

## THE NEW REFORMATION.



If novelty in thought is a disease, it is a contagious disease. Every phase of intellectual activity is afflicted with it. We have a New History, a New Education, a New Astronomy, a New Social Science, a New Political Economy, and a New Theology. Those Athenians who are always looking for some new thing must find in the present aspect of public thought a great deal to exhilarate them, and those quiet spirits who dread agitation and deprecate novelty must find abundant cause for apprehension. For myself I neither dread nor desire novelty; but I desire to understand both the old and the new. My object in this article is neither to condemn nor to commend the concurrent moods of thought of the present century, but to consider their origin and their significance, and thus to afford some data for coming to a just judgment respecting them.

The Lutheran Reformation was not merely a religious protest against ecclesiastical authority: it was a great intellectual awakening. Almost simultaneously with the protests against the Papal authority and the demand for an open Bible were the discovery of a Western continent and a quickened commerce, the invention of the printing-press and a revival and enlargement of literature, the birth of the scientific spirit and its application both to theoretical science and to the practical arts. Shakspeare and Cervantes, Gutenberg and Albert Dürer, Columbus and Copernicus, Loyola and Calvin, Xavier and Luther, were almost contemporaries. The first post-office, the first printing-press, the first telescope, the first spinning-wheel, were all nearly contemporaneous with the first open Bible and the first free religious speech. These are not accidents. In truth there are no accidents. The predominant principle of the Reformation—the right of private judgment—was more than a religious principle; certainly it had much more than a theological application. It was a revolt against authority. It threw humanity back upon its own resources. Rights are duties; and the duty of private judgment laid upon mankind the duty of original investigation and inquiry. This right had first to be taught to man, who is always reluctant to take up a new right if it impose a new duty. The opportunity to exercise it had to be won in many a hard battle. It in-

volved the wars in the Netherlands, the massacres in France, the civil wars in England. It cannot be said to be undisputed even now.

But by the beginning of the present century in all Protestant Europe, and even in most of Roman Catholic Europe, the right of man to think for himself had been established. It is still denied; it is still punished with ecclesiastical pains and penalties; but it no longer involves a hazard of life or limb. With the present century there began therefore a new era of intellectual activity—an era of individual and independent thinking. Authority was discarded; not religious authority only, but all authority over intellectual processes. The mind may be fettered or it may be free, but it cannot long be partly fettered and partly free. Freedom is indivisible; and the right to think in either science, politics, or religion carried with it necessarily the right to think in each of the other departments of thought. Liberty to investigate led to investigation. The Baconian philosophy was a natural and necessary production of the Lutheran Reformation; and a new science of life was the natural and necessary production of the Baconian philosophy. A fresh investigation was made into history. Records that had been unquestioned were subject to scrutiny. Niebuhr gave the world a new comprehension, not merely of Roman events, but of all ancient history. Stories that had passed current for generations were subjected to a free, not to say an irreverent, scrutiny. William Tell and King Canute were declared to be myths. Literature fared no better. Homer was abolished, and the Homeric ballads were attributed to an impersonal epoch by the same free spirit which denied the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the apostolic authority of the Fourth Gospel. Shakspeare was reduced from the rank of a poet to that of an actor, and his plays were variously attributed to Bacon and to anonymous authors. Scientific theories which tradition had stamped as current coin in the intellectual realm were cast into the melting-pot for a new assay. Some radical errors were discovered; and each discovery made easier the work of the critic. Every hypothesis was subjected to suspicion. The whole body of scientific tradition was swept away by the same spirit which refused to own allegiance to ecclesiastical tradition. The scientific talmuds were put away on the shelf as antique curiosities; and the world began an independent and direct investigation of phe-

nomena, sometimes incited thereto by a spirit of iconoclastic egotism wholly unscientific, but in the main inspired by a noble curiosity—an appetite for the truth. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood led to a new physiology; a new botany, a new astronomy, and a new biology followed. In the material sciences the text-books of ten years ago are already out of date.

The students of psychology were last to catch the new spirit of the age; but they were not and could not be impervious to it. Plato was for a while closed, though we are beginning to open him again; and the scholars, turning aside from a study of what other scholars had said about man, began to study man himself. Gall, Spurzheim, and Combe discovered the intimate relations of mind and brain, and developed a science of organology which, if it is somewhat crude and has sometimes been diverted to purposes of traveling charlatans, yet represents a profound truth which science is tardily beginning to recognize. Sir William Hamilton set an example of direct study of consciousness which modern psychology is carrying forward with valuable results. It would have been strange indeed if the reaction against the despotic authority of tradition had not produced some unhealthy contempt for it, and this doubtless was the case; but we are getting beyond this first stage of the new era, and the sober-minded thinkers in all departments agree in condemning nihilism as no better in science or religion than in politics, and in commending the aphorism of Mr. Gladstone, "No greater calamity can happen to a people than to break utterly with its past."

