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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE III.

THE KÖNIGSBERG RELIGIOUS SUIT.

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AMONG the *causes célèbres* of the present century the "Königsberger Religions-Prozess," or religious suit, is one of the most remarkable. Although proverbially notorious in Germany, the knowledge of it here and in England, until about a year ago, was very limited, and the occasional references to it in theological cyclopedias mostly superficial and one-sided. A candid and impartial statement, free, on the one hand, from enmity to religion, and on the other from direct or indirect connection with the cause itself,—a full account, in short, of all that actually took place without any party-leaning, ill-will, or prejudice, is still a desideratum. Such an account cannot be had until the whole of the voluminous record, now in the custody of a Prussian court of justice, has become accessible to historiographers. As the case now stands we have on the one hand a host of unsubstantiated assertions, charging two ministers, now deceased, with founding, and quite a number of ladies and gentlemen, confessedly distinguished for intellectual culture, refined manners, social position, and decided religious character, with having belonged to, a sect whose tenets were antagonistic to Christianity and destructive of morals. On the other hand we have the indubitable proof in two judicial sentences that the charges of immorality and of the existence of a sect were unfounded, and a formidable array of published works, claiming that, at a time when vital Christianity was *rara avis in terris Germanicis*, two ministers and a number of godly persons of both sexes dared to front the prevailing looseness, nominalism, scepticism, and irreligion, with the then startling declaration that the religion of Jesus Christ requires its adherents to exhibit an agreement in profession and life, to

be living epistles known and read of all men; and that everything beyond and outside of this simple and earnest advocacy of a Christianity, interpenetrating with its hallowing and ennobling influences all relations of life, has no other foundation than the baseless fabric of malicious calumny. It is moreover necessary to state that a very remarkable book, drawn up from official sources, to which we shall presently more fully advert, has been before the public since 1862, in which the author not only triumphantly demonstrates the innocence of the accused, but shows, with inexorable logic and a rare familiarity with legal, forensic, and theological subjects, that the suit was conducted in flagrant violation of the Prussian directory, and that personal hostility to the accused, if not still greater hostility to the doctrines they taught and practised, kept moving the hidden machinery of the then prevalent administration of the law. The gifted author was so circumstanced as to obtain insight into the record, and his work, though compiled from official sources, is not authoritatively set forth, but the fact that its conclusions and disclosures have never been officially disputed, and that many of the leading theological and serial publications in Germany, which at one time had helped to propagate erroneous views, have made the *amende honorable* by retracting them, leaves no room to doubt the absolute correctness of its statements.

It is truly marvellous that under such circumstances W. H. Dixon, an English author, wielding a graphic and flippant pen, and by no means destitute of literary pretensions, should have unearthed all the scandalous fictions connected with the Königsberg Suit, dressed them up in a garish livery of his own manufacture, and thrust them before the world in a sensational book with the catch-penny title, "Spiritual Wives." He begins his brief preface thus: "The subject opened in these pages is so far new, that scarcely any of the facts are to be found in books." Had he taken the trouble to read Count Kanitz's work, a copy of which he might without difficulty have procured of any bookseller at

Königsberg, where he eagerly sought for materials, he would never have framed that sentence; for its perusal must have convinced him that the marvellous stories which he retails with manifest gusto and ill-concealed flings at religion, so far from being facts, were airy nothings and slippery inventions of wanton imaginations. If Mr. Dixon knew nothing of the existence of the "Aufklärung," he was unprepared to furnish this chapter "illustrating the spiritual passions of man," as he grandiloquently styles his book; if he knew the work in question, he wrote with the deliberate purpose of suppressing the truth, and of raising the accumulated fables of the Königsberg *chronique scandaleuse* to the realm of history. The foundation of much of Mr. Dixon's narrative, as he explicitly states, is the so-called evidence of Professor Sachs, which, on account of its obscene and scurrilous contents, he prints in an appendix in German, and of which he says in the preface, "that it was the chief evidence used against Archdeacon Ebel in the great trials here recounted, and was sealed up by order of the Royal Court of Berlin, as a document affecting persons of high rank. How that paper came into my hands I must not say; it is authentic and complete; for that I pledge my word; and if either the authenticity or the completeness of this paper shall come to be challenged by any one having the right to do so, I may then be in a position to require and obtain permission to tell the story of how it appears in these pages."

The only intelligible conclusion to be drawn from this startling announcement is, that the Royal Court of Berlin placed this document, which had been sealed up for thirty years, at the disposal of Mr. Dixon, either by furnishing the original or an authentic copy, for otherwise he could hardly pledge his word for its authenticity or completeness. Mr. Dixon seems to have anticipated in the readers of his book a credulity equal to his own, and he parades his *ipse dixit* with an astounding degree of assurance. The slightest familiarity with the history of the suit and the high-toned dignity of the Prussian authorities is sufficient to show the utter

absurdity of the supposition that a royal court of justice should have delivered to a foreigner a document criminalizing persons with the very charges of which that court had *acquitted* them. Mr. Dixon, indeed, does not say that he obtained said document from the court in question, but the mysterious announcement of secrecy, accompanied by his pledged word for its authenticity and completeness, hints at an official communication, and since that admits of a manifest *reductio ad absurdum*, the only course left is to challenge its authenticity. Count Kanitz and Dr. Wilhelm Ebel, "having the right to do so," have challenged its authenticity; it remains now to be seen whether Mr. Dixon will make good his promise of telling the story how said document appeared in his book.

