

ARTICLE VIII.

THE PRESENT RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK.

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THE impressions here set forth are partly the result of a visit of seven months to Great Britain and Ireland, the Continent, Constantinople, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. They will consequently be fragmentary and tentative, rather than complete and assured. But for that very reason they may lead others to supplementary and more substantial investigations. In both America and Europe there is found a growing consciousness of lack of religious power. Many causes have combined—wealth, worldliness, extreme scientific views, criticism of the Bible, intellectualism, and rationalism in many forms—to cripple the energies of the churches. A paralysis seems creeping over Christian benevolences, missions, education, and preaching, in many quarters.

But one good thing has appeared in this time of religious decline,—the desire for union. It has often been so. It was in 1817, amid the demoralization that followed the Napoleonic wars, that the Reformed and Lutheran churches in Germany united. The recent union of the United Presbyterian and Free churches in Scotland; the decision of the Cumberland and regular Presbyterians in America to become one church; and the conference just held in Dayton, Ohio, looking toward a union of the Congregationalists, United Brethren, and Methodist Protestants,—all teach the same thing. When prominent Christian teachers are declaring the Bible not different from other books, putting evolution in place of revelation, going back to Socinian and deistic views of Christ and his work,

reviving the "Accommodation" theory of Semler to make Paul teach only ethics and natural theology,—repeating, in other terms, the old rationalism of the eighteenth century as the new theology, and with the new psychology and the new pedagogy letting creep in much of the mere naturalism of Rousseau:—when these things are borne with, certainly the distinctions that keep one kind of Presbyterian from another, or a Congregationalist from a Methodist Protestant, may well appear insignificant. This feeling after fellowship among Christians, going so far in Canada and Australia as to bring Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists into deliberations looking towards union, and the splendid practical federation of all nonconformists in England, which has put more of their men into Parliament than ever before, are certainly spots of radiance on our religious horizon.

In Ireland I was much impressed by the need of reforms in church methods. A bright young Irish girl said to me, "Rum and Romanism are the chief enemies of our country." There is much truth in the remark. When the Irish pay \$30,000,000 a year for rent, and \$70,000,000 for strong drink, it is evident that the landlords are not the worst oppressors of Ireland. But the Roman Church here has little sense of fitness or adjustment. She keeps as many archbishops and bishops now over some 3,000,000 Catholic Irish as she had one hundred and fifty years ago when there were 6,000,000. Not even Spain or Italy is so overloaded with hierarchy as is Ireland. This land suffers from many drawbacks, but the chief is the numerous priests and bishops, who do not lead the people wisely. "Home Rule" will not save Ireland, for home rule has never succeeded in a Roman Catholic country. A republic cannot live in peace with an imperial church at whose head is the Pope, more despotic than the Czar of Russia or the Sultan of Turkey. Hence

France has disestablished the church; the King of Italy is under the ban; the republics of Central and South America are in constant revolutions, aided by the priests; and men like Ireland, Keane, Gibbons, and others in our own land are advocating a liberal Catholicism, which can thrive in a republic, but when carried to Europe is denounced as "Americanism" and as heresy. The Pope does not speak in favor of home rule in Ireland, for apparently he does not wish it to become free from England. The Holy Father as successor of Cæsar is an international, but also an antinational, ruler. He opposes national churches with all his might. In the Vatican Library the leading officials are Germans; while Italian priests are found in Ireland and England. In a little monastery in Cana of Galilee the two monks are Spanish and Austrian. In Chicago a Polish priest may be found over an Italian parish. Patriotism is subordinate to religion, and the Roman religion is anti-republican, imperial, papal. Hence, in the last conflict, the good Catholic, if consistent, must sacrifice national liberty to the universal church. This is the reason why so many leading politicians in France have been either Protestants, Jews, or free-thinkers. The English Church in her ritualistic spirit, her *non-possumus* attitude, shows some of the blindness of Rome. In Dublin, for example, there are two Protestant cathedrals, five minutes apart, each with a large staff of clergy, choristers, and attendants, and each holding daily choral services to a handful of people. I entered one, and saw thirty singers and clergy and a congregation of five. Under such circumstances it is not a long step to the Catholic idea of masses for the absent, the dead, etc.