It would have been equally strange if the impulse to original investigation and independent judgment which was derived from the religious life had not in time affected the religious life; if, having learned in the school of conscience the right and duty of private judgment, mankind had made no attempt to exercise it in measuring the truth and value of religious tradition; if, renouncing authority in all other departments of intellectual life, it had bowed submissively to authority in matters of religious belief and moral action; if, in disowning the supremacy of scientific and political creeds, it had not also disowned the supremacy of theological creeds; nay, if in its reaction against them the same spirit of somewhat iconoclastic skepticism which had repudiated Homer should not also show itself in doubts concerning Moses. It was in the nature of things impossible that there should be a New Science, a New Politics, and a New Philosophy, and not also be a New Theology. The one is no more to be dreaded than the other; and the philosophic mind will be equally unready in

each instance to rush to the conclusion that it is wholly true or wholly false. I am not of course unaware of Macaulay's famous proposition that in theology there can be nothing new; but I believe it as little as I believe in his correlative proposition that in theology there can be nothing certain. In strictness of speech, no truth is new. It has always been as true as it is now that light is a wave and that the earth and planets move around the sun. But man's apprehension of truth is new, and his apprehension of moral and spiritual truth is quite as much affected by his spiritual development as his apprehension of intellectual truth is affected by his intellectual development. Only the agnostic can consistently deny the fact of theological progress. Even he who gives to the Bible a literal interpretation must yet perceive that man's ability to understand it will depend upon his spiritual conception. The scriptural declaration that God is love does not convey the same meaning to a bushman as to a Madame Guyon or a John Wesley.

At all events, as matter of historic fact, the same spirit of independent thought which set men to original investigation of the phenomena of vegetable, animal, social, and political life moved another class of thinkers to an independent investigation of the source of religious truth and life. And as Protestants regarded the Bible as one of the original sources,—if not the chief source,—the beginning of the present century witnessed in all Protestant Christendom the beginning of an original, systematic, and enthusiastic study of the Bible. It had been studied before, but never with the same spirit manifested in the same degree. It was now for the first time a study of independent investigation. Biblical criticism assumed a new significance and a new importance. The question of the authorship and composition of the books of the Bible, the object of the writers, the circumstances under which they wrote, the audiences to which they spoke, have been studied anew and with valuable results. The libraries of Europe and even the monasteries of the East have been ransacked for manuscripts, and the manuscripts themselves have been collated and compared with an enthusiasm and a painstaking far greater than that bestowed on any secular writers of equal antiquity. The writings have been subjected to a minute and even a microscopic critical examination, and a more comprehensive study of their general tenor has not been neglected. In the theological seminaries, at first in Germany, then in our own country, a new department of biblical theology has been established, and the departments of biblical exegesis and biblical theology are coming to hold a place equal with if not superior to that of systematic theology,

which had before dominated every seminary. New translations of the Scriptures have sprung up in every land; and these have proved themselves in England and America only forerunners of a new revision of the English version, undertaken by representatives of the entire Protestant church. Its scholarly qualities are indubitable, whatever objections to it may be made by a conservative spirit or a literary taste. A new class of commentators on the Scriptures have arisen, and a new class of commentaries have superseded their more polemical and less independent predecessors. Meyer in Germany, Godet in France, and Alford in England may not be abler as thinkers than Augustine, or Calvin, or even Clarke; but their spirit is radically different. They neither attempt to interpret Scripture in harmony with a preconceived theological system, nor even to deduce a theological system from Scripture — hardly to prove that it is self-consistent and harmonious. They simply endeavor to show the reader what the language of the sacred writers, properly interpreted, means, and leave him to educe his own system.<sup>1</sup> Finally the whole Protestant church in Europe and America agreed upon a systematic study of the Bible in the Sabbath-school in a series of pre-arranged lessons; and so wide is the interest in this course of Bible study that every religious newspaper and some secular papers print every week a commentary on the current lesson. These helps are naturally not always very scholarly, the study in the Sabbath-school is not always very thorough, and the selection of the lessons themselves is not above criticism; but the fact that several millions of children are simultaneously engaged in a weekly study of the Bible, and that this Bible study has very generally usurped the place allotted a hundred years ago, or even less, to the catechism, is significant of the movement of the century away from traditional authority towards independent investigation in theology as in all other sciences. More important than all is the concentrated attention which this study of the Church has directed towards the life and character of Christ. One has only to compare Fleetwood's "Life of Christ" with any one of those which are to be found upon any minister's bookshelves to perceive the difference in the theological spirit of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The past half-century has