Mr. Dixon curiously enough draws a revolting picture of Sachs, the author of the mysterious document, who, he says, "in his latter days was known as Mephistopheles,¹ a name which he earned right well by his daring spirit, his cynical phrase, and his contempt for religion. He made a mockery of sacred things. In the lecture-room he would pause in a discourse on anatomy to pour out his venom upon some passage in Holy Writ. In the name of science he would protest, with a biting acid, against the sacred mysteries of our faith. In his secret heart he regarded preachers as the common enemies of our race, to whom no quarter need be shown by a man of wit. As a medical officer he pretended that he had cause to know that students of theology were the most abandoned of all the student tribe. One lad with a ruined constitution went to him for advice: "You are a student of theology?" said Sachs, with his usual sneer. "No, Herr Professor," replied the lad, "I am a student of law." "Then I would advise you to change your profession. You would make an excellent divine." This self-same Sachs was the chief witness for the prosecution; the mysteriously-found document for the authenticity and completeness of which Mr. Dixon has pledged

¹ Mr. Dixon, by the bye, insists upon spelling the word "Mephistophiles;" but as that is wrong, we have taken the liberty to give the correct spelling.

his word, professes to be Sachs's evidence, and be it remembered, it is the foundation of much of Mr. Dixon's narrative, in which (p. 152 sq.) we find the following passage. "It was agreed that Sachs was to be heard. The counsel for the defence now received from Diestel two written documents, which he laid before the judge. They were in Professor Sachs's hand-writing and bore his signature. They were addressed to the late Countess von Kanitz (Minna von Derschau), and contained a very long and detailed statement of his many and grievous offences against God and man, some of which were absolutely incredible and revolting. A man who had been guilty of such acts, said the defendants, was utterly unworthy to be heard in a court of law, in a matter affecting the honor of noble women, and of gallant and pious men. The court communicated with Professor Sachs. What had he to say? Were not these papers forged? Mephistopheles had to rub his eyes and to bow his head. This man of science, so keen of intellect, so shrewd of tongue, who mocked at religion, and held women in contempt, had to come forward in a court of justice with the plea that, in a moment of moral and physical weakness, he had been made the victim of a young lady — bold, inquisitorial, and of morbid fancy. While he was connected with the Ebelians, he had been placed under the spiritual guidance of the Countess von Kanitz; a lady of noble brain and overpowering will, who, in a moment of mortal weakness had drawn from him the statements now before the court, — were they true? They were not true, said Sachs in answer to the judge. But they are given in writing, in the first person, and are signed? yes; that was so; and yet the statements were not to be taken as his own. When he wrote them he was beside himself with grief. He did not know what he said and wrote. The lady pressed him to cleanse his bosom of its secrets; she hinted at the disclosures she would like to hear him make; he had a strong desire to win her favor; and he had, therefore, made those confessions of imaginary crimes.

Not only by word of mouth, in the heat of a personal

interview, but coldly, in his own chamber, under his hand and seal? Yes, even so; the lady was imperious; she would not take his oral statement; she sent him home to think the matter over and to write it down; he wrote what she wanted him to write. Poor Mephistopheles! What could the judge do under such circumstances? Without Sachs's evidence he had scarcely any ground to stand on; and Sachs was now proved by his own confession to be worse than the defence had called him—not only spy, informer, and apostate, but a rogue, whose written word was branded by himself as a deliberate lie.”

The story as reported by Mr. Dixon is simply a story. He might have learned the truth by reference to Count Kanitz's book, where the actual occurrences are recorded (p. 55 sq.). It is not true that Sachs had a private interview with a young lady. He besought his sponsors, Count and Countess Kanitz, to give him a hearing; he volunteered to confess all his shortcomings, craved their forgiveness, and begged to be once more honored with their friendship. They yielded to his entreaties and *saw him together*. Sachs in order to be spared the agony of an oral recital, proposed to furnish a written one. This is the true state of the case, and if the imaginative author of “Spiritual Wives” had only been less superficial and credulous, and exhibited a little more conscientiousness of statement, he might have avoided the imputation of deliberate invention to which his unguarded language lays him open.

The same remarks apply to the astounding revelations of a female church, and of principles of light, darkness, and union, all of which are pure fictions. Mr. Dixon's intolerable dramatic inventiveness and unpardonable ingratitude for favors received is singularly illustrated in the account he gives of his visit to the Moravian chapel at Königsberg; the obliging pastor showed it to Mr. Dixon, whose erratic pen perpetrated such extraordinary vagaries that the Moravian minister was compelled to brand his account as untrue in the *Königsberger Ostpreussische Zeitung* (No. 299) for 1868.

It may be proper to state here on the authority of Count

Kanitz that the so-called sect was simply a circle of congenial friends, who agreed that the conventional dance, card-playing, and scandal should be tabooed at their social gatherings; but that in their stead the discussion of rational subjects, of scientific, philosophical, theological and general interest, the reading of instructive essays or books, and music, should be the order of the day. The members of that circle were good Christian people, who, because they preferred such a rational and instructive mode of spending their evenings to the more popular and worldly way then in vogue, were cried down as sectaries, and their harmless gatherings branded with the vilest epithets which the Christ-hatred of the times could coin.

