

ARTICLE VII.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN PRUSSIAN HIGH SCHOOLS¹

BY PROF. HUGH M. SCOTT, CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE general scope of the following paper may be gathered from the questions proposed on behalf of this Association. They are :

1. "What provision does the Prussian government make for religious and moral instruction and influence in its system of state education ?
2. "What denominations exist in Germany; and how does the government manage to secure their good will and co-operation in educational matters ?
3. "Since there is so much thorough Christian instruction given in Germany, how does it happen that there is so much scepticism there ?
4. "Can the Prussian plan of Christian education be adopted in the United States ? What changes should be made in it to adapt it to our American system ? Or is it impossible to do so ?"

In attempting to give a sketch of the system of religious teaching in Prussian schools, it should be remarked at the outset that a fundamental principle running throughout it, as every German school system, is an emphatic conviction that the nation is Christian in instincts, in history, and in aims; and that therefore no plan of instruction is complete which does not include the thorough teaching of Christian doctrine and morals.

In 1870 Von Mühler, minister of public instruction, said :² "The direction of the educational system in all its branches belongs to the state. That is a principle which has been rooted for more than a hundred years in our public life. But we understand by the state not an abstract legal idea, but a living complex of all the intellectual and material forces and activities which belong to the nation, to make them serviceable to a common end, the good of the individual and the whole. The state can therefore least of all in the matter of education neglect those living, intellectual forces which are of such far-reaching importance in the nation. Particularly in reference to religion, and the church which is called to foster religion, can it not so act. An attempt to dissolve the intimate union between culture and religion, between school and church among our people—a union of more than a thousand years, growth—would be an impossibility. It was proposed to the National Assembly of 1848 with a view to an absolute separation between church

¹ A paper read before the Western College Association at Grinnell, Iowa, Dec. 27, 1882.

² Wiese, *Höheres Schulwesen*, ii. p. 25.

and state, but dropped because of the opposition manifested throughout the country. What was true then is still more emphatically true to-day. We can say with all certainty, our German people will have their schools be Christian and remain Christian. Our constitution follows this principle. It determines that religious instruction shall not be given apart from the schools, but in the schools; and that the churches and religious societies shall have a leading influence in giving such instruction. It desires to have confessional distinctions as far as possible regarded in the public schools. In Article XV. it guarantees to the churches and religious societies expressly all their institutions, endowments, and funds devoted to education, and determines that in all public arrangements of the state — in the school as elsewhere — which have to do with the exercise of religion, the Christian religion shall be regarded as the basis. We regard religious instruction as an integral part of the sum total of school instruction; we assure the church authorities and leaders of religious societies their proper influence. The training of teachers is not to be separated from connection with the church and religious culture."

Of the three classes into which Prussian educational institutions may be divided, viz. the common school, the high school, and the university, the high school will more properly illustrate the information sought by such an association as this. In the primary schools, usually having three classes, elementary religious instruction is given by the ordinary teachers, preparatory to and in harmony with the more advanced curriculum. The university, on the other hand, need not occupy our attention, for it does not pretend to give religious instruction apart from professional theology. The certificate of "ripeness" with which every young man enters the university includes religion, and marks the completion of the religious instruction which the state provides for every educated citizen. In the high schools, then, the Prussian system of teaching religion finds its most important field. Of such schools four kinds are distinguished:

1. The higher citizen schools (Höhere Bürgerschulen), of which there were in 1874 ninety. These include all ordinary subjects and modern languages, but not Latin and Greek. Schools of this sort exist also for girls, but by no means in sufficient number, so that many private schools supplement them.

2. Realschulen, or literary academies, of which there were in 1874 ninety-seven. Here Latin is added to the studies, and prominence given to the natural sciences. These two classes of high schools, forming essentially but one class, are especially intended for those who do not intend to follow a learned profession, and for business men.

3. The pro-gymnasia. These are just gymnasia without the highest class (I.), and are preparatory to the other. They numbered thirty-four in 1874.

4. The high school *par excellence*, the gymnasium, or regular classical academy, which is the gateway to the university and all higher learning. These number two hundred and thirty.

