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THE
CHURCHMAN

MARCH, 1884.

ART. I.—PRESENT PROSPECTS OF PROTESTANTISM
ON THE CONTINENT.

THE subject before me is so large that I find it very difficult to approach and address myself to it. It is easy at a glance to see over how wide an area it ranges. Within the limits allotted to me I cannot hope to do more than take a partial and surface view of it. The utmost I can attempt, conscious all the while of the incompleteness of the attempt, is to give some general impressions. Having lived abroad from my childhood in Germany, France, and Belgium, having been Chaplain of Marbœuf Chapel in Paris for more than three years under the Empire, and having recently taken charge of Christ Church, Neuilly, under the Republic, I have enjoyed opportunities, not given to all, for leisurely and dispassionately considering the condition of religion on the Continent, and of taking some humble part in the great evangelizing movement which, like network, is spreading itself over France in particular.

“Protestantism on the Continent” just now possesses additional interest, inasmuch as the subject has been brought forward in connection with the fourth centenary anniversary of that Reformation which is indelibly and gratefully associated with the name, zeal, and resistless ardour of Martin Luther.

At the outset I may be allowed broadly and simply to define what I imagine would be generally accepted and regarded as the three great, commanding, fundamental principles of what is ordinarily understood by Protestantism, and which, without at first himself formulating into so many dogmatic statements, form the foundation of Luther's work. They are these :

1. Justification by faith alone ; not by the Sacraments, and not by works.

2. Scripture, and not tradition, the source of truth and standard of faith.

3. The right of private judgment, not dependence on the authority of the Church.

These three great principles, leaving out of consideration minor questions, may be generally regarded as the three leading data or "notes" of Protestantism. They are embodied in the Liturgy, crystallized in the Articles, affirmed more or less clearly in public religious exercises, attested to by every candidate for Holy Orders in the Church of England, and publicly assented to on the occasion of "institution" to a benefice. If we look steadily at these fundamental principles, in their doctrinal and practical importance, they constitute that gulf between our own and the Roman communion which the Reformed Churches, so far from desiring to bridge over, should regard as irrevocably "fixed." Whatever differences of opinion may exist touching some questions of ritual, or even on the possible interpretation of our Thirty-nine Articles, is it too much to affirm that the fundamental principles of the Reformed Church, where earnestly believed, cordially accepted, and loyally subscribed to, must in themselves be the most effectual security and safeguard against any return on the part of the Church of England to the bosom of the Church of Rome? Why do we affirm this? For this simple reason. If you consider the opposite of these principles, you find that they form the essence and gist of that system which, wherever it dominates and prevails, unduly exalts the powers and prerogatives of the Christian ministry, consistently keeps the mind of the laity unenlightened as regards saving truth, enslaves the conscience, subjects its adherents to spiritual bondage, if not tyranny, cripples all the finest powers, fetters the noblest aspirations, takes from man God-bestowed rights and privileges. What the effect must be of such a system pursued to its legitimate results, it is not difficult to infer or describe. It is true, no doubt, as Archbishop Whateley in his interesting "Essays on Romanism" shows, that Romanism is the "religion of humanity," *i. e.*, it could never have attained such gigantic dimensions, acquired such power, exercised so wide-spread an influence, if it had not found in human nature its encouragement, its *raison d'être*. It must be remembered that it was not Aaron who forced on the people the worship of golden calves. He yielded to the clamorous voice of the impatient and rebellious people: "Up! make us gods which shall go before us!" *Populus vult decipi et decipiatur.* There is a tendency to be religious by proxy; to say in so many words, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out." There is a disposition, arising out

of our native indolence, to entrust our spiritual well-being to the care of another, as we entrust our health to a physician, or our affairs to a lawyer. There is such a thing as making another the keeper of our conscience. Men and women, to a greater degree than they are either aware or willing to allow, do not like the trouble of thinking or the pain of inquiry. They accept and take on trust that which they assume their religious guides to have made their special study, and with which they are more *au fait* than themselves. There is a subtle thought also, a faint hope, though it may not shape itself into so many words, that there is some merit in multiplied acts of devotion, in religious exercises, fastings, penances, mortifications, pilgrimages.