Mr. Dixon finds his story mainly on the evidence of Sachs, and coolly assumes the reader prepared to receive that evidence, with the grotesque fables he has elaborated therefrom, as gospel truth. In order to place the reader in a position to appreciate the audacity of this voluble and inventive writer, he must remember that Ebel and Diestel were *acquitted* of the charges, which ungodly and unprincipled men brought against them. He knows this, for he adverts to the final sentence (p. 159); but in order to justify his resuscitating of the infamous slanders, which obscene tongues and papers circulated in Germany thirty years ago *Dixon dixit* "the high matters in dispute were referred by this Court of Appeal to the still higher courts of Public Opinion and Universal History." His admirable qualifications as an exponent of public opinion and a historian, may be gathered from the following particulars; the evidence of the accused; the high tribute for virtue and godliness accorded to them by the courts, by ladies and gentlemen of undoubted honor and veracity, the contemporaries and acquaintance of the accused; the published accounts of the transactions by the persons implicated, the last and most remarkable of which is the book of Count Kanitz; the published retractation of misstatements or misrepresentations formerly made by newspapers and cyclopaedias; the whole

current of public opinion entirely changed in virtue of the light derived from the publications referred to—all these are deliberately set aside and disregarded by the author of “Spiritual Wives,” who gives us instead, (1) the evidence of Sachs, disproved in every particular during the trial; (2) a ridiculous account of his confabulation over a bowl of Roman punch and a bag of strong Suabian tobacco, with a jolly lawyer at Königsberg; (3) the traditions of the obscene gossip raked up by hook or crook,—these he manipulates after the manner of playwrights pandering to slippery tastes, weaves into the *story*, dramatically told, of spiritual wives at Königsberg, and calls this patchwork of calumny and ribald jest a chapter “illustrating the spiritual passions of man.” Mr. Dixon’s daring attempt to establish a connection between the religious movement at Königsberg (and by implication of the pietism of Germany—for he does not hesitate to fling the term “*Mucker*” at consistent Christians found at Halle, Heidelberg, Berlin, Hanover, Dresden, Stuttgart, Bremen, and Elberfeld) and Mormonism and Free Love, deserves to be denounced as an insult to religion and common sense, and to be held up to the scorn and contempt of men.

Without travelling to Königsberg, and the inspiration drawn from Roman punch and Suabian tobacco, we are in a position, from an appeal to the record and the voluminous literature of the subject, to form a tolerably accurate idea of it. Fair play and justice demand a statement of the case, as furnished by those who ought to know, and whose standing and reputation entitles them to a respectful hearing. This we propose to supply in the subjoined account, drawn up chiefly from Count Kanitz’s work, and other sources, enumerated at the close of this Article, premising that, while our limits preclude the discussion of lateral issues and scandalous reports, and the portraiture of the interesting personages connected with the suit, we do not put down a single word unsupported by evidence accessible through the book-trade to any of our readers desirous of further information.

Johann Wilhelm Ebel was born March 4th, 1784, at Pansenheim, a small town in Ost-Preussen. His father was minister there until 1795, when he was called to the deanship of the Polish church at Königsberg. Johann went to the gymnasium there, and in 1801 entered the university. He wanted to study theology, against his father's advice, who deemed his *scrupulous conscientiousness ill-suited in a theologian of that period!* Chiefly in consequence of the representations of the director of the gymnasium, who had noticed in young Ebel remarkable qualifications for the sacred office, the father withdrew his objections, and the ardent youth entered eagerly upon the pursuit of theological studies. "I attended Hasse's Lectures on Paedagogics," says Ebel, "and taught with signal success in a primary school. I should probably have chosen the scholastic instead of the theological vocation, if in the providence of God I had not become convinced that our church system really rests on the immovable foundations of a well-established philosophy." How this was brought about he states thus: "I was eighteen years old when a friend of our family mentioned that he had made the acquaintance of a man (Johann Heinrich Schönherr) who had succeeded by proofs of reason to bring the declarations of the Bible and its whole contents into verbal agreement, and invincibly to defend them against the scoffers. Like a light from heaven this message shone with unspeakable delight in my heart, and a nameless joy took hold of my being. All questions hiding within seemed to be solved, all darkness dispelled, and I had at that moment the presentiment of the fulfilment of my deepest longings. From a child brought up in reverence of the word of God, the doubts and contradictions of it, which then were loudly broached by my teachers and fellow-students, could not fail greatly to disquiet my heart and to hold it in anxious suspense. When undertaking to meet and oppose them I had, after idle contentions with my adversaries, often sought with bitter tears a corner of my attic-room to pour out my grief before God, because I had been unable to save his word from defamation, or to

justify its sayings against the criticisms of the rationalists. In this soul-struggle, in fear and longing, I received the good news, that the revelations of reason and holy writ were in agreement, and that the man who had succeeded to establish this agreement was then living."

Ebel thereupon sought the acquaintance of Schönherr. He could not at once see the affinity of his philosophy with the spirit of the Bible, and "for years attempted to assail its positions with all the weapons furnished by study, and an incredulity begotten by contradictory philosophies; but he finally saw and owned with joyous astonishment the possibility of a knowledge in perfect agreement and unison with the divine revelation of the scriptures."

In 1804 Ebel was licensed to preach, and appointed assistant at the gymnasium of Königsberg. Count Dohna made him private tutor of his sons, and in 1807, in acknowledgment of the ability and faithfulness with which he had discharged this task, appointed him to the living at Hermsdorf.

In 1810 he was promoted to the position of teacher and preacher at the Friedrich's Collegium, then newly instituted as a gymnasium.

In 1816 he was elected preacher and pastor of the Altstadt church, the largest congregation at Königsberg. His *personnel* was very attractive; his tall stature, dignified carriage, and speaking features arrested attention, and were only excelled by the matter and manner of his preaching. The church was crowded; the fame of his pulpit ability spread far and near; his eloquent advocacy of the claims of true godliness shook the dry bones of philosophy, scepticism, and general irreligion then prevalent at Königsberg. The inventive Dixon draws as usual on his imagination when he describes Ebel as "bold, sentimental, and original; never scrupling to throw into his most solemn passages a homely phrase, an old saw, a snatch of song, even a touch of comedy, which all but forced his hearers into shouts of mirth. He could be as grave as Stanley, as sportive as Spurgeon, *but the aim of all his efforts seemed to be the awakening of souls*

to a quicker sense of the religious life." With the solitary exception of the italicized sentence, this description is simply a myth; but as myths and fancies are in close league with frivolity and double-entendres in this Dixonian novel, we promise to annoy the reader no more with references to his sensation pictures.