produced above a score of Lives of Christ.<sup>2</sup> Without concord of action they have appeared almost simultaneously in Germany, France, Holland, England, and America. They have been written by Jews, Rationalists, Liberal Christians, and strict Calvinists; they represent every attitude of mind — the coldly critical in Strauss, the rationalistic but reverent in Hooykaas, the dramatic and imaginative in Renan, the critically orthodox in Lange and Ebrard, the historical and scholarly in Geikie and Edersheim, the devout and popular in Hanna and Farrar. It thus appears, from a merely cursory survey of the history of religious thought since the beginning of the present century, that the entire Church has been engaged, to an extent never known before, and in a spirit never possible before, in a study of the Bible, and especially of the life of Christ. It has been engaged in by every school of thought and by every type of mind; by the rationalist and the orthodox, the critical and the devotional mind, the textual and the theological mind, the gray-haired professor and the infant-class. And all of every age and every school have been engaged, though doubtless in different degrees both of independence and earnestness, in an original investigation of the source of Christian truth and life, and with a purpose to ascertain for themselves from the original sources what are Christian truth and Christian life as interpreted by Christ and his immediate disciples.

Now it is impossible that such a study could have been pursued for over half a century and not give us something new in both theology and ethics. It is impossible that such an intellectual activity should exist and not produce some new and profound convictions, some new and clear apprehensions, and some new and crude notions which further study pursued in the same spirit will eventually correct. If half a century of study of the Bible, if especially half a century of study of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, did nothing to give the Christian student a clearer vision, a wider horizon, and a larger faith, hope, and charity, we might well begin to doubt whether either the Bible was the book or Christ the person we had thought; whether they were not correct who tell us that the world has outgrown the teaching of the one and the example of the other. If I have read aright the signs of the times, what is called the New Theology is not, properly speaking, a theology at all; it is certainly not a New England notion nor a German importation. It is the spirit of original investigation, characteristic of the age, applied to the elucidation of the problems of religious thought and life; it is a desire for a clearer understanding of the Christianity of

<sup>1</sup> A striking illustration of this is offered by Dean Alford's frank declaration that there is no authority in the New Testament for the doctrine of apostolic succession. With this contrast Calvin's constant thrust at the papacy in his commentaries, which are as polemically Protestant as his Institutes.

<sup>2</sup> I count on my own shelves twenty-five separate Lives of Christ; and of course my collection is far from complete.

Jesus Christ, and a quest for it in the original sources of information. It is accompanied, as all such searchings are, by some strengthening of old convictions and some correction of old errors on the one hand, and on the other by some clearer apprehension of truths but dimly perceived before, and some crude and hasty conclusions which may be safely left to the test of time and further study. I shall not attempt to gather up the results of this half-century of study. To do so would be to frame indeed a "new theology"; and if that should ever be desirable, the time for it has not yet come. But I may indicate the direction in which and the path along which Christian thought seems to me to be traveling.

This has indeed been already partly indicated. Christian thought has broken with ecclesiastical authority; it has substituted therefor original research. To one who lives in the nineteenth century, imbibes its atmosphere, and shares its life, there is no alternative between not thinking at all and thinking under the conditions which the nineteenth century imposes. And the nineteenth century requires original work of all its students. The historian discards the traditions which centuries have accepted unquestioned, and ransacks the archives of old libraries for original documents; the political economist turns unsatisfied away from the dogmatism of Ricardo and asks life what are the actual conditions of industry; the geologist studies the rocks with his hammer in his hand; Wallace catches in his own nets the insects he will describe; the psychologist gathers from a wide field of observation the facts of consciousness. The theologian cannot live in such an age and not go direct to the two sources of Christian faith — the Bible and Christian experience — and interrogate them for himself.<sup>1</sup> The progress of the age is away from traditionalism towards the Scriptures, away from a scholastic towards a vital theology. This is not equivalent to saying that it is away from the beliefs embodied in the old creeds. It is one thing to doubt a statement and quite another thing to question its authority. The most pugnacious Protestant believes the more important statements contained in the Roman Catholic creed, but he denies totally the authority of the creed. The most radical Rationalist believes many of the fundamental principles of the Bible, but he denies that the Bible is an authority. For myself, I believe that the final result of the original research which characterizes the present age will be to confirm all the fundamental statements of belief contained in the ecumenical creeds of Christendom. But they will be believed, not because they are contained in those creeds, but