It is not until the soul has learned how it owes all to Christ that it also learns that, however good the deed may seem, "whatsoever is not of faith hath the nature of sin." Religious sentiment, all that we commonly understand by the devotional element in our complex nature, has, of course, its proper place and use; but it is capable of abuse. It may be so excited and played upon by the accessories of religion, by the pomp and witchery of ritual, as that we may come to mistake devoutness for faith, excited feeling for real godliness. Say what we please, there is no real disinclination on the part of many, especially of women, to confess. Fewer men than women confess. This anyone can observe for himself in the churches on the Continent. The strength of the Church of Rome lies notoriously and confessedly more in the adherence of women than of men to her system. The reason of this, without dilating upon it, is not far to find. The Church of Rome has taken advantage of what she finds in human nature. She suggests a quietus in her doctrine of Infallibility for all doubt and all doubters. In her communion she offers a land-locked haven for all storm-tossed minds. Unexamined, such a quietus has its attraction and charm. Who would not have all perplexity, questionings, doubts, thus easily set at rest, if he could but persuade himself and believe that the Pope is infallible? With the exception of the Greek Church, the Church of Rome stands in the very forefront of religious communities for the gorgeousness of her ritual, for all the circumstance, and accessories of Divine service. She ransacks Art in its various departments; she brings all that is most sensuous and fascinating to bear on the emotional part of human nature. She does not discourage the idea that works are meritorious, or that they may be a procuring means of salvation. She shuts her eyes to the fact that we can never know when or if we have done enough, and so she has invented the theory of works of supererogation wherewith to cover all deficiencies;

a bank is established on which drafts for holiness can by adequate payments be drawn. To maintain such a system, supported by purgatory and masses for the dead, it is absolutely necessary that the laity should remain unenlightened. The Bible is a sealed, if not a forbidden and manipulated book. If not actually on the list of the *Index Expurgatorius*, it is practically interdicted to the laity. Her offices are said in Latin, and if now and then the Scripture warrant for any dubious teaching or doubtful practice be hinted at, she falls back upon and shelters herself within the entrenchments of the vague word "tradition."

Without pursuing further a subject with which every intelligent Christian should be fairly familiar, as to the points of difference between us and Rome, what, we may ask, must be the inevitable effect, sooner or later, on any one mind, ultimately on many minds, by degrees on the mind of a nation, thus taught, thus manipulated by its priesthood? What cannot but be the natural and legitimate result where the conscience yields in passive submission, where the right of private judgment is not exercised, where the fair opportunities of investigating and knowing truth are foregone, where all the actings, promptings, instincts, aspirations of the spiritual life are habitually restrained, where body, soul and spirit are made over unquestioning to one authoritative and domineering power, professing to hold, for reward or retribution, for recompense or punishment, the keys of heaven and of hell?

Go abroad, reside in a Roman Catholic country, and you find the answer. I do not say that there are not many devout, sincere, godly men and women in the Roman Catholic communion, earnest in their convictions, most exemplary in their lives. Some of our best books of devotion are from Roman Catholic sources. Many familiar prayers and hymns are drawn from the same fount. There is not a little that we of the Reformed Church might well and safely imitate in their reverence for sacred things and sacred places. Some of the more devout Roman Catholics hold by what is best and of Scripture warrant in their communion, but tacitly repudiate much which they regard as superstitious or venial, the end, in their eyes, justifying the means. Allow a large margin for those who, brought up in her communion, attached to it by preference and strong family associations, find in Romanism much in accord with their religious sympathies; granted that there are many who hold fast by what is good and reject what is doubtful without necessarily forsaking her communion; yet where, under the name, sanction, and guise of Christianity, do you find atheism more rank, infidelity more blatant, scerp-