Of his preaching Count Kanitz says that "it stirred a new life in the dead masses; his eloquent portrayal of the divine attributes of love and mercy encouraged minds crushed and terrified by the calamities of the preceding wars to seek the peace of God, and exalted the patriotic enthusiasm evinced in the wars of liberation to grateful acknowledgments of the mercies of God. Ebel gratified at once the yearnings of the heart and the wants of the mind, and thus kindled the flame of true devotion in old and young, high and low, learned and unlearned, in students and young men going to or returning from the wars, so that hearers of all classes and conditions, even rare frequenters of the sanctuary, sought and found spiritual nourishment in his sermons. Many would write them down to communicate them to others. There was no rush, as in the case of sensation preachers; but a gathering of quickened spirits, who were not frightened by the preacher's earnest rebukes of sin and glowing exhortations to repentance. The lofty Christianity preached by Ebel pierced and quickened all the relations of life. Thus the conscientious labors of a faithful preacher and pastor enkindled a light at Königsberg, the bright beams of which shone afar. His preaching restored to their proper significance old Bible truths, whose import had been forgotten, perverted, and emasculated."

Another competent judge, his friend Diestel, delineates him thus: "The glowing zeal for the divine which fills his being is relieved by an ever-retiring modesty, an eager yearning for oneness and the peaceable adjustment of human affairs. He loves God and he loves men; hence his sympathy with the divine and the good in men everywhere and in every form. Reposing faith in the goodness of men, his

simplicity and impartiality draw it forth. His soul firmly rooted in God and ever eyeing his purpose, he is accessible to all, and ready to sympathize and co-operate with every interest compatible with the dignity of man. Many-sided, and endowed with great tact, he easily adapts himself to the most varied circumstances. The impulse of his loving heart to be all things to all men enables him to harmonize the true in differing views, and to scatter good seed wherever he meets with receptive soil. His intellectual constitution is averse to party and sectarian tendencies, to prejudice and onesidedness, and this characteristic has prevented the rise of sectarianism at Königsberg. The openness with which he meets all classes of men without respect of persons, simply because they are men, annihilates all sundering and separating differences. Wordlings and believers, rationalists and supernaturalists, men of the most opposite communions, find a rallying-point in his impartiality, support in his love, and in his comprehensive mind the means to a truly human and truly Christian point of view, 'where is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all.'"

We cannot make room for a detailed account of the circumstances which led to the separation of Schönherr and Ebel. The popularity of Ebel made him enemies, and he was decried as the founder of a sect, a mystic and pietist. In the beginning of 1826 a ministerial rescript, bearing date October 24th, 1825, warning all the consistories of the land against mysticism and pietism, and cautioning them against filling vacant positions with persons thus tainted, became known at Königsberg, and interpreted as an official opposition to the teachings of Ebel, which the rationalists and temporizers branded as mystical and pietistic. The severe ethics on which the enthusiastic Ebel insisted were understood to be unpalatable to the authorities, and those loosely connected with him speedily forsook him. Among them were Professor Olshausen and a young theologian. Compelled to explain their course, which was generally under-

stood and appreciated as time-serving egotism, they found the expedient of casting suspicion on Ebel's theological views at once the easiest and most profitable. Men were not wanting who eagerly seized the opportunity to make common cause with them, although the motives which impelled the latter were vastly different from those which prompted the former, one of whom at least made the most strenuous efforts to establish a supremacy of influence at the expense of Ebel, whereas the trio of further opponents consisted first, of a dissembler (Sachs), who, while professing religious ardor, indulged in dissolute practices, for which the faithful Ebel took him to task, and, finding his loving remonstrances fruitless, broke company with him, with the result that his fidelity met the reward of unmeasured enmity; secondly, of a man (Count F.) who ascribed the discontinuance of certain pecuniary privileges which through the liberality of his sister he had enjoyed for many years, to the religious views of herself and her husband; and as these were devoted friends of Ebel, whose lofty teachings were irksome and unpalatable to him, he sought to annoy them by opening a crusade against their loved pastor, whom he charged with spiritual tyranny, heretical doctrine, and immorality; thirdly, of an avowed enemy of vital religion, in the person of the provincial president at Königsberg (Schön), who, bent upon destroying the powerful influence exerted by Ebel's eloquent advocacy of positive Christianity, inaugurated his official career by causing Ebel's church to be pulled down, on the ground that a slight inclination of its tower imperilled the lives of the worshippers.

That church, one of the most beautiful at Königsberg, had stood five centuries, and the tower, soon after its completion, settled into a position of trifling deviation from the perpendicular. A comparison of semi-centennial measurings showed that the angle of inclination remained unchanged, and that consequently there was no danger; but although this fact was strongly urged, the president caused the church to be closed for a year, ostensibly for the purpose of testing its

security, but really for the purpose of demolishing the structure. The test was certainly unique. The ground was dug away from a pillar to a depth at which it stood under water, and was wholly without support; then, of course, the pillar gave way, the whole edifice became crazy, and the work of demolition was an imperative necessity. The author of this vandalism was *ex officio* president of the consistory, and with him were lodged the charges against Ebel and Diestel.

How they reached him remains to be told. Count F., to whom we have already referred, at first started them in a private letter addressed to a lady, who communicated its contents to Pastor Diestel, the friend and colleague of Ebel. Diestel replied to F., indignantly repelling his calumnies, denouncing his motives, and notifying him that their reiteration would compel him to publish the falsehood of his statements.