Besides these, there are about twenty-five Protestant academies and homes for students, and nine Roman Catholic seminaries of a similar sort.¹ These, as much as the others, are under government inspection; for not even private schools in Germany can employ teachers who have not passed the state examination, or occupy buildings which the government authority has not approved. They have much more of a home character than the more public institutions. The students live in the *Alumnat*, or *Convik*, as it is frequently called, and receive often free, or partly free, board and tuition. In these boarding colleges, as in similar denominational institutions in Britain and America, great care is taken to cultivate the religious life; and in some instances especial provision is made for those who desire to study theology. In some cases they offer simply a Christian home, especially to orphans or boys far from their own homes, with oversight of studies which are prosecuted at some neighboring gymnasium. In others they give a complete high-school training in connection with special attention to religious culture. About three thousand boys attend the Protestant and about four hundred the Roman Catholic institutions of this nature in Prussia.

But to return to the gymnasium. Here boys are expected to enter about their tenth year, after having spent three years in the primary school. The gymnasium has six classes and at least nine teachers. The course extends usually over nine years, and includes religion, the German, Latin, Greek, and French languages, history and geography, mathematics and physics, science of nature, drawing and writing; occupying in all thirty hours a week. Extra hours are added for Hebrew, music, and gymnastics.

Candidates to teach, who must have taken a gymnasium² and university course, may apply for the *facultas docendi* in any of four departments; viz. in the philologico-historic, the mathematico-scientific, in that of religion and Hebrew, or modern languages. In 1838 religion and Hebrew were made a department, but religious teachers must also be capable of teaching at least the middle classes in some other subjects. Religion is regarded as one of the regular studies of the course, and occupies the place of honor at the top of the list. Since 1824 all teachers must pass an examination in religious knowledge; but the teacher of religion must pass a special examination for his work, just as the Greek teacher for his department; and in all cases before the same board of university examiners. Religious instruction is usually given by three teachers in the gymnasium, each of them having clearly defined duties, and each being directed as to what he is to teach and how he is to impart it. Teachers for the highest classes must stand an examination on the con-

¹ Cf. in general the sections in Wiese, *Höheres Schulwesen*, Vols. i.-iii. 1864—1874; also his *Verordnungen und Gesetze*, 1875.

² Teachers for *Realschulen*, however, may now go from *Realschulen* to the university.

tents of the Bible and their connection, on Old and New Testament introduction, the fundamental doctrines of faith and morals, church history, New Testament Greek, and Hebrew.

Seminaries (i.e. classes under the familiar direction of a professor) for special training and practice in certain branches, are connected with most universities and many gymnasia. Among these are seminaries especially intended to train well qualified persons for the work of teaching. A certain number of picked men, usually about six, are here put under the care of an experienced educationist, who leads them into the theory and practice of instruction. Such brilliant students receive bursaries of about one hundred and fifty dollars a year, and are usually appointed in time to prominent positions. A seminary in Magdeburg receives such students to train for religious teachers in high schools. It provides for six at a time, usually young men who had finished their theological studies with distinction, and who decide to teach, pays their expenses, and aims at producing thoroughly qualified religious instructors. It may be remarked that theological students hear a course of lectures at the university on *Katechetik*, and learn practically in the public schools under the eyes of their professor and fellow students how to give instruction for confirmation. This is worthy of notice; for the qualification to teach religion is acquired seldomer than formerly by candidates for teacher, so that in many cases the local clergy must undertake that duty by single hours in school. Of five hundred Protestant teachers licensed in 1873 forty-five passed in Hebrew and religion, i.e. to teach them; of one hundred and fifty-seven Roman Catholic but two passed in these subjects; and of six Jewish none. In 1872 there were one hundred and twenty-three Protestant and one hundred and five Roman Catholic clergymen teaching religion in schools. In 1873 of six thousand one hundred and eighty-five teachers in Prussian high schools there were two hundred and sixty-one drawn from the local clergy to give religious instruction.

The teacher of religion must teach a year or more on probation, like all other teachers. Like all others he must also on assuming office take a solemn oath of loyalty to king and country and of faithfulness to his duty as instructor. Temporary teachers pledge themselves by publicly giving their hand.