ticism more cynical, than in those countries where the Roman system is the most fully developed? I am not now thinking of the decay of religious belief in Germany, marked and confessed as that is. We must not be misled by centenary celebrations of Luther into thinking that Germany is *au fond* a religious country. It is grievous indeed to think what a rationalizing spirit of interpretation has for some time past been bringing about in the religious life of the country which gave birth to Luther, what havoc it has made of all belief in the supernatural in the domain of theology! Infidelity in Germany is not of the light, flippant, coarse nature which characterizes infidelity in France. It is more solid, massive, and thoughtful. Voltaire and Strauss are two very different minds. Rationalism in Germany is penetrating all strata of society. Its effect is visible in the open desecration of the Sabbath, in the scant attendance at all places of worship, in increasing indifferentism. A preacher of commanding eloquence will fill to repletion a church otherwise empty; and in the readiness to hear some great preacher, in the attention with which they will still listen to one of whose earnestness they are satisfied, we may say of Germany that the bruised reed is not broken, and the smoking flax is not quenched. The religious instinct is there, notwithstanding and despite all that Rationalism has endeavoured to do in the way of repression and ridicule. I believe that Germany is ripening for some great revival which shall once more rouse her slumbering ashes into rekindled fire, and that that will not be so much by a second Luther protesting against what has received the *coup de grâce* in Germany, as by a wider diffusion and more Spirit-guided study of that Word of God which Luther gave to Germany, as Tyndal gave it to our own favoured England.

Now, no one can reside for any length of time in France, Belgium, or Spain, without being brought face to face with infidelity in its most blatant and painful development. I confine my observations to France. France may truthfully be characterized as infidel to the core. Look at her observance of God's holy day. It is avowedly the day set apart for pleasure and holiday-making. All her museums, theatres, concert-rooms are open, the best plays are performed, the best concerts given, on Sunday. It is the day for races at Chantilly or Longchamps. Look at her system of education. During my recent stay in the French capital, one of the leading professors in Paris, on the public occasion of distributing prizes to children, thus addressed them: "On dit, mes enfants, que nous avons chassé Dieu de nos écoles. Ce n'est pas vrai. Pourquoi n'est ce pas vrai? Parce-

qu'il n'y a pas un Dieu à chasser." Here are some questions out of a freethinking Republican catechism, which is hawked about in every town and village.—"What is God? An expression. What is the value of this expression? Nature. What is nature? The material world. All is matter. What is the soul? Nothing." The religious orders from which the famous preachers at Advent and Lent are selected being suppressed, there is now scarcely any preacher of any note to be heard in the great pulpits of Notre Dame, St. Roch, the Madeleine, and other well-known churches. A systematic effort is being made to abolish all chaplaincies in the army and navy. The *Sœurs de Charité* in prisons, penitentiaries, and asylums are being gradually eliminated, and this leaven of better and more gentle influence will ere long be lost. Even the sick and dying are not to have a chaplain near at hand in the wards of those world-famed hospitals of Hotel Dieu and Lariboisière. They threaten to erase the name Hotel Dieu, and designate that splendid hospital by some secular name. It is only very recently that the present Archbishop of Paris, commenting on this, uttered words to this effect: "Who would believe that the day would ever come when the founder of this hospital, if he could now speak, would warn men and women against going to an hospital founded originally for their good?" There seems, in fact, to be a positive, malignant hatred to almost anything and everything in the shape of religion, and this hate is shown in numberless even petty and uncalled-for ways. Interments by civil rites, and not by the Church's offices, are vastly on the increase. Not content with asserting her unbelief in public and undisguised forms, and not allowing or recognising any symbols of faith, a Comic Bible—*Bible pour-rire*—is being sold in the streets of Paris. The *menu* of a dinner given in Paris on last Good Friday by the Anti-Clerical League is too utterly blasphemous for publication. Suffice it to say that the dishes consisted of a travesty of our most holy and cherished truths. I give but two: "*gigot d'agneau Paschal*," "*cognac d'Esprit Saint*." Facts such as these speak for themselves. They are boils on the body, symptomatic, as are all surface eruptions, of a system disordered, out of health. Whence does this for the greater part arise? To what cause must we in all truth assign this atheism so flippant, so coarse, so revolting? It is the inevitable reaction from superstition. It is the revolt of the mind from what it discovers to be fraudulent and untrue. It is the natural recoil from what thinking for themselves has brought men of thought and intelligence to pronounce unworthy of a rational creature's belief. Can we be surprised?