Count F. made Diestel's reply the ground of an action for libel, which according to the Prussian directory, was communicated to the local consistory. Among the documents handed in as evidence were not only Diestel's letter to Count F., but also the latter's original communication to the lady.

The consistory took hasty action by ordering the preliminary suspension of Ebel and Diestel (October 7th and November 26th, 1835), and moving the department of cultus to institute criminal proceedings against them on the ground "that they were suspected to have founded a sect of tenets conflicting with the Christian confession; and in part, at least, of immoral tendency, which sect was seeking, in the guise of religious asceticism, the gratification of unchaste desires." Four long and wearisome years were consumed in the conduct of the suit, until at last sentence was given by the Criminal Senate of the Supreme Court at Berlin, of the tenor that the two accused clergymen, "for having intentionally violated their duty, should be deposed and declared unfit for any public office; and further, that Dr. Ebel for having founded a sect should be taken to some public institution and detained there until he had given proof of amendment."

From this sentence Ebel and Diestel appealed to the Sen-

ate of Appeal of the Supreme Court, and after a further delay of eighteen months, the following sentence was given :

“ That the finding of the Criminal Senate of March 28th 1839, published August 30th, 1839, be so far modified that the accused, not for having intentionally violated their duty, should be deposed and declared unfit for any public office, but for having violated their duty from gross negligence ; to wit, that the accused Dr. Johann Wilhelm Ebel be dismissed from his office of archdeacon and preacher of the old city church at Königsberg, and that the accused Georg Heinrich Diestel be dismissed from his office of preacher of the Haberberg church at Königsberg ; and further, that Dr. Ebel be acquitted from the charge of having founded a sect, and that the finding of his detention in a public institution be cancelled.”

Ebel, after learning the final sentence, took the proper steps to dissolve his official relations, and in his farewell letter to his congregation made use of these words : “ The sentence of the Senate of Appeal of the Royal Supreme Court, communicated to me on the 2d inst., deprives me of the office of archdeacon of the old city church. God has honored his servant in stamping on him and his Christian ministry of nearly thirty years' duration the seal of genuineness, but he has thereby at the same time uttered a word of deep significance to those who know my ministry of the Word.”

The simple comparison of these two sentences with the original charge shows that Ebel was really acquitted, and that his deposition was a crying wrong, at variance with the principles of justice and equity which characterize the humane code of Prussian law, and chargeable, not to the provisions of that code, but to their unlawful misapplication and non-application on the part of those to whom the conduct of the suit was committed. It must be borne in mind that while this celebrated suit was pending, the judicial process in Prussia was private ; and this circumstance explains the possibility of the results ; but all this is changed now, and

we need hardly add that with the now prevalent administration of the laws in open court, the recurrence of similar results is simply impossible.

Among the hearers and devoted followers of Ebel, was Count von Kanitz, a nobleman of high-toned integrity, a jurist of great learning, and a Christian of remarkable earnestness, exemplary consistency, and simplicity. Deeply interested in the momentous questions at issue, intimately acquainted with the life and labors of Ebel, and thoroughly versed in judicial matters, he strove from the beginning with indefatigable perseverance and invincible zeal to prevent the consummation of the almost incredible judicial wrong inflicted upon the two traduced and persecuted godly ministers of Königsberg. Unable to avert the blow thirty years ago, he has never ceased to the present hour (for he still survives) in his unremitting efforts to vindicate their memory; and by the publication in 1862 of a work entitled, "The Ecclesiastical Suit conducted at Königsberg in Prussia from 1835 to 1842, cleared up from official sources for Secular and Church History,"¹ has succeeded in showing with overwhelming conclusiveness that said suit was conducted in violation of law, that the charges brought against the accused were false, and that the accused were bright and shining lights, conspicuous for virtue, spirituality, and fidelity, whose lofty conception of the Christian life and apostolical earnestness in recommending and maintaining the application of Christian precepts to every relation of life, were the real cause of the bitter hatred with which they were visited. They were martyrs, and they bore their martyrdom in the spirit and for the sake of the blessed Jesus, "who when he was reviled reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

We have hitherto confined ourselves to a condensed summary of the case, in order to give Count Kanitz the opportunity to develop the details, and for this purpose an

¹ Aufklärung nach Actenquellen über den 1835 bis 1842 in Königsberg in Preussen geführten Religions-prozess für Welt-und Kirchengeschichte.

analysis of his very able work is now presented to the reader. The preface, defining his position, runs thus: "The author of this work, whose outer and inner life is closely interwoven with the matter round which the suit illuminated in the sequel revolves, felt it his duty from the commencement of the judicial proceedings to co-operate in the establishment of the truth. His testimony having been declined by the authorities dealing with the case in the first instance, he submitted a statement to the King of Prussia, Frederick William III., bearing date October 18th, 1835, offering to bring his accurate knowledge of the accused and the accusers, and the motives prompting their charges, before the respective authorities, in order to obviate hasty action, which the known averse disposition of several high functionaries warranted to be apprehended.

"This led to the result that the examining authority was directed, in a cabinet order, bearing date November 7th, 1835, 'to request of Count Kanitz the information (or as expressed in another quotation of the royal mandate "the explanation") which, according to his statement, would serve to explain the state of the case, and shed light on the individuality of the persons concerned therein.' The Minister of Justice, moreover, on the 27th day of the same month, made it obligatory on the authority conducting the examination 'speedily and carefully to execute said supreme order.'

"The author, however, had only a short time to answer the royal request, for, on March 21st, 1836, he was again denied the use of the minutes of accusation, indispensable to the elucidation of the case, and of the record of the transactions, which had been granted to him since February 1st.