The course of religious instruction to be pursued in an average gymnasium, such a course being endorsed by the minister of public instruction, and not to be changed, occupies three hours a week in the lower (VI. to V.), and two hours a week in the upper classes (IV. to I.), and is as follows¹ — the first hour in the morning being devoted to religion:

In the sixth class (the lowest), Bible narratives from the Old Testament to the times of the kings, taught from a book of Bible stories. Before

¹ *Wiese, Verordnungen und Gesetze für die höheren Schulen in Preussen, 1875, p. 317 f.*

the chief festivals the proper account from the New Testament. The first part of the catechism with Luther's explanations learned by heart; the second and third parts being committed to memory without the explanation. In understanding with the other teachers a certain selection of texts and hymns is given to be memorized.

In the fifth class, New Testament narrative is to be learned in the same way, and the general division and order of the books of the Bible. The catechism is reviewed, and the second part with Luther's explanation committed. Hymns are reviewed, and some new ones learned. The progress of the church year is to be always indicated, and the significance and importance of such festivals as that of the Reformation pointed out.

In the fourth class prominent parts of the Old and New Testament are read, especially selections from the Old Testament which give the connected history of Israel; also the most important portions of the Apocrypha. In the New Testament selections are made from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and from the Acts. Also the geography of Palestine is studied. The catechism is reviewed, and the third part learned with Luther's explanation and proof-texts. The fourth and fifth parts are to be committed. Hymns reviewed, and new ones learned. As occasion offers the pupils are to be taught the meaning of church usages.

In the third class the Messianic and poetic parts of the Old Testament are read, as Psalms and selections from the Book of Job. In the New Testament the life of Jesus is studied synoptically, also the Sermon on the Mount, and the Parables. Remarks on Old and New Testament introduction begun in the lower class are continued. The catechism, hymns, and texts are reviewed, and some Psalms and hymns added. Then narratives from church history and lives of leading hymn writers. Especially studied is the Apostolic history with reference to the Acts and Epistles.

In the lower division of the second class the Scripture reading is continued with particular reference to the growth of God's kingdom in the Old and New Testaments. Typical passages in the Old Testament are especially noticed. In the New Testament the Epistles to the Ephesians and Philippians, the Epistle of James, 1 John, and 1 Peter are read. The catechism, hymns, Psalms, and texts are reviewed, and church history continued. In the higher division of this class 1 Timothy is read, with other portions of the New Testament, and now the Greek Text is used. Important passages, also the Lord's prayer, are to be committed to memory in Greek. Psalms, hymns, and texts are to be reviewed. Church history is now learned in general outline, with the study of the first four centuries more in detail. The history of the Reformation is to be told, and the time of Spener, Franke, and missions to be familiar. The history of dogma is to be mentioned, but not dwelt upon. The relation of Judaism to Christianity, also the connection of the Oriental, Greek, and Roman religions with Christianity is to be pointed out.

The first class is to study the Gospel of John, the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and the chief sections from 1 Corinthians and the Epistle to the Hebrews. The fundamental doctrines of faith and morals are to be taught in their connection; also an outline of creeds. The Augustana is to be read, and doctrines differing from it referred to. Apologetic teaching is to be here emphasized. All proof texts, difficult passages, etc. in the two upper classes are to be studied in the light of the Greek original. Review continued.

A similar course, *mutatis mutandis*, is followed in the Roman Catholic religious teaching.

Such is an outline of the religious instruction in the Prussian gymnasium. A like curriculum with slight modifications is followed in the other high schools.

This teaching is accompanied, at all events in form, by proper devotional exercises. In most evangelical schools public worship, consisting of singing, Scripture reading, and prayer, takes place with the whole school every morning. Each hour's work in the forenoon is to be begun with prayer, as well as the hours of special religious instruction. The school closes on Saturday at noon, usually with devotional exercises, including a short address by the principal. Public occasions, such as the installation of new teachers, the graduation of pupils, examinations, etc., are to be opened with acts of worship. National anniversaries, e.g. the birthday of the emperor, the victory at Sedan, etc., are commemorated by religious and patriotic services in the high schools. Teachers are instructed, as far as possible, to induce their pupils to attend public worship in church, and if practicable accompany the boys thither; also at the proper time to turn their thoughts toward the table of the Lord. In the words of a government circular, "it is the aim of the religious instruction in schools, in connection with the catechumen and confirmation teaching, to help lead the youth to a living knowledge of their belonging to the kingdom of God on earth, and to evangelical church fellowship in it, and to stimulate the will and power in them to take part in the labor and blessings of such a fellowship."