The evangelical idea of worship, according to St. Paul, is edification (*οἰκοδομή*), that is, churches are to be built and services conducted where, and in such a manner as, the most

benefit will be conferred upon the people. Many Roman Catholic churches arose where Peter was buried, or Paul beheaded, or a saint appeared in vision, or a martyr suffered; and future generations, regardless of convenience or edification, must come to these places to pray. The long march, the mountain climb, the pilgrimage, are meritorious parts of the services. That is, the whole conception of worship is perverted. It is made something to induce God to be gracious, a *do ut des*; whereas the New Testament teaching is that God is gracious; we know this in Christ; and Christian worship is a communion, a giving and a receiving of this fulness of the Godhead in Christ. But even Romanism is being leavened in some degree by modern thought and the liberty of the gospel. In Austria about five thousand left the Roman Church last year, and this exodus has been going on for some years. Austrian Germans have been asking why they are so far behind Germans in the Fatherland, and are beginning to see the reason in papalism. A member of Parliament named Wolf went with his family to a Protestant church to see what was done, and was so impressed that he became a Protestant, and has become a leader in the movement for freedom. English Catholics practically defied the Pope when he sided with the Boers in the South African war. A reaction has broken out in Spain, led by the poet Galdos, who denounces the monasteries and other abuses. He says one hundred and eighty convents in Barcelona and many in other cities are a cancer in the life of the people. He opposes the Jesuits and their schools as the French did all monkish schools and abolished them. Heretical works like Dante's "De Monarchia" and Galileo's "De Revolutionibus" have been dropped from the Index. Dr. Zahm's book on "Evolution" was to be put on the Index, but the Pope forbade it. At the International Council of Catholic Scholars, which has

met annually since 1885, many liberal ideas are uttered, and other evidences appear of light entering Romanism.

In Protestant Germany religious coldness is admitted and lamented by all. The orthodox charge much of the decline to the critics who destroy the Scriptures, and to the rationalistic theologians, who undermine the faith. Three things are made very prominent in these discussions: (1) the historical study of the Bible; (2) the importance of comparative religion; and (3) the psychological apprehension of religious truth. The experience point of view is much elaborated. That all these are of great value none will deny. The point of departure is where the questions arise: Does historic evolution leave a place for revelation in Scripture, and the supernatural in religion? Does the study of comparative religion make Jesus just one great teacher with Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, and others, or find place for him as Saviour and Lord of all men? And, in connection with the psychological analysis of religious experience, can we believe in regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and faith as a gift of God?

The lines of demarkation seem becoming more evident. Three or four years ago German theology seemed divided into orthodox and Ritschlian, but now the *Protestantenverein*, the Unitarian Association, which had died, has been revived, and the Ritschl men seem separating into right and left wings. Dr. Rade, editor of *Die Christliche Welt*, has recently declared that, while intellectually he feels compelled to regard Jesus as only a wonderful man, yet in his devotions he cannot but pray to Him and hold communion with Him. He has "the religious value" of God for him, and he passionately refuses to give Him up. The editor of the Ritschlian organ thus puts the mystery of Christianity in the man Jesus; while the orthodox feel the proper place to put it is in the divine Son

of God. From the point of view of comparative religion, also, Professor Troelsch attacks Dr. Harnack and other radical theologians. Troelsch, himself a liberal, says, If Jesus is only one teacher among others, and Christianity only a chapter in the general history of religion, then the Faculty of Theology should be abolished at the universities, and in its place appear a professor of Comparative Religion, as at the University of Paris and elsewhere.

The orthodox oppose these radical views in books, in heresy trials in sermons, and in appeals to practical work. The liberal men are chiefly active in social reforms; the evangelical give most attention to religious services, mission labors, Bible instruction, and deaconess work. Since 1874 the school children in Wurtemberg have learned, each in his course, 350 selected texts and 35 hymns; the liberal teachers now want these reduced to 275 and 32. There is controversy, too, about teaching the Bible according to the theory of the radical critics or according to the more traditional view.

At the universities the teaching of theology is largely in the hands of liberal men. The pastors become more evangelical often as they preach, and oppose frequently their former teachers. The church is demanding the right to nominate the men who are to teach her pastors, and insists that they are not being trained for the work to be done. This is certainly true in view of the foreign field, for it is said less than five per cent of the missionaries sent out by the seventeen German societies go from the University divinity schools. Of the 528 mission stations, 131 belong to the Moravians, who have least to do with universities, and conduct seminaries of their own. The other churches, also, have mission houses, and schools for preachers, in which men are educated for the colonies, America, and heathen lands. Of the seventeen societies, all but one are sup-

ported by the orthodox churches, and the one that is liberal, the "Allgemeine evangelisch-protestantische Missionsverein," founded in 1884, has not yet proven that its new gospel for the "nations of culture"—Japan, China, India—is more effective than the old gospel of the orthodox missionaries. After twenty years it has only seven missionaries employed,—three in Japan and four in China,—and part of their work is conducting services for Germans in those lands. In the early years of the Society its reports insisted that the liberal Christianity would find ready access to cultured heathen, because it set aside the miraculous, and by historic methods led men to Jesus; but, in the light of experience, later reports declare that it is actually easier for the orthodox gospel to spread among the heathen than for the liberal; for, when once the Bible was accepted as the word of God, the hardest work of the missionary was done; while the liberal missionary, presenting no word-of-God Bible, had to begin in the quicksands of philosophy, natural religion, destructive criticism of the Scriptures, and comparative religion, and labor long to find any solid basis for his teachings.