"Unsuccessful in setting aside the lateral influences which had occasioned said denial (which will be mentioned at the proper place), and in his efforts to prevent illegal acts, his co-operation in the determination of the truth had thenceforth to be confined to his testimony in court.

"At that time the question dealt with explanations of facts, which have become superfluous since the final sentence

in the suit, kept pending until the close of 1841, rejected all criminal accusations and only condemned a philosophico-theological *private view* and its alleged *dissemination*. But it is now of the last importance that the official record should be made to elucidate the influences which rendered it possible that in this nineteenth century *courts of justice* not only condemned *religious* and *philosophical views*, but treated their colloquial communication as crime, punished with deposition from the ministry.

“This work seemed to be prescribed to the author in virtue of his intimate relation to the transaction, and of his knowledge of the judicial record, insight of which was afforded him first by royal mandate and afterwards by the counsel for the defence, but its execution was impossible while the crowded business of official duties claimed all his energies. Not until the impaired state of his health, caused by many years’ exertion, had compelled him to resign, did he find the necessary leisure, and by his residence in a milder climate, the needed invigoration for compiling from former extracts the official data essential to the elucidation of the matter.

“The author, in memory of the prince whose sense of right directed him ‘to shed light on this matter,’ hereby fulfils the object of the royal mandate in making the record disclose the truth, and likewise supplies the proof that the termination of this affair in a result at once illegal, unreasonable, and immoral, must not be laid to the charge of the humane Prussian law, whose administration has for forty years engaged all his powers, but rather to the *non-observance* and *transgression* of law, whereby in the conduct of this affair justice has frequently been down-trodden, liberty of conscience violated, and the holy exposed to scorn.”

Count Kanitz’s work consists of three parts, respectively entitled: 1st “Preliminaries of the Suit”; 2d “History of the Suit”; and 3d “Results of the Suit.”

The leading points of the first part having already been considered, we begin our analysis with the second, which details the history of the suit; and notices:

1. *The encroachments of the ecclesiastical authority.* The president of the consistory compromised his official position by a private arrangement with the accuser "to furnish a brief recital of some facts in order to justify his interference against sectarism," and, instead of directing him to specify his charges to a judge, as the only lawful person competent to receive only facts and juridical proofs, referred him to a clergyman, and selected for that purpose an individual of known hostility to the accused. This ecclesiastic excused the informant from producing facts, and accepted in their stead, as doctrines, alleged expressions and views, and as proofs, letters actually written by Count Kanitz ten or fifteen years before, as well as a manuscript on philosophical subjects. He then invited a notoriously immoral person to his private residence instead of summoning him, as the law required, to the office of the consistory, and unlawfully interrogated him on subjects not specified in the accusation; although the statements of this witness were incredible and contradictory, as proved by the record, the ecclesiastic admitted them as evidence warranting further interference on the part of the consistory, manufactured them into a theological opinion, intended only for the use of the consistory, which, according to his own statements, would have been very differently worded had he been aware that it would come under the inspection of the accused. In virtue of this "theological opinion," the consistory summoned Ebel before them to be examined respecting the charges brought against him. Perceiving that his old adversary had been appointed his judge, and conscious of innocence, he requested to see the protocol of accusation, and this being denied him, he answered the summons on the appointed day, October 5th, 1835, and refused to submit to any inquisitorial proceeding until his just demand should be met. The propriety of his conduct is apparent from the circumstance that the first question put to him was, "whether he admitted the correctness of the allegation that he had founded a sect?" while the protocol of accusation contained no such allegation, and nobody had

brought such a charge against him. The production of the protocol would have shown this, and on that account it was withheld. The charge of sectarism originated with the consistory, which declined the offer of Count Kanitz to shed light on the subject, preferred to hear only the accusers, and in violation of every principle of justice, allowed the informers to become witnesses for their own accusations.

On the basis of such vaporous and fictitious charges the consistory forthwith ordered Ebel's suspension from office, and in the letter communicating to him said order used this language: "While in our official judgment we acknowledge the blamelessness and zeal of your past ministerial activity, we cannot suffer this circumstance to stay further proceedings because it has been unable to ward off the hard accusations which have been brought against you." The ratiocination of this proposition is justly denounced by Count Kanitz as repugnant to law, logic, and experience; to law, because the weight it attaches to an accusation is in inverse ratio to the blamelessness of the person against whom it is made; to logic, because not every accusation is founded *per se*, and because no man is able to ward off an unfounded accusation, for the very reason that it lacks foundation of fact and reality; to experience, because history shows that often the very best of men are unable to ward off hard accusations. The consistory, not content with the suspension of Ebel, moved the supreme ecclesiastical authorities at Berlin to institute criminal proceedings against him and his colleague, Diestel, whose suspension had also been effected. The total absence of all publicity in the judicial process which then prevailed, rendered it possible that these innocent men were not only suspended from office, but actually treated as criminals.

2. *The precipitate interference of the courts and its consequences*, the author shows from the transgression of the following precepts of the Prussian law:

- (1) The judge must strictly confine himself to the limits of the law.
- (2) Only facts can be submitted to his judgment.

(3) He must maintain the equality of all persons before the law.

He points out that an inquisition may not be instituted unless the certainty or probability of an offence has previously been established, and its actual occurrence has been fully ascertained by judicial process, and proves from the record that, although both requirements were wanting in the case under notice, it was ordered that it should begin with an examination of the accused, and that a protocol of denunciation should be made and communicated to them. This actual inversion of the legal course of criminal procedure burdened the accused with a defence against a non-extant *corpus delicti*, to be determined by the examination, and placed the court in the extraordinary position of being in quest of a non-extant crime, instead of inquiring into the reality of a probable crime. At this stage of the suit, Count Kanitz was appointed by royal mandate to shed light on the matter, but to his great sorrow opposing influences speedily deprived him of the privilege of having access to the record.