The school and the church being both national institutions, the instruction of the one accommodates itself to that of the other. Accordingly the gymnasium (order of 1860) is instructed to leave two hours a week, usually eleven to twelve A.M., free for such students as may be in the pastor's communicants' classes preparing for confirmation. In the four weeks just preceding confirmation, if necessary, the school-work done at home is to be lightened. The youth have thus two distinct courses of instruction, from their teachers and from their pastors, and both prescribed by law. They run parallel until about the third class, when the boys are confirmed; after which the gymnasium teaching occupies the field almost entirely.

In such religious teaching of course the confessional element presents itself, and must be recognized.¹ Prussia has not yet elaborated a complete school constitution, neither is there any law enjoining confessional schools; yet as a matter of fact and history every high school as a rule is expected to have a distinct confessional character. As, however, the denominational differences in Germany are few and distinct, this question is not so perplexing as elsewhere. Prussian schools arose in connection with the church; and when the state claimed them and took them under its control it but slightly modified the religious basis on which they were founded; the tradition and usage of the school remained. Although latterly, as we shall see, especially in the case of newly founded gymnasia, this system has been somewhat relaxed; still, in the appointment of a rector of a high school, it is a *sine qua non* that he should be a man of pronounced religious and ecclesiastical principles. The Prussian authorities would not appoint a professed unbeliever to any prominent post as an educationist.

For purposes of religious instruction high schools are divided into four classes; viz. Evangelical (i.e. Protestant), Roman Catholic, Jewish, and mixed, i.e. where different confessions attend, and where there are both Protestant and Roman Catholic, and, though rarely, Jewish teachers, and the rector is chosen according to the prevailing character of the school. Of these there were in 1866 two hundred and thirteen Protestant, fifty-six Roman Catholic, and twenty simultaneous schools. In 1874 the whole number of such high schools was four hundred and thirty-eight.

In the evangelical schools the Heidelberg as well as Luther's Catechism may be used. In mixed schools the general devotional exercises are to follow the predominant character of the school, but the minority may receive their religious instruction from teachers of their own faith. The same principle applies in the case of Jewish boys,² who either omit the religious teaching in school or, if in sufficient numbers, have sometimes a religious teacher of their own. Under Falk, minister of public instruction from 1872 to 1880, and since, Jewish religious teachers have been allowed a salary by government, and rabbis have been recognized as such teachers. In some schools Jewish religious instruction is obligatory for those who cannot show a satisfactory substitute. The state thus declares by word and deed that every child shall receive some kind of religious education.³

In the bitter ten years' conflict between Prussia and the papacy the schools became involved. The Roman Catholics refused in 1872 to have their children taught by those who rejected the dogma of papal infallibility. Minister Falk then issued an order permitting children of such

¹ Wiese, *Höheres Schulwesen*, i. p. 37 f.; ii. p. 19 f.; *Verord. u. Ges.*, pp. 24, 64 f.

² Wiese, *Höheres Schulwesen*, iii. p. 20, and *Verord. u. Ges.* p. 25.

³ Cf. order of 1856, *Verord. u. Ges.*, p. 166.

parents to receive instruction at home, on condition (1) that they request the school authorities to give a dispensation, stating the name of the teacher of religion whom they will substitute; (2) that the school authorities are satisfied with the substitute, and the students so taught pass with the rest the examination in religion on leaving school; and (3) that the parents in question have formally left the established church. This last condition was added in reference to a minute issued in 1875, extending this liberty to all for whose creed the school provided no instruction.

As the war went on the Jesuits and the other teaching orders were either expelled from Prussia or dissolved. Their schools were closed, and many of the seminaries for poor students and theological boarding colleges either crippled or terrified into inactivity. The course of instruction to be followed, and how it was followed, were carefully watched in Roman Catholic teaching in the public schools. The aim of Dr. Falk during the Kulturkampf was to bring Roman Catholic education, lay and clerical, under direct state control, and to foster the free-thinking element in Protestant teaching. To effect this he encouraged the establishment of simultaneous schools and the principle of parity, i.e. that the question of religion was not to be raised in the case of teachers of general studies.