I have stated it more than once in public—I restate it fearlessly—that during the time of my ministry in Paris, many

years ago, priests officiating in prominent churches sought me out, anxious to forsake the Communion of the Church of Rome. They assured me in the most positive terms that a large proportion of priests in France are infidel. To repeat the exact words one used to me, "We do what we do, and teach what we teach, to keep up our power with the people." I could not have *imagined* such words or such conversation. I learnt more from their voluntary acknowledgments than from many books on the Roman system. More than one priest told me that it was the hideous abominations of the confessional which first opened his eyes to the corruption of his communion. It is notorious that many of the lower classes seek the priesthood to avoid conscription. It is equally certain that many cab-drivers at this moment in Paris are priests. What more significant and yet more painful than what my friend Père Loyson himself told me? I took the opportunity on a recent occasion of being present at the veneration of relics at Notre Dame. Nuns knelt two at a time for one hour, counting their beads, etc., in veneration of an old tooth, the reputed tooth of St. Peter or St. Paul. Whose it was I forget; but it is not to the point. This decayed tooth was the object of protracted veneration. I told Père Loyson I had been to this service, and said to him, "Time was when you brought all Paris to your feet at Notre Dame, and preached on the occasion of the veneration of this relic. Did you yourself really believe that that old decayed tooth was the tooth of Apostle or saint?" His answer was frank and unreserved: "No," he replied; "of course I did not."

Now facts such as these simply cannot be gainsaid. They cannot be pooh-poohed. For how much of the infidelity of France finds its excuse, its *raison d'être*, here! The man has been trained from childhood in a system which, if it is to be maintained, must repress inquiry. He has been taught that the Roman Communion is the only safe fold; that the perdition of anyone outside that fold is more probable than his salvation is possible. He has learned to regard all other religious bodies as heretical, and the punishment for heresy is severe and merciless, being excommunication on this, and hopeless damnation on the other side of the grave. He holds on to his soul's anchor as long as he can; but by-and-by he begins, as an intelligent man, to think for himself. He is restless under the green withes with which Delilah would fain bind his growing intellect. He breaks these withes "as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire." He finds nothing in his creed, certainly nothing in its public offices, which addresses itself, as one once said, *à l'âme*. Of the officiating priest he sees little more than his back. The service is not in the mother tongue. The confessional is loathed and

detested because of the power it gives the priest over the conscience, and because of the family secrets which it puts into another man's possession. It is felt that the greater part of religion is associated with fees and payments, from which even the dead are not by death delivered.

The spirit of inquiry, of scepticism in its best sense, now so markedly abroad, applies its crucial test to all superstitious practices; it rejects as simply and utterly unworthy of credit much on which the Church of Rome has always based her pretensions and built up her power. If thoughtful Germany casts off her faith in the supernatural, which presents itself for acceptance under no guise of imposture, how much more will the intellect of France, lost, I believe, irrevocably to the Church of Rome, reject and ever ridicule all mechanical views of the Sacraments, all winking Madonnas, bleeding statues, and superstitious uses in which the priests themselves do not in their heart of hearts believe? And this creed, found unsatisfying to the soul's deepest cravings, supported to a large extent by that which will not bear examination, what is the consequence? The man is ignorant altogether of one Book, which he never opens. He knows nothing about religion save as it is imperfectly or erroneously taught at the lips of those in whose sincerity he has lost all confidence. His conscience revolts at the thought of indulgences for sin. He sees the communion in which he has been cradled throwing the ægis of its traditions, position, culture, art, resources, over superstitious uses, untenable doctrines, and in some cases immoral practices. The result is, he breaks with all religion. It is Roman Catholicism or nothing. It is with him either a yielding up of himself to it, body, soul, and spirit, passively and blindly, or he takes up with a life of indifferentism, ends it with a deathbed of suppressed agony, and death itself is an awful perhaps, a venture into the dark with no sure light to irradiate the darkness. It cannot but be so. Ceasing to believe in religion, he throws off all its restraints. Having no longer any hold over the intellect, having lost any it ever had on the affections, religion soon loses control over the life. Marriages are more often celebrated at the nearest Mairie than with the Church's benediction. Excommunication is ridiculed as some nursery scare. Extreme unction is looked upon as the sublime effort of superstition. The man who with his whole heart rejects religion, ignores her place, declines her offices, will not play false at the last.

There is good reason to believe that Gambetta was not an atheist, but he, like not a few thoughtful Frenchmen, had long seen the hollowness and unreality of the dominant faith. He had all throughout his life consistently inveighed against

the pretensions and assumptions of sacerdotalism, and so, when it came to the last, he preferred to be laid down in his grave amid the genuine tears and heartfelt regrets of the thousands for whom he had lived and toiled, rather than at the last moment do violence to all his convictions. He would be buried with no religious ceremony rather than contradict his frequent protests against the Church of Rome by being borne to one of her churches and laid to rest with her flambeaux, her incense, her lustrations, and her prayers.