because they have been verified by a fresh and sometimes hostile investigation. At all events, a fresh and sometimes hostile investigation is a characteristic of the age. This spirit of investigation is what makes this an age of skepticism. But surely there is no kinship between the spirit which scoffs at all that is invisible and immaterial and the spirit which refuses to believe anything, visible or invisible, except upon trustworthy evidence and after thorough inquiry. The former is not characteristic of the age. It characterized the age of Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Paine; it does not characterize the age of Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin. The age is emphatically serious, not scoffing. It questions seriously; it is not content to accept assertion for proof, tradition for investigation, dogma for faith. It investigates everything, and investigation presupposes doubts; but it doubts that it may investigate. It is true that every man cannot be an original investigator. We cannot all catch insects with Wallace, or study the rocks with Lyell, or search the libraries with Motley, or collate industrial statistics with Professor Ely. Nor can we all investigate either the history of Christian life in the Church or collate and compare the disclosure of Christian truth in the several books of the Bible. But in the nineteenth century the only men who speak with authority and exercise leadership are the men who have verified their conclusions by original research. We go to the student of industrial life for our political economy, to the student of the stars for our astronomy, to the student of original documents for our history, and to the student of the Bible and of spiritual experience for our theology. Is the pulpit losing its power? There are pulpits and pulpits. The pulpit which contents itself with repeating old dogmas on the authority of old creeds has lost its power, if indeed it ever had any. But the pulpits that get their knowledge of truth directly from the written word of God, and from that word which he is ever writing in the hearts and lives of men, never had so great a power as now. When men object to doctrinal preaching what they really object to is preaching founded on ecclesiastical authority. The most popular preachers of England and America to-day, from Maurice to Spurgeon in England and from Phillips Brooks to John Hall in America, are

<sup>1</sup> To one who regards the Bible as itself a transcript of the highest spiritual life, recorded both as an inspiration to and a test of religious consciousness, these two sources will appear not to be, as they are sometimes regarded, inconsistent, nor even as they are often regarded, different; but really only different phases of the same original source of all theology and revelation — the inward, spiritual apprehension of the invisible and the divine.

essentially doctrinal preachers;<sup>1</sup> but they are not dogmatic preachers. They are vital; they speak with the authority of teachers whose knowledge of the truth is derived from the original sources by original study.

This tendency to an original investigation of Christianity has compelled the Church to a more careful and continuous study of the character and teachings of its Founder. The evidence of this in the multiplied Lives of Christ I have already adverted to; the results of it are radical changes in Christian thought. It must first be noted that, widely as students of that life differ in their psychology of Christ and in the degree of allegiance which they pay to his teachings, there is a substantial agreement among them that he correctly interpreted the moral laws which bind men together, and that he himself afforded by his life and character the best representative earth has ever possessed of the divine qualities in human action. Voltaire's motive was, *Ecrasez l'infame* ("Crush the monster"). Whether the monster was Jesus Christ, or Christianity, or the Roman Catholic Church, has been matter of dispute among his commentators. The truth is, he did not clearly discriminate between the three himself. Contrast this motive of the infidelity of the last century with the following eulogy with which the Dutch Rationalist Hooykaas concludes his "Life of Jesus":

Rest sweetly from thy toilsome work, thou noble benefactor, deliverer of mankind, great Son of God! Thy triumph is secure. Thy name shall be borne on the breath of the winds through all the world; and with that name no thought except of goodness, nobleness, and love shall link itself in the bosoms of thy brothers who have learned to know thee and what thou art. Thy name shall be the symbol of salvation to the weak and wandering, of restoration to the fallen and the guilty, of hope to all who sink in comfortless despair. Thy name shall be the mighty cry of progress in freedom, in truth, in purity — the living symbol of the dignity of man, the epitome of all that is noble, lofty, and holy upon earth. To thy name shall be inseparably bound that ideal of humanity which thou didst bring into the world, and which can never be rejected from it more. Thy life was short, yet in it thou didst more than any one of all thy brethren to uplift the lives and souls of men. And now that thou art dead, it shall be seen that they for whom thou didst give thyself up to the very death are not ungrateful. From thy cross goes forth a power which is slowly but surely regenerating the world. Thy spirit, which remains behind, shall fulfill thy task. The future is thine own. Thou great deliverer, thou monarch in

the realm of truth, of love, of peace, we do thee homage!

This contrast sufficiently indicates the change which has been wrought in what may be called the unbelieving world in the last one hundred years. The change in the Christian church is certainly not so startling; but it is important and significant, and the end is not yet.