In Breslau the school-buildings stood closed for two years (1870-72) because the minister would not allow positions to teachers who were neither Protestants nor Roman Catholics. Falk yielded the point, and, to illustrate the principle, one Jewish teacher was appointed. In 1868 a measure passed the Prussian parliament omitting thenceforth the designation Evangelical or Catholic in founding new gymnasia. In some cases, however, the confessional basis has been laid anew; e.g. in Wongrowitz (1872) and Brilon which are strictly Roman Catholic, and in Gütersloh and Westphalia, which are evangelical, and were started because of the rationalistic teachings in the gymnasia. These institutions are recognized by the state, but the government refuses to grant them aid, at least the last two. Only a formal statute in the foundation of a school is to be recognized as giving it a confessional character. A few evangelical schools changed their statutes in the interests of parity (parity usually meant parity between Protestants and Roman Catholics). Others, while preserving the general character of the school, chose teachers according to the number of children of different creeds. And so this liberalizing tendency under Falk which left old Catholic teachers to teach the ultramontanes and rationalistic teachers to instruct the orthodox, went on embittering earnest men in both communions, and bringing the majority in the Prussian church at last into hearty sympathy with the Roman Catholics in their battle against military rule in school and church.

The end soon came. In 1880 Falk fell before the cry of a thousand Roman Catholic parishes without priests, and the denunciations of even court preachers, who declared that his teachers were forgetting the "Fear

God" in their sceptical "Honor the king." The wounds of the conflict are being healed, and with slight modifications the old system seems likely to be continued.

We turn now for a moment to the influence of the church upon the school in Prussia.¹

The only direct and legal right of control and counsel which the church possesses is that exercised through the general superintendent or presiding clergyman of each province; a right which has been strongly opposed of late by a party seeking the separation of church and state. These superintendents, who are directly responsible only to the minister of public instruction, may visit the schools when and how they please, and are expected to overtake them all at least within from four to six years. They may send other clergymen in their place. Reports of such visitation are to be made about every third year. After each visitation the superintendent may hold a conference with the rector and teachers, and point out anything deficient in religious instruction. He can, however, only recommend; changes are made only by the regular school authorities. At most he can but complain to the provincial board of education; hence Professor Christlieb calls it² a "a very weak and insufficient guarantee that religious instruction should be given in a way which is not entirely contrary to the creed of the church."

In the case of the Roman Catholic church the influence exerted upon religious teaching has been stronger and more direct. The bishops have the same rights of visitation as Protestant superintendents. A greater part of their teaching is done, even in the schools, by clergymen. They are not in such close connection with the state, and so maintain more liberty in the matter and manner of their instruction. Added to which the larger number of their separate and more or less private schools has increased the influence of the church. Before the Kulturkampf, into which the dogma of infallibility caused Bismark and Falk, perhaps unwisely, to plunge the nation, the Prussian Roman Catholics were taught harmoniously with Protestants in the public schools. All children received religious instruction from their own teachers; and such a sight of peace and quietness provoked the Roman Catholics of South Germany to say of their brethren in the north that they were first Prussians, second Germans, and only third Roman Catholics.³

In this connection it may be proper to say a word on the denominations in Prussia and their general relation to the schools. As is well known, the so-called Evangelical or united church, of which the king is *summus episcopus*, is the established church of the land. Starting from it, the census of 1880⁴ arranges the population according to religion under five

¹ Wiese, *Höheres Schulwesen*, i. p. 12.

² Extract from a private letter.

³ Quoted in Baring-Gould's *Germany Present and Past*, p. 300.

⁴ Results given in *Deutsch-Evangelische Blätter*, 1882, Hft. iii.

classes: (1) Evangelical, which is made to include Lutherans and Reformed, Separate Lutherans, Old Lutherans, Mennonites, and Moravian Brethren; (2) Catholics, including the Old Catholics; (3) Jews; (4) Dissenters, as Methodists, Baptists, Irvingites, etc.; (5) those who profess no religion. In 1871 the whole population of Prussia was 24,643,941; of whom 16,019,587 were Evangelical, 8,267,968 Catholic, 325,594 Jews, 26,408 (?) Dissenters, and 4,389 of no religion. In 1880 of a whole population of 27,278,911, 17,645,462 were Evangelical, 9,205,139 Catholic, 363,970 Jews, 42,515 Dissenters, and 22,000 of no religion,—a remarkable growth apparently of dissent and no religion. Less than half a million are outside the Evangelical and Roman Catholic churches; of whom when the Jews are subtracted but 66,000 remain, one third of whom are religionless and the rest split into a dozen sects. The largest Protestant body outside the established church is the Old Lutheran, which numbers about 50,000, including children. They have no separate schools so far as I can learn. The Moravians, however, have their own high schools, and also a theological seminary; so that their students for the ministry do not need to attend the state institutions. The other sects, being very small and mostly of foreign origin, fall in with the state system of religious teaching, or supplement it by Sabbath-schools of their own.