In labors at home, city missions, home missions, and institutional work are almost wholly in conservative hands. Still, not a few men of the liberal theology, by their insistence upon the practical, have helped direct men toward the living phases of religion. It looks as if the Ritschlian school had reached the culmination of its strength, and is beginning to decline. The Protestant Union has gone back, in smaller numbers, to its bare Unitarianism. Some Ritschlian leaders like Kaftan, Hermann, and Rade seem moving toward more evangelical positions. Kaftan now insists upon an element of knowledge in faith, and upon the necessity of an objective revelation. Harnack, who has accepted a position as librarian

of the Royal Academy in Berlin, will not lecture so much on church history, and very likely will give less attention to theological matters. Confessionalism, while in some respects to be deplored, seems to be growing, and carries with it an increasing devotion to the creeds of the church.

Beyond Romanism and the theology of Protestant Germany, our outlook took in Turkey and Egypt. Here rose to view the relation of Christianity to the non-Christian world. Here some 500,000,000 Christians look out upon 800,000,000 heathen and 200,000,000 Moslems. Paganism is now entrenched in India, Japan, and China; and, despite the enormous opposition of race, culture, and traditional religion, there are some indications that the gospel will finally conquer all these lands. But Islam appears hardest of all to vanquish. It accepts the Old Testament. It borrows its creed from the Jew, and its missionary doctrine from Christianity. Hence Dante put Mohammed in purgatory with the heretics. What, then, is the outlook in the world of Islam? To begin with, more Moslems are found under Christian than under Mohammedan rulers. Some 65,000,000 are under England in India, and over 8,000,000 in Egypt; others are under America in the Philippines, Russia in Asia, France and Germany in Africa. The culture that comes to all these subjects has a Christian coloring, and their laws and morals must approach Christian standards.

Another matter of great moment is the existence side by side in Turkey and Egypt of Moslem and Christian governments, with the constant comparisons which make the former seem so odious. In Egypt, England has established law and order, reduced taxes by forty per cent, rid the peasants from the clutches of loan sharks, introduced a vast system of irrigation, railways, efficient police, honest officials, and public schools. Cairo has become the world-city of the Orient, and

Egypt is a synonym for prosperity and peace. This great object-lesson has been taken to heart by all Syria, Palestine, Arabia, and the regions beyond. I was told that Syria and Palestine would throw up both hands for English occupation and rule. Young men from these lands prosper in Egypt, and then go home to tell and show what Christian England does, and what Mohammedan Turkey cannot do. England occupies Egypt, the Sinaitic peninsula, the Sudan, and her Cape-to-Cairo railway is daily extending a backbone of commerce and civilization from end to end of the Dark Continent. English gunboats are all around the Red Sea. They police the coast, and show the Arabs the justice which the Turks do not bring. This English occupation seems to be the cause of the chronic insurrection which exists in Arabia, and the growing determination of the home of Mohammed to throw off what is left of Turkish rule. The Sultan is less and less regarded by the Arabs as the successor of the prophet; and it can readily be seen that, if Mecca and the holy places of Islam reject his authority, it will give a heavy blow to this religion.

Another power that is undermining Mohammedism is the Christian schools and missionaries that are found all through the Turkish dominions. Graduates of the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut, and of the Presbyterian schools in Egypt, were taken into service in large numbers by the English Government when it set itself to establish just laws and Christian order in the land. It is interesting to think that, for more than twenty years, American missionaries had been educating young men for England to appoint when she took hold of the land of Pharaoh.

The work of the missionaries is largely among the ignorant, superstitious Christians of the East,—the Greek, Maronite, Jacobite, Armenian, Coptic, and whatever other name they

bear. When this mass is leavened, it should form the missionary army to convert Islam in Turkey. Of the 2,000,000 of people in Syria and Palestine, there are 320,000 Christians in the Lebanon district, and little groups elsewhere, besides 100,000 Jews. In Egypt there are nearly 1,000,000 Christians in a population of 9,000,000. Here is a fine missionary population, native born, speaking Arabic, and, when qualified, the best agency to carry the gospel to followers of the Koran. Islam, like heathenism, is anti-humanitarian in spirit: it is a religion which recognizes the rights of no man outside its pale, and which leaves even its own women outside religious privileges. Hence it cannot stand in competition with the universal culture and recognition of all men which the gospel brings. When public schools were opened in Egypt, seventeen per cent of Coptic children seized the opportunity to get an education, while only five per cent of the Moslem came to them. The intolerance of the Sultan is that of his religion; and, when the ideas of human rights and human duties receive their full recognition, the end will come of both heathenism and Mohammedanism.