And what is to be the outcome, the finale of all this? Can true religion ever again assert herself or lift up her head in Paris, which is France? Is there absolutely no hope for that fair land? Is she doomed irrevocably to infidelity? Is she committed hopelessly to atheism? We answer unhesitatingly, confidently, thankfully, No! for at no time does God leave Himself without witness. Not yet has the sentence gone forth, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." There are not a few on the Continent who are alive to the painful spiritual facts amidst which their lot is cast, and whose earnest prayer, seconded by earnest effort, must, in God's good time, prevail. The attitude abroad is really more anti-clerical than anti-religious. The God Whom so many profess to deny is not so much the God of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as a God associated with superstition, a God identified with the denial of liberty of conscience, with suppression of all right of inquiry, a God as presented through the medium and interpretation of a priesthood itself not credited. The feeling toward the priests just now is bitter to a degree. Were a revolution on any large scale unhappily to break out in Paris, the cut-throats of La Roquette would raise the cry *à bas les prêtres*, and it would be taken up fiercely throughout the city. If the ministers of any religion be hated and despised, what must become of the influence of the religion they represent?

Some of the more thoughtful, earnest and far-seeing men on the Continent have for some time past been fully alive to the present miserable condition of things. Men like Bishop Herzog of Berne, Bishop Reinkens, Dr. Dollinger, and Père Loyson, leaders of the remarkable movement amongst the Old Catholics, have been stretching out their hands, whether in vain or not, remains to be seen. This is the comment of Père Loyson, one of the most eminent of her children, on the communion from which, with infinite sorrow, he felt constrained to take a wide departure: "Des penseurs éminents voyaient avec peine que la religion devenait étrangère aux besoins réels de la société." The reform which he, with men of like mind, is attempting to bring about, must not be lightly thought of, still less ignored. It is fully recognised by the Anglo-Continental Society.

Loyson's aim and dream, for which the modern Massillon has foregone and sacrificed the most brilliant prospects, is to purify the Roman Communion and to restore to France the old Gallican Church. He seeks to evangelize the Latin Church. "Nous demandons," he says, and in what better words could his object be stated?—"nous demandons seulement à l'Église Catholique, dont nous sommes les fils, de se réformer elle-même." His points of departure from Rome are very important. 1. The rejection of the dogma of Infallibility. 2. The celebration of all the Offices of religion and the public reading of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue. 3. That confession should be in every case voluntary, and always "morale." 4. That Bishops be elected by the clergy and "le peuple fidèle." 5. That the clergy should have the same liberty to marry as the laity. These are very important points. The Gallican Church which he represents is neither a sect nor a schism. It is a keeping of the old faith once delivered to the saints, having the Nicene Creed as its standard of orthodoxy. With some little modification of ritual, perfect unity reigns between the Old Catholics of France, Germany and Switzerland. Of this movement it may be premature to form a decided opinion. It does not command much sympathy in England. It is kept alive, in my judgment, more by the earnestness, inspirations, and personal influences of its honoured leaders, than by its own intrinsic and enduring credentials. It does not go far enough for those who would break with Rome, and yet fail in discerning sufficient departure from Rome to justify such rupture. It does not satisfy the French Protestant, for much that is retained of teaching and ritual is closely identified with Rome. None who knew Père Loyson can fail to be attracted by the man. No one can listen, as I have, in his church in the Rue d'Arras, to that burning eloquence with which he, in the very heart of Paris, fearlessly exposes the abuses of a Church in which, himself cradled, he is now excommunicate, without having the warmest sympathies enlisted, without wishing him God-speed. Unless, however, his mantle fall on some yet unborn Elisha, and the movement be made to depend less and less on the influence of any one man, I venture to predict that the effort, so noble, so chivalrous in its aim, if not Quixotic, is not destined to succeed.