Both the great churches in Prussia are ever ready to aid indirectly in the religious instruction in schools. The organist of the village church is almost invariably one of the teachers, and trains a choir of his own schoolboys to lead the singing. He accompanies the minister to weddings and to funerals, and in his absence sometimes conducts religious service. Historically the church sexton has been a schoolmaster. The pastor is required by law to give a course of religious instruction to those about to be confirmed. To do this satisfactorily he is led to put himself in communication with the religious teacher in the school. All points affecting religious instruction in the school are thus actively canvassed by the church. At the sixth annual meeting of the Rhine teachers of religion in high schools, held in June 1881, two general superintendents were present, a pastor led the discussion on the teaching of church history, and on the difficult question of catechisms clergymen and laity agreed that in each place uniformity between church and school should prevail.¹

In some parts of Germany, e.g. Bavaria, religious instruction in schools is given by the regular clergy. In Prussia this has been discouraged under Falk, though quite a large number must still be employed. Should any temporary vacancy occur in the religious teaching of a high school the authorities are empowered to fill it for the time with a pastor. The appointment of the middle and lower teachers in high schools is in the hands of the magistracy; and in some cases, e.g. in Elberfeld, the church

¹ Cf. the report given in *Deutsch-Evangelische Blätter*, 1882, Hft. v.

has a share in this patronage, and votes in the choice of teachers. Where a high school has a board of directors the leading clergyman of the place is usually one of its members. The church authorities have also a decisive voice in choosing religious books for school use. It might be added that in the numerous private academies, especially for girls,¹ clergymen not unfrequently teach religion in the higher classes.

What, then, is the general impression one receives on a review of religious education in Prussia? The regulations of 1826 still in force aim at "not a mere morality built on airy foundations, but an inner conviction resting on Jesus Christ." But these orders fell gradually into forgetfulness. In 1838 students of theology left the gymnasias so ignorant of Scripture that they could be put to shame by children, and it was directed that boys should not be admitted from school to confirmation classes who did not know the five chief sections of Luther's Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the chief contents of the books of the Bible, and the most familiar hymns. In 1851 the philological conference in Erlangen declared Christian doctrine the heart of gymnasium instruction. In 1855 complaints were heard that the religious instruction was too technical, and that the schools taught theology rather than religion. To help this, systematic collections of proof-texts were published to be memorized. In 1858 government received favorable reports of the religious teaching in high schools. And then the cold air of rationalism became more and more felt in the gymnasias. Especially under Falk many teachers came in who regard religion as a moral department of state — it is a mere accident that they teach Christianity and not Buddhism — in whose hands, to quote Christlieb,² "heathen classics and natural science are exalted, the Christian belief constantly pulled down, or even ridiculed in the eyes of the pupils of the gymnasiums."

Some of the weak points, then, in religious teaching in Prussian high schools seem to be: (1) In not giving the student clear and connected views of Christian doctrine. His head is filled with a mass of hymns and texts and bits of history and archaeology and lists of kings and various readings, etc., with a vague idea that all rests on the Bible and the church. A few critical remarks undermining the Bible and laughing at the church are apt to shipwreck his faith.³ (2) The teaching is not applied practically to the lives and hearts of students. Such themes as depravity, repentance, faith, and a life of holiness are left to the pastor, and so too often the point of all true religious instruction is lost. (3) It does not foster sufficiently individuality and manly independence among the boys. It is a principle in German education that the pupil is to be as little as possible alone. Even in the play-ground or on excursions to the country he is marched in military order by a teacher, who gives him the scientific

¹ Only very young boys are permitted to attend private schools.

² Private Letter.