Since the days of Augustine the Christian church has possessed no nobler hero than John Calvin; and since the days of Paul no member of that church has rendered it a greater service. The world had become atheistic. It still revered God's name, but it did not bow to his authority. Atheism, as Professor Seeley has well shown, is the philosophy of a supreme egotism. In it man says, I am God, and there is none else. Europe was not philosophically atheistic in the sixteenth century; but it was practically egotistic. Humanity owed its supreme allegiance to the king on his throne and to the pope in his chair. It knew no higher authority and acknowledged none. Then it was that John Calvin, following the more pugnacious reformer who had prepared the way for him, arose with his doctrine of Divine sovereignty. There is, he said, no king but one; no father but one: He alone is the universal King, the All-Father. Kings and hierarchies do but play at law-making; He is the only lawgiver. Crowns and thrones and chairs are but toys; He is the only crowned and enthroned and sceptered *One*. From Him all authority comes; in Him all authority centers; to Him all allegiance is due; His will is the final, ultimate, absolute fact in the universe. It cannot be questioned; and from it there is no appeal and no escape. This is Calvinism — the doctrine of Divine sovereignty: to be read in the light of the age against whose dormant anarchy, awakening later in the French Revolution, it was a solemn protest. Nor can we say even now, in the United States of America, with its shallow doctrine of popular sovereignty, its cry of *Vox populi, vox dei*, its egotism of democracy, its dead sea fruit of anarchic socialism, that there is no need to listen to and heed this protest of a solemn voice reaffirming the sublime doctrine of the ancient Hebrew prophets and itself reaffirmed by the least religiously minded of modern historians — J. A. Froude.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A most cursory examination of the published volumes of Henry Ward Beecher's sermons will show that he is preëminently a preacher of theology. This is equally true of Channing, Lyman Beecher, Finney, Bishop Simpson, the elder Tyng; in short, of all the more popular of American preachers of the last half-century.

<sup>2</sup> "A king or a parliament enacts a law, and we imagine we are creating some new regulation to encounter unprecedented circumstances. The law itself which is

applied to these circumstances was enacted from eternity. It has its existence independent of us, and will enforce itself either to reward or punish, as the attitude which we assume towards it is wise or unwise. Our human laws are but copies, more or less imperfect, of the eternal laws so far as we can read them, and either succeed and promote our welfare, or fail and bring confusion and disaster, according as the legislator's insight has detected the true principle, or has been distorted by ignorance or selfishness."

But sovereignty without love is an awful despotism; and the sovereignty of even John Calvin's Calvinism was a sovereignty not of love but of power—of power hardly even tempered by love. The world is a dull pupil. It never learns more than one lesson at a time. It could not learn at once even Matthew Arnold's simple proposition that there is a power not ourselves that makes for righteousness. It had first to learn that there is a power not ourselves. That lesson learned, it was prepared to go on and learn that this power makes for righteousness—not only is righteous, but makes for righteousness; a missionary power, working ever through the ages that it may conform all moral life to its own moral perfection. Fifty years' study of the life of Christ has brought this truth to the consciousness of the Christian church. Not that it is a new revelation. Not that it is a peculiar production of any new theology, or even of any Protestant theology. It can be found in the writings of theologians of every age and of every school. Nowhere is it expressed with profounder faith than in the letters of the Roman Catholic Madame Guyon and in the hymns of the hyper-Calvinistic Toplady. But it was not the heart of Christian theology, nor wrought into the life of the Christian church. It will not be questioned that Jonathan Edwards was the most characteristic preacher of the Calvinistic school in New England in the eighteenth century. It is impossible to reconcile his famous sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" with the belief now wrought into the consciousness of the Christian church that God was in Christ and that Christ is the manifestation of God. "The God," said the Puritan preacher, "that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours." This was the old theology of New England in the eighteenth century. No minister could utter such sentiments in any pulpit in New England to-day and retain his pastorate. No theologian can reconcile them with that faith in the love, and patience, and longsuffering of God which half a century of study of the life and teachings of Christ has wrought into the life of the Church. To the doctrine of Divine sovereignty we are adding, if we have not already added, the doctrine of Divine love. The Church accepts Jesus Christ not as a manifestation of a particular attribute of God, nor his life and death as part of a special plan to re-

strain from wrath a God whose anger endureth forever; but as a revelation of the longsuffering love of the universal Father, whose loving-kindnesses and tender mercies are over all his works. "The fatherhood of God" has taken the place occupied half a century ago by the "moral government of God." A good old deacon in the church of my boyhood always used to address God in prayer as "Indulgent Parent." He was wholly innocent of new theology; but all new theology was in that phrase.

What changes are likely to be worked in theological theories by this habit of original investigation into the source of Christian life and this more Christian conception of God as the Father of whom every fatherhood in earth is named, I shall not attempt in this paper to indicate; partly because it would lead me into what is just now a hotly contested field, partly because the time is not yet ripe for anything more than a tentative and doubtful statement, but chiefly because I have reserved these few closing paragraphs for a suggestion of certain practical and spiritual results in the life of the Church which the new Reformation has already produced and is certain to produce more and more in the immediate future.

The present century opened with very little of either religious light or warmth in the Puritan churches of England and America. Aggressive piety was almost confined to the Methodists, who had not yet lost the enthusiasm of their first great love and their first miraculous successes. The philosophy of Locke was the dominant philosophy in England, and was preparing the public mind for the materialism of Maudsley, the agnosticism of Herbert Spencer, and the utilitarianism of Bentham and of Mill.