It will naturally be asked, "But what of the old or modern Protestant Church? Is it not doing a great work? Is it not salting the religious life, however corrupt? Or has it lost its savour?" It has been asserted confidently of late that whole villages in the provinces are going over *en masse* to Protestantism. I am not in a position either to confirm or gainsay this assertion. It is true also that Paris is not, in one

sense, France; but I am bound conscientiously to affirm that I do not believe that French Protestantism, in its present aspect and operation, is a *power*. This is not to say that the French Protestant Church does not contain within its fold good men and true. Pressensé, Bersier, Monod, and many more, are men of honoured names; but you will no more replace the Roman communion by French Protestantism than you could replace the Church of England by Methodism. The contrast between the Church of Rome, with her splendid edifices, gorgeous services, impressive ritual, and the coldness, nakedness, and severe Puritan simplicity of the Church in the Rue l'Oratoire, or the Avenue de la Grande Armée, is too great—too marked—to be *per saltum* accepted. Imagine any one going at a bound from St. Alban's, Holborn, to Spurgeon's Tabernacle! The great majority of those who have wandered far from Christian paths cling with tenacity to the traditional rites and name of the Catholic Church. I asked a priest on one occasion why he, and men like himself, did not at once embrace French Protestantism? His reply was, "Parceque on s'éloigne de trop." That exactly expresses this difficulty, "on s'éloigne de trop." Add to this that no little suspicion exists as to the orthodoxy and soundness in the faith of some of the French Protestant *pasteurs*. There are liberal Protestant *pasteurs* who preach no Christ. The freethought which characterizes our age, which has brought its crucial tests to bear on Roman Catholicism, has found its way into French Protestant theology, is leavening its literature and pulpit. If the teachers of religion be not themselves orthodox, how can they hope that their hearers will be sound in the faith? There is also a remarkable craving for some form of liturgical service; and if French Protestantism is to do any real work, it must in some way satisfy this demand, which men like Bersier have been forward to recognise.

Whence, then, shall help come? From what source shall real reform be looked for? How shall true religion once more gain firm footing abroad? It must, I am persuaded, come from without. The cry is as of old, "Come over and help us." This call is one to which a remarkable response has of late years been made. The Foreign Aid Society, so largely indebted to Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Burgess, the Dean of Ripon, and others, has been for many years eminently useful in distinct evangelistic work, in the diffusion of the pure, unadulterated Word of God, and through the well-organized system of *colporteurs*. In their last Report is given a detailed and most interesting *résumé* of the God-owned labours of this excellent, too little known, too slenderly supported society for the spread of the Gospel. The Comité Auxiliaire d'Évangélisation de Paris, originating in the Exhibition held in Paris,

and working on the lines of the London City Mission, is doing, with its system of evangelistic addresses and Scripture Readers, a confessedly good work in the same direction. Who can speak at all adequately of the marvellous work organized by Mr. MacAll and his devoted wife, spreading as some life-giving stream over the whole domain of Romanism and indifferentism? It has been my privilege to attend and take part in the simple services under their auspices. I can testify from personal observation to the profound and intelligent interest with which the service was followed and engaged in. The service is warm and hearty, the prayers are fervent and touching, the singing is sweet and moving, the preaching plain and persuasive. Whether in the West End or at Grenelle, whether amongst the more cultured or the less educated classes, there prevails a great and eager desire to hear the Word of God. How great the Frenchman's ignorance of the Scriptures is may be gathered from this fact. The question was once put to a group of market-people, "What think ye of Christ?" The answer, to which all agreed, was, "Oh, he was a Jew, who turned Roman Catholic."

Who can speak adequately of Miss De Broën's self-denying toil in Belleville, in the very heart of the Communists, amongst the most *outré* of Republicans? When I saw the eagerness with which the poorest of the poor pressed forwards at the close of a simple Gospel address to purchase with hard-earned savings a copy of the New Testament for four sous, it reminded me of what Blunt tells us in his "History of the Reformation." He says that when the English version of the Scriptures was first given to us, men would give a load of hay for a few verses. The Bible is an unknown book to thousands in France. The Gospel comes, therefore, with all the force and charm of some new message, with its enlightenment, consolations, and promises. One fruit of the Republic is that whereas under the Empire silence was almost imposed on the lips of those who were not of the Roman Communion, now, partly through indifferentism, partly in keeping with the creed of Republicanism—freedom of thought, liberty of expression—large toleration is accorded to all creeds, all denominations, all teachers. To the cynical Frenchman, Gibbon's sneer is congenial, that to the statesman all religions were equally true, to the philanthropist equally useful, to the philosopher equally false. But God has overruled all this, so that a great and effectual door is open, which many are taking advantage of and entering.