³ Höheres Schulwesen, iii. p. 44.

name of the tree he climbs or the flower he gathers. An English boy receives half his moral culture in the play-ground, where his feelings of pluck and fair play and respect for the scruples of another boy are strengthened. The German school may be said to have no play-ground¹ either without or within the building. Religious teaching has no chance to be tried in boat-clubs, or at cricket, or races and matches; the student seems too often sacrificed to a kind of military system. (4) But the great objection urged by earnest Christians in Germany is the frequent prevalence of infidel teaching in the schools. Hitherto no sufficient protection has been found against men who may use their position as religious teachers to undermine all that good men hold sacred.

The prevalence of scepticism in Germany and its causes form too wide a topic to be even outlined in this paper. It is evident from what has been said that the high schools have been both effect and cause of the spread of unbelief. When English deism and French infidelity reached Germany the rationalism which they bred turned some men out of theology and others aside from theology. Many of both classes found a place of labor in the gymnasia, where, in connection with history or the classics, they taught a scepticism which they would not or could not preach in the church. For years the most used religious text-books were written by rationalists, and the life of Christ was represented free from miracle and the supernatural. The very hymns prepared for children were stained through and through with infidel suggestions. A change has taken place for the better in the Prussian church,² and the religious teaching in high schools will doubtless soon assume a more evangelical character. But at present Professor Christlieb says,³ "in most of our high schools the religious instruction is given so badly that this is one of the chief causes of our common rationalism, and the infidelity and religious indifference amongst our educated classes."

Many other influences conspire to produce unbelief. The German nation never became as thoroughly reformed as Scotland or England. Luther did not teach how to keep the Sabbath holy, and so provide a strong support for public worship and household religion. The overwhelming admiration of everything French helped to poison German life. The French court was the beau ideal, and was so corrupt that it almost ruined forty millions of people. Germany had thirty courts, small and great, all seeking to rival Versailles in uncleanness; is it any wonder that the German nobility became vile to the last degree, and free love held high carnival? The divorce laws of Prussia were lax enough for any infidel, and the results are to this day visible.

Then the wars through which Germany has passed and her present

¹ Cf. some good remarks by Baring-Gould, *Germany Present and Past*, p. 189 f.

² In 1879 the orthodox reached a majority in the General Synod.

³ *Private Letter*.

military system have bred and do breed unbelief. The campaigns of 1866 and 1870 were followed by about one hundred per cent increase¹ in crime, till every prison was overflowing, and it was held that Germany must get colonies to find room for her criminals. Every young man must now enter the army before his twenty-second year, and these raw lads from the country must be marched into city life and the influences of barrack morals. Three years in such a school go far to efface religious impressions. Being marched now and again to church, and formed into squads to receive the Lord's supper, does not go far towards counteracting the prevailing carelessness and the popular scepticism.

Again, the exciting history through which Germany has gone during the past twenty years has produced a worship of material greatness, and destroyed largely the primitive simplicity of the German character. The glorious deeds of her armies, the rise of the new empire, and the wild speculation and gold fever which followed the French milliards half turned the head of Germany, and led thousands to sacrifice contentment and honesty to bubble companies, mammon worship, and unbelief. Mr. Davis, for many years at the head of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Germany, and a man thoroughly familiar with German life, says, that twenty-five years ago he knew no people with whom money had so little influence as the Germans, but now he knows none with whom it has so much. The crash and commercial panic of 1874 awakened many from their mad dream, but the worldly, godless spirit has not yet been laid. Quite in harmony with this temper and the German love of an original theory is the avidity with which Darwinism and materialistic views of development were seized, and have now become the creed of thousands of the young men of the land.

Finally, the intimate connection between church and state in Germany has often favored the growth of scepticism. From the Reformation down, religion in Germany has been too much a matter of state, and the belief of the people too dependent upon the creed of the ruler. The military sovereigns of Prussia dealt with the church as if it were a black-coated regiment of guards. Until 1631 the ruler was a Calvinist, and the Lutherans had an unhappy life of it. In 1808 a royal order created a "department of public instruction and worship," and the church was made a department of state under control of a minister of ecclesiastical affairs. Church courts were abolished, and the king became a kind of pope. In 1815 the church courts were ordered to live again,² and transact ecclesiastical matters for the king. In 1839 the autocrat proclaimed Lutherans and Reformed one, under the name of the Evangelical church, gave them a liturgy of his own composition, told them to believe what they liked, or

¹ Cf. *Die Zunahme der Vergehen und Verbrechen*, etc. Stursberg, Düsseldorf (5th ed.), 1879.