3. The *illegal conduct of the examination* prompts the author to notice the direction of the Prussian Criminal Code, requiring the judge to bestow the same care in ascertaining the innocence as in determining the guilt of the accused, and to consider both the legal conception of the crime, and the penal law with its different modifications relating thereto. Yet nothing was done to fix the meaning of the term "sect," although the examining officer declared it as his judicial conviction that "the status of a sect imports a total separation from the established church." Instead of inquiring whether this criterion applied to the case, the inquiry assumed inordinate dimensions and entered improper spheres, "hunting for grounds of suspicion in all the provinces of Prussia and in almost every country of German speech, and weaving together gossip wholly irrelevant to the case and unconnected with the accused and their friends." "Fables and curiosa, collected in this way, became the subject of judicial proceedings and sworn examinations, and kept

the public in breathless suspense from November 1835 to August 1836. Idlers failed not to augment the material thus furnished with the inventions of a vulgar and lascivious imagination, which were eagerly published by a frivolous press. No relation was spared; all ordinary considerations of decorum were set aside; the family and all civil and social relations were rummaged by the intrusiveness of criminal interference." It is also charged that a witness, whose reputation as an immoral man is established by documentary proof, was allowed to testify in matters requiring morally pure perceptions; that the law was further disregarded in the submitting of *suggestions* and *captious questions* to the accused and the witnesses, and in unnecessary confrontations; that while great partiality was shown to the accusers, unlawful obstacles were placed in the way of the defendants.

The third part of the work, entitled "Results of the Suit," treats in the first section of the unmasking of the accusers and their witnesses, in the production of a most formidable array of charges, alleged to be substantiated by the record, which in juxtaposition with the statements of the defence, place them in a most unenviable light, and establish with logical certainty the innocence of the accused. The second section seeks to demonstrate the overthrow of criminal justice in the first sentence against the accused by showing that its acquitting part, while it set aside the charges as unfounded, does not exonerate him by a formal acquittal, and that its condemnatory part is based on arguments utterly repugnant to current ideas of toleration and liberty. They were:

1. The application of Wöllner's notorious religious edict of 1788, directed against neology, to the case of Ebel, who strenuously fought for the supreme authority of holy scripture and the all-sufficiency of our Lord's atonement.

2. An appeal to the *Corpus Juris* of the fifth century for a definition of the term "sect," in order to prove, in the face of all legal and scientific authorities, the existence of a sect.

3. The misinterpretation of private letters exchanged by intimate friends, from ten to twenty years before.

“ Church History,” says Count Kanitz, “ supplies, indeed, in former ages, examples of condemnation in matters of faith by which benefactors of the human race were sacrificed to party-hatred because they opposed universal corruption, and false witnesses charged them with transgressions or crimes; but it cannot instance another judicial sentence drawn up in this century, which on all decisive points not only exhibited an utter disregard of truth, law, and logic (as has been shown in the *Aufklärung*), but in the absence of any punishable offence pronounced a judgment of condemnation on views and opinions, partly couched in coarse and injurious terms, bidding defiance to the advanced civilization and liberal tendency of the age, in order to suppress an activity singularly fitted truly and lastingly to meet its wants.

“ This sentence is therefore a standing document of the danger to which right and morality are exposed by every deviation from law, while the futility of its attempt to pervert truth into untruth bears witness to the purity and intangibility of a truly Christian life, which in spite of outward oppression and injury experienced at the hands of secular power, always has, and ever will, overcome the world.”

In the third and last section the author shows how the final sentence of the Court of Appeal condemns the whole suit; for in acquitting the accused of the charge of having founded a sect, it virtually admitted the illegality of all criminal proceedings. Its condemnatory part treats familiar conversation on philosophico-theological views and conversational expressions affecting a particular relation, as violations of official duty, and punishes them, in flagrant opposition to the Prussian law, which guarantees full liberty of conscience, and expressly stipulates that no person shall be called to account or disquieted for holding views and opinions.

Our limits preclude the production of the very interesting particulars of the *Aufklärung* and compel us to refer those desirous of further detail to that remarkable work, equally creditable to the head and heart of its gifted author.

Those who peruse it carefully and subject its statements and disclosures to the candid test of parallel literature, can hardly resist the conclusion that Ebel and Diestel were greatly persecuted, outrageously slandered, and innocently deposed from the ministry, and that similar proceedings instituted against the most exemplary, godly, and learned men, conspicuous for intellectual strength and culture, eloquence and holiness, and followed by a similar judicial procedure, would inevitably lead to the same results.

Count Kanitz justly observes "that it cannot appear strange that the men moved by the spirit, which ever awakens the Christian life, have always been assailed as sectaries and sect-founders, not because *they separated themselves*, but because *others separated from them*. The Jews and Pagans called Paul a sectary because he had infused the Christian vital element into defunct Judaism and immoral Paganism; the Catholics called Luther a heretic because he annihilated their dead works with the doctrine of justification by faith; the schoolmen gave the same name to Spener because he strove to animate the dead bones of a so-called orthodoxy by maintaining that spiritual experience must evince itself in active Christianity; and Ebel met with similar treatment at the hands of his contemporaries, because he exhorted his age voluntarily to respond to the love of God in harmonious reaction of thought and belief by means of a conscientious adherence to the verbal contents of holy scripture.