For the present I am disposed to think we must be content with the unsectarian and undenominational form which evangelistic work is taking abroad. The molten-metal is being

run at present into one mould rather than into many. The time has hardly come for giving it shape and hammering it out into one or more schools of thought. France, Belgium, and Spain know too well the dominion and tyranny of one overmastering aspect of religion. They who are seeking to save the Continent from utter unbelief approach it less with a system than with a message. They do not aim at having but one uniform mould, into which the awakened spiritual life shall at once and of course flow, but they preach the message common to all believers: "Jesus and the Resurrection." What shape the awakened life shall take remains to be seen. I look on all these efforts much as one looks on the preliminary and pioneering work of settlers. They first clear the forest and the brushwood, are content with a rude log-hut until they are in a position to construct a more settled and substantial residence. I look on it as on the work of the humble worm, which perseveringly and unobservedly bores the soil, making the hard earth porous, preparing it for the rain that shall percolate and make it fruitful. I look on it as on the work of sapper and miner preparatory to a great crisis. All this good work, carried on noiselessly and unostentatiously by these various evangelizing agencies, must, in God's own way and time, bring forth fruit. He has promised that His Word shall not return to Him void. Meanwhile, there is a plain duty consistently with our own position as a Reformed Church in our relation to other branches of the Church of the Reformation.

It is very noteworthy and interesting that a very general feeling prevails abroad that the Church of England, not as represented by any one school, but in her moderate ritual and faithful teaching, is the *beau ideal* of a Church. There is no desire to cut adrift from a system Apostolic in its order, Catholic in its tradition, Evangelical in its teaching. This being so, it is all the more important, that the Church of England should maintain this moderate position; going neither Rome-ward in teaching and uses such as the Gallican Church is seeking to expunge; not going Geneva-ward, so that men anxious to forsake the Roman communion could not identify themselves with her. It is not too much, but it is only the sober truth, to say that the Church of England is looked to all over the Continent as the Church of the future. Our influence will be great, just as we are true to the fundamental principles of the Reformation, rejecting all that is unapostolic and superstitious, retaining all that is Apostolic and scriptural. And if a Döllinger can hold out the right hand of Christian fellowship to a Luther, we, without necessarily committing ourselves to all which Herzog and Reinkens and Loyson teach, may by our sympathy,

prayers, and alms do much to help forward the great religious movement set on foot by them. We can help to circulate those Scriptures which bring enlightenment to souls now sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. We can give French Protestantism an impulse which shall quicken its stagnation. We can extend the right hand of fellowship with earnest grasp and hearty good wishes to all who, however they may differ from us in things not essential to salvation, yet love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Our motto may be—

In things essential, unity ;
 In things indifferent, liberty ;
 In all things, charity.

FRANCIS PIGOU, D.D.

ART. II.—DEAN COLET.

THE name of John Colet is known scarcely to any, perhaps, but to men of extensive reading ; and yet he was the first in this country and in Europe to give utterance to those primary ideas on the study of Holy Scripture which are now universally accepted. He was the eldest son of Sir Henry Colet, a wealthy city merchant, who had been twice Lord Mayor of London. He had been early sent to the University of Oxford, where he took his degree of Master of Arts. Having afterwards taken orders, he was presented to a living in Suffolk and a prebend in Yorkshire. When he was a young man, he diligently studied the scholastic philosophy, and the works of Plato, Plotinus, and Cicero. He had willingly sacrificed the wealth which he might have accumulated if he had followed his father's occupation, as well as the prospect of distinction in the service of the State, which, through his father's influence, presented itself to him ; he had forsaken those temples in the great metropolis where Pleasure erected her throne, and assembled constantly crowds of her worshippers, that he might devote himself at Oxford to the study of the Scriptures and to the propagation of the results of that study among all who came within reach of his influence. In the year 1496 he began to deliver at Oxford a course of lectures on the Epistles of St. Paul. He was at this time the sole survivor of a family of twenty-two brothers and sisters. This great mortality must have produced in his mind serious impressions. He had just returned from Italy, to which country he had gone because he was anxious to cultivate the new learning.