² Cf. *Germany, Past and Present*, by Baring-Gould, p. 245 f.

the basis of the Scriptures, but unite in a common communion service, and live at peace. In 1866 Hannover, which is all Lutheran, was seized by Prussia, and for the sake of uniformity the Evangelical church established; greatly embittering both believers and unbelievers against a ritual ordered by the emperor and Bismark. In 1873 a presbyterial system was given the church, and the people granted a limited power in the choice of pastors; but the absence of creed, and the jarring between Lutheran and Reformed, orthodox and rationalistic parties in the church cause strife and scepticism. Instead of peace, where each may believe almost what he likes, there is indifference; and at the not unfrequent sight of the "parallel system," i.e. two pastors, one orthodox the other sceptical, preaching in the same parish to suit all classes, many decline to follow either, and fall into carelessness and unbelief.

In conclusion, a word on the possibility of applying the Prussian system of religious instruction to American schools. The absence of any established church in this country, and the great number of denominations of similar importance make the full application of the Prussian system impracticable here. Even were it practicable, it would doubtless need modifications in the line of the defects noticed above. Without discussing, then, in detail the many points of material difference, I venture simply in the light of what is good in the German system to name a few considerations which might be observed in American education.

(1) In general, that all private institutions of learning should be under government inspection so far as to guarantee good literary work; compulsory attendance at school of children, say from their sixth to their fourteenth year (as in Prussia); a system of promotion of teachers as state officials, and of pensions after a proper period of service: a narrower but deeper course of study, and discouragement of "cram" in education.

(2) In reference to religion, this nation is Christian. That is not and should not be regarded as an open question. A conscientious Imperialist or Royalist or Socialist must bow to the fact that this is a Republic; so must the Buddhist, the Mohammedan, and infidel acknowledge that it is a Christian Republic. In its law of oaths and marriage and sabbath-days it proclaims this fact; and history, as well as the right of majorities, maintains this national position, while according the widest freedom of personal belief. In common and high schools there should be, therefore, at least full liberty to teach the general doctrines of Christianity; to read and study the Scripture, and thus lay a foundation for a moral and upright life. What ground have a small minority to claim not only exemption for themselves, but the intolerance to deprive a large majority of what they consider a constitutional right? The criminal does not want to be taxed for jails, nor the ignorant for high schools and universities; so the irreligious cry out against the state's teaching Isaiah or Paul, though it may instruct in Ovid or Byron or Goethe. It should be striven, then, to

have religious instruction in every school, leaving those free to absent themselves who have conscientious objections.

Religious teaching in schools would withdraw power from the ignorant foreign classes, would promote national unity, and rob Roman Catholicism of much of its narrowness by taking away the chief reason for separate schools. It seems possible that the Protestants of this country, who can agree on an international series of Sabbath-school lessons, might unite on a course of Bible history, the Apostles' Creed, the Commandments, and general teaching of Christianity. In Prussia scarcely ten of the four hundred and fifty high schools have not both Protestant and Roman Catholic students, and most of them Jews also, and yet comparatively no trouble arises about the religious instruction.

This nation especially seems to demand religious teaching in schools. Six out of the fifteen millions of children of school age in this free land never enter school. It is therefore doubly important that the lower classes, who receive all their teaching in the public schools, should be given there the foundation of moral living. These United States, as no other nation, were founded in religious principles — to be a home of oppressed piety and gospel liberty. No man can learn the history of this people, and so intelligently contribute to it, without being taught the religion which animated its patriotism and brightened the dark hour of its adversity.

The details of this wide question must be discussed by those more familiar with the whole subject than the writer of this paper. One thing certainly seems desirable, viz. that the irregular, spasmodic, uncertain religious teaching in our schools should be supplanted by some legal recognition of the philosophic and historic right of religious instruction in public education; that these nurseries of thought and culture should be so far lifted above political and secular and party strife as to insure a thorough grounding to every child of the republic in those truths of God, immortality, and virtue which lie at the foundation of all national greatness and growth.