"Thus all inimical weapons turned against Ebel; falsehood, intrigue, perjury, ignorance, and violence, were without consideration or restraint applied to the whole persecution, both in the origin, conduct, and termination of the suit, and made to produce a record whose extensive and intensive condition is altogether *sui generis*."

The subjoined quotation from Lactantius (*Institut.* v.) seems to be singularly apposite: "What is the chief element of this great obstinate hatred? Does truth bring forth hatred, or are they ashamed to be ungodly before the righteous and

the good? Or is it both? For the truth is hated for this very reason, that the sinner desires full scope for his sins, and thinks that his wickedness can only then be gratified to the full when there is none left to disapprove of them. Thus the pagans want to exterminate the Christians as the witnesses of their wickedness and malice, for they loathe them as those who rebuke their lives. For why should a few individuals be good at so inconvenient a season, and reproach the public immorality by their good conversation? Why should not all be equally bad, thievish, unchaste, adulterous, perjured, lustful, and cunning? Such being the case it was not sufficient simply to oppress the Christians with outward power; they had to be morally annihilated; and how could that be done except by disfiguring their teachings and defaming their conversation?"

Ebel's own words after his deposition deserve to be placed on record: "Time in its development hastens to maturity; and God who willeth that all men should be saved, also willeth that they, by a free exercise of their will laying hold of salvation, should come to a knowledge of the truth. This knowledge, however, can only be found through faith in the declarations of the Bible. Our age needs a philosophy and seeks one; but it will continue a perplexed age until it learns philosophically to subordinate its reason to the word of God. This alone is the tendency and spirit of that philosophy, which, ranging itself below the Bible, advances the sole claim to be to the thinking mind a key to the understanding of the Bible, and repudiates the views and consequences which have been attempted to be laid to its charge; far removed from opposing the fundamental truths of the evangelical church, it rather establishes them, and is a sure weapon both against the infidelity and the religious phantom-life of the age.

"I here make this acknowledgment with profound gratitude to God; for while hundreds of my colleagues have been turned away from the Bible by other philosophies, this philosophical mode of thinking kept me from the loose seductions

of a tempest-tossed age, and supplied me concerning the evangelical confession of faith, with strength of conviction, which, in spite of incessant hostilities, immovably manifested itself in strictly biblical preaching.

“Committing therefore all things to him who gave to man the word of the Bible, which ‘as to its whole contents is to me divine truth,’ and confiding in him who thus far has led me in a wonderful manner, I cheerfully leave my former relation.”

It remains to add that Ebel after his deposition spent six years (1842–1848) with his friend E. von Hahnenfeld at Grunenfeld in East Prussia, passed two years (1848–1850) in the Tyrol, went thence to Hoheneck near Ludwigsberg in Württemberg, where he fell asleep in Jesus, August 18th, 1861.

Those of our readers who may desire fuller information on this famous trial will be glad of the subjoined list of works directly or indirectly connected with it. We would more particularly call attention to two volumes of sermons by Ebel, recently reprinted, and originally preached during the very period which gave rise to the trial; they are respectively entitled *Die Treue* and *Die Weisheit von oben her*, in which the departed “yet speaketh,” and utters no uncertain sound on many of the most interesting and important questions of the day. The splendid typography and chaste binding of the volumes seem to proclaim them loving mementos of the departed, and their contents bear ample testimony to the fidelity and spirituality of Ebel’s preaching.

Besides these two volumes of sermons the more important published works of Ebel are the following: *Die gedeihliche Erziehung*, an admirable work on Christian education, which we hope to see in an English garb. *Bibelworte* and *Winke zum Verständniss der Bibelworte*, a very useful Sunday-school book. *Verstand und Vernunft im Bunde mit der Offenbarung Gottes durch das Anerkenntniss des wörtlichen Inhalts der heiligen Schrift*, by Ebel and Diestel, Leipzig, 1837. *Zeugniss der Wahrheit*, by the same, Leipzig, 1838, in refutation of Olshausen’s book entitled *Lehre und Leben*

des Königsberger Theosophen Johann Heinrich Schönherr. Grundzüge der Erkenntniss der Wahrheit, Leipzig, 1852. *Die Philosophie der heiligen Urkunde des Christenthums*, Stuttgart, 1854-1856. *Compas de route pour les amis de la vérité dans un temps de confusion des idées offert par des amis de la vérité*, Königsberg, 1859.

Works in vindication of Ebel besides the exhaustive and unanswerable *Aufklärung* by Count Kanitz, are two condensed statements of the large work, and *Ein Mahnwort zu Gunsten der Nachwelt an die historische Literatur der Gegenwart*, by the same author. *Ein Blick auf die einstige Stellung der Oberpräsidenten Auerswald und Schön*, etc., by E. E. von Bardeleben, Stuttgart, 1844. *Die Liebe zur Wahrheit*, by Ida, Countess von der Gröben, Stuttgart, 1850. *Die religiöse Bewegung zu Königsberg*, etc., by E. von Halnenfeld, Braunsberg, 1858.

ARTICLE IV.

MOUNT LEBANON.

BY REV. T. LAURIE, D.D., FORMERLY MISSIONARY THERE.

(Continued from page 471).

THE GEOLOGY OF LEBANON.

THIS has never been thoroughly explored. Dr. Henry J. Anderson, who was with Lieut. Lynch in his expedition to the Dead Sea, is the only writer on this subject, and his examination of the mountain was only partial. He commences his "Geological reconnoissance of part of the Holy Land" as follows:

"To the geologist Syria appears as a much disturbed, mountainous mass of secondary and later limestones with basaltic and tertiary interruptions. The calcareous deposits form the basis and body of the work. The Plutonic rocks are subsequent intrusions. Still later embankments of looser texture have lodged themselves irregularly in the cavities of