In the Church of England worship was a dull routine, and preaching a prosaic essay-reading; in the Puritan churches faith was a cold intellectualism, and preaching an exposition of profound metaphysics. The orthodox definition of faith made it synonymous with belief; the orthodox definition of virtue made it synonymous with happiness. Mental philosophy ignored the spiritual element in man; moral philosophy ignored the virtues of self-denial and suffering love. The worship of a God who was only a moral governor developed a stalwart but a rigorous and exacting conscience; the worship of a God who existed for his own glory did nothing to develop a spirit of serving and self-sacrificing love in the worshiper. Luther himself had declared that man lost his freedom by the Fall, and that God had in his secret counsels reserved certain of his children to inevitable reprobation. Calvin, with less tender sympa-

thies and more remorseless logic, had dragged these counsels out from the secret places where Luther left them in hiding and had blazoned them through Europe. The Methodist revolt against fatalism as inconsistent with Scripture and with human consciousness had only intensified Puritan belief in the dangerous dogmas of unconditional decrees and reprobation. This fatalism, borrowed of the Old Reformation, with its ennobling but easily perverted doctrine of Divine sovereignty, had quickened unbelief and deadened piety. There were no revivals—the churches did not believe in them. The minister was a winnowing machine whose gospel was a fan in his hands, with which he selected the eternally chosen grains of wheat while the unalterable chaff was swept away into unquenchable fire. There was no missionary activity at home or abroad. When Dr. Dwight began his famous series of sermons at Yale College, it is said that there were two Thomas Paine societies in the college and but two professing Christians. Slavery was interpreted as a prolongation of the curse of God on the descendants of Canaan, and the drugged conscience of the North gave but feeble answer to the faithful preaching of Dr. Hopkins against it. The practical results of the New Reformation are to be seen in four great contemporaneous and concurrent tendencies, all easily traceable in the history of the present century.

*First.* In the Oxford movement in England a few earnest men, making quest for that life which the popular philosophy of the day either quietly ignored or dogmatically denied, turned their faces backward, and sought by reviving the mystical doctrines and the elaborate ritual of the half-pagan churches of the early ages to revive the life which had animated both. Under the leadership of such devout souls as the poet Keble and the prophet Newman archæology in religion enjoyed a revival the fruits of which are still to be seen in a revived Anglo-Romanism, an imitative ritualism, and a vigorous and vital work of Christian beneficence among the poor and the outcast. Simultaneously began, though without organism or acknowledged leaders, the Broad Church movement, in which men equally dissatisfied with the superficial philosophy of the age sought for spiritual truth by looking within for a witness of it; a movement whose prophets—Erskine, Maurice, the Hares, Arnold, Robertson, Kingsley, and Stanley—have made their voices heard across the Atlantic, where the spiritual song they sang has been caught up and sung by such poet-prophets as our own Munger, Mulford, Brooks, and a score of others. In the United States, in the death of Emmons, in 1840, there died the last repre-

sentative of the old school of New England preachers—the purely logical.

A new school is taking its place—the intuitional. That man is a reasonable creature; that the reason is the supreme and divine faculty; that his reason is to be convinced by the truth; that when his reason is convinced his will must obey; that when this result is reached he is a converted being—this was the philosophy which, sometimes avowed, sometimes unrecognized, underlay the preaching of the old school. The whole fabric of the religious life was built by logical processes, with doctrine, on the human reason. But all men are not logical; and all men do not obey the truth, even when it is made clear to their logical understanding. The office of logic is to criticise rather than to enforce, and to enforce rather than to reveal. Spiritual truth is not mined by picks and beaten out by hammers. It is in the heavens, not buried in the earth; to be seen, not mined. It is within, not without; not to be arrived at by slow processes of deduction, but to be apprehended and appreciated upon a mere presentation of it. This far-reaching truth was spoken outside the Church, in England by a Carlyle and in America by an Emerson; its spiritual prophet in the Puritan churches of New England was Horace Bushnell. Misapprehended by his critics, more sadly misapprehended by his disciples, they have too often constructed out of his visions, like those of an ancient Hebrew prophet, dogmas sometimes narrower and shallower than those which aroused his fiery indignation; and in the place of the Dagon which he cast down have put up a doll perhaps less hideous but certainly less venerable. That truth is immediately and directly seen by the soul; that God is no best hypothesis to account for the phenomena of creation, but the soul's best friend, its Father, its intimate personal companion; that inspiration is no remote phenomenon, once attested by miracles, now forever silenced in the grave of a dead God, but the universal and eternal fact of communion between a living God and living souls; that the forgiveness of sins is infinitely more than any theory of atonement, and that no theory of atonement can comprehend the full meaning of forgiveness of sins—these were not the theories of a philosopher; they were the realities, the vital convictions, the personal experiences of the saint, whose sainthood must be in the heart of the critic before he can criticise and in the heart of the disciple before he can comprehend.

*Second.* In our spiritual faith we are one; in our intellectual definitions and our esthetic expressions there are as many variations as varieties of education and of temperament.

