and their vision is wider and clearer thereby. Narrow and bigoted misconceptions have been largely abandoned. We live in a time of freer ventilation. It is the duty of a well-informed Christian to know and rejoice in this.
As you take up the discussions of this Convocation, and address yourselves to its varied work, may the counsels of fraternity, wisdom and love prevail. And may God's Holy Spirit be with us now and always.

James H. Van Buren.

San Juan, P.R.,

May 9, 1905.
EPISCOPAL ACTS: from Sept. 1, 1904

Sept. 4, 14th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. A.M., Celebrated Holy Communion and preached at All Saints Church, Great Neck, L.I. Evg., Officiated same.

" 11, 15th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. A.M., Preached at St. John's Church, Washington, D.C. Aft., Preached at open air service, Cathedral Grounds.

" 12, Mon., P.M. Marriage, St. John's Church, Washington, D.C.

" 18, 16th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. Minneapolis, Minn. Preached and made addresses five times in various parishes.

" 18, Evg., Confirmed one person for Bishop Edsall, at Holy Trinity Church, Minneapolis, Minn.

" 19, Mon., Evg., Preached at All Saints' Church, Northfield, Minn.

" 20, Tues., A.M., Addressed the Seabury Divinity School, at Faribault, Minn. Evg., Addressed the Church Club at Minneapolis, Minn.

" 21, Wed., A.M. Addressed the Diocesan Branch Woman's Auxiliary, at Gethsemane Church, Minneapolis. Evg., Address at Ascension Church, Stillwater, Minn.

" 22, Thurs., A.M. Addressed the Sunday School Institute at the Pro-Cathedral, Minneapolis. Evg., Address, at St. Paul's Church, Winona, Minn.

" 23, Fri., A.M. Addressed the High School at Winona, Minn. Evg., Address at Christ Church, Red Wing, Minn.

" 25, 17th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. A.M., Preached at Church of St. John the Ev., St. Paul, Minn. Evg., Christ Church, same, preached.

" 29, Thurs., Aft., Addressed Woman's Auxiliary at St. James Church, Downingtown, Pa.

3, Mon., Aft. Addressed the Clerical Club at Providence, R.I. Evg., Addressed Woman's Auxiliary at St. John's Church, Providence, R.I.

5, Wed. Attended opening service of General Convention, at Trinity Church, Boston, Mass.

5-24, In daily attendance on Gen. Convention, Boston.

9,19th SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. A.M., Preached at All Saint's Church, Brookline, Mass. Evg., Preached at St. James' Church, West Somerville, Mass.