As, therefore, the Christian character has progressed towards a clearer conception of the spiritual truth, which creeds imperfectly define and rituals imperfectly express, they have progressed first towards a larger toleration, then towards a wider sympathy, and finally towards a clearer apprehension that all sectarian differences are superficial and all Christian unity is radical and essential. Towards the close of the eighteenth century a Scotch stone-mason was excommunicated by a Presbyterian church for helping to build an Episcopal church; the Presbyterians justified their act by the Old Testament denunciation of those who built altars to pagan gods in the high places. About the same time a devout Presbyterian woman in Pennsylvania refused one stormy night to give shelter under her roof to the godly Alexander Campbell, the founder of the denomination which popularly bears his name, and thought that she did God service because John had told his readers not to receive into their houses or bid God-speed to those who were transgressors of the law and teaching of Christ. These are typical facts. The older readers of these pages will easily remember when polemically denominational sermons were the rule rather than the exception, and each church appeared to be more anxious to fight the church over the way than to join it in fighting the world, the flesh, and the devil. This era of internecine, sectarian warfare has passed away forever, under the influence of the New Reformation with its study of Christian consciousness, of the Bible, and, above all, of the life and teachings of Christ. The Evangelical Alliance was organized in 1845 to give expression to the common faith and spirit of Protestant Christianity. The Young Men's Christian Association, formed to unite all believers in Christ in a common work for him, grew up almost spontaneously from a mustard seed planted in London in 1844. An undenominational religious press has sprung up both in Great Britain and the United States within little if any more than a quarter of a century, with a wide and widening constituency in all denominations. Religious teaching, Christian but unsectarian, is to be found in increasing quantity and improving quality in every form of literature, periodical and permanent. The great dailies, which quarter of a century ago rarely printed a sermon, now publish every Monday morning extracts or full reports of sermons with an absolutely unsectarian impartiality. Protestant Christianity is still divided into sects, and the sectarian organizations appear as strong if not as sectarian as ever; but the movement towards interdenominational comity, if not ecclesiastical union, grows stronger every year. The Pan-Presby-

terian Assembly gives promise of a not remote union of all Presbyterian churches in some federal if not organic body. The Congregationalists and Free Baptists are discussing union. The Episcopal church has, in its Triennial Convention and by official utterance, indicated its desire for a united Protestantism, and suggested a doctrinal and hierarchical basis. Whether that basis is broad enough to be practical, I do not need here to consider; the spirit of the age and of the Church is indicated by such a proposition. Sectarian preaching is rare, controversially sectarian preaching is still rarer. The reader may go into any church in any town of the United States on any Sunday morning, and the probability is that he cannot tell the denomination from the contents of the sermon; he may from the manner of the preacher or the conduct of the services, but not from the truths uttered in the public discourse. Under the inspiration of the New Reformation the church of Christ is already one, and is beginning to discern, though only dimly as yet, and to express, though only timidly and with reserve, its spiritual unity.

*Third.* Simultaneously with this growth in spirituality and unity has come a growth in practical activity, in what is termed, with not altogether felicitous phrase, "aggressive piety." Nearly all the great missionary movements of the present day in the American churches were undertaken since the beginning of the present century. The American Board of Foreign Missions, the mother of American missionary activity, is a little over three-quarters of a century old. In England the Established Church organized a Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts as early as 1701, but it was in its earlier history merely a church extension society for work in the colonies of Great Britain, not a truly foreign missionary society. The work of missions in foreign lands, despite some prophetic and sporadic attempts, began substantially with the beginning of the present century.

The missionary movement is not a merely philanthropic movement; it does not derive its power from a mere sentiment of pity for men and of fear for their future. Its inspiration is in a spiritual sense of what it is for a child of God to live in ignorance of his Father and in isolation from him, and in the hopefulness caught from faith in and communion with a God whose faith in the possibilities of man and whose hope for and love towards him are infinite and inexhaustible. As the Church has studied the life and character of Christ it has caught his spirit, it has imbibed his life and followed his example. Whatever may be thought of this explanation, there can be no doubt of the historical fact that the movement



towards the disavowal of ecclesiastical authority, an original and independent study of the Scriptures and of Christian experience, a direct, spiritual appreciation of truth as spiritually discerned, and a unity of the Church in the essentials of faith, hope, and charity has been contemporaneous with, or possibly a little antecedent to, that vital and vigorous missionary movement at home and abroad which is characteristic of the life of the Church in this latter half of the nineteenth century.

*Fourth.* Equally characteristic of this age is the practical application of the precepts of Christ to the moral and social problems of life; and in my judgment this characteristic is due to the same causes. Certainly the conscience of the American people, I should rather say of the Anglo-Saxon people, never has been so sensitive and never so resolute in dealing with practical life. If the most trustworthy expressions of religious feeling are those uttered in devotional meetings, private journals, and religious biography, it is quite possible that what the theologians call "conviction of sin" was more poignant in the last century than in this; but if the most trustworthy expressions of religious feeling are those embodied in life, the sense of sin and the purpose of reformation have been far more effectively expressed in this century than in the last. Then millions of slaves were held in bondage in America, and other millions under the British flag in its colonies, with only a feeble and wholly ineffective protest. Drunkenness did not lead to social disrepute either in Old or in New England. Churches paid for drinks on occasions of dedications and ordinations, and the minister's sideboard took on the aspect of a public bar.<sup>1</sup> The conscience of England abolished slavery in all English dominions in 1833; that of the United States, moving more slowly and having a more onerous task, accomplished its work thirty years later and at an awful cost. But the task was accomplished. Almost on the very spot where in the first half of this century a Northern missionary was publicly whipped on the bare back, not for circulating antislavery tracts, but for having one in his possession, now stand the buildings of the Fisk University, dedicated to the education of the emancipated negro. If drinking has not been diminished,—upon that question social statisticians are not agreed,—drunkenness certainly has decreased, both in England and in the United States; and the conscience of the people, awakened to the

enormity of a social crime which costs more in both men and money than either war or pestilence, is seeking to find a way to bring the destruction of this enemy to a perpetual end. It has not yet found the way; but it has found, or is fast finding, the will. And where there is a will there is a way.

In 1850 the American Congress organized the polygamous Mormons into a Territory of the United States, and President Fillmore appointed the chief polygamist of them all governor of the Territory. In 1887 the House of Representatives, without a division or a roll-call, passed a law declaring polygamy a felony and disfranchising any one who practiced it. Without entering upon either the question of Irish home rule or of American socialism, it is safe to say that both movements derive all their strength from a public sense of justice. That the English movement in favor of granting Irish home rule is inspired, not by political selfishness, cupidity, lust of power, or other basilar motives, but by a high sense of righteousness, will hardly be denied even by its opponents; and that whenever the English people have determined what is the true measure of righteousness they will grant whatever it demands will hardly be doubted by any student of current English history. Between the good and the evil in modern socialism it is more difficult to discriminate. A movement which involves principles so divergent and even antagonistic as those of the Christian socialists of England on the one hand, represented by such prophets of a nobler social life as Maurice and Hughes, and those of the Anarchists on the other, represented by such extravagants as *Élisée Reclus* and *Prince Krapotkin*, cannot be justly characterized in a single paragraph. Yet the candid student of our national life, who measures currents, not by the driftwood they carry on their surface but by the direction which they take, will hardly question *James Russell Lowell's* interpretation of the phenomenon of modern socialism: "Socialism means, or wishes to mean, coöperation and community of interests, sympathy; the giving to the hands, not so large a share as to the brain, but a larger share than hitherto in the wealth they must combine to produce; means, in short, the practical application of Christianity to life, and has in it the secret of an orderly and benign reconstruction."

In short, the New Reformation in bringing into theology as central the Fatherhood of God

<sup>1</sup> "When the Consociation arrived, they always took something to drink round; also before public services, and always on their return. As they could not all drink at once, they were obliged to stand and wait as people do when they go to mill. There was a decanter of spirits also on the dinner table to help digestion, and gentlemen partook of it through the afternoon and

evening as they felt the need—some more, some less; and the sideboard, with the spillings of water and sugar and liquor, looked and smelled like the bar of a very active grog-shop. None of the Consociation were drunk; but that there was not, at times, a considerable amount of exhilaration I cannot affirm." [*Lyman Beecher's Autobiography*, Vol. I., p. 245.]

is bringing into political economy the Brotherhood of Man. A new theology and a new sociology go hand in hand. Their advocates and interpreters are the same. The same causes have produced them, they represent the same intellectual and spiritual aspirations, and they are marred by similar errors, extravagances, and destructive criticisms.

The reader will perhaps permit me, in bringing this paper to a close, to sum up in a sentence its conclusions. The Protestant Reformation, denying all human authority over beliefs, and confining such authority to the sphere of human and mainly of social action, threw humanity back upon itself and drove it to an independent investigation of the sources of Christian faith. These sources are Christian experience in the history of the Church, and the Bible, especially the life and teachings of Christ. The result was inevitable—a disavowal of all ecclesiastical authority in matters of opinion, often mistaken for skepticism, and a disavowal of all beliefs founded on such authority, often mistaken for infidelity. But its result was also a clearer spiritual vision of spiritual truth; that is, a clearer faith, a stronger and more hope-

ful purpose of propagating and diffusing that faith, and an application of faith's teachings, both more practical and more earnest, to the actual problems of human life. This movement thus interpreted is neither temporary nor local; it is a part of the great historic movement of the human race under the inspiring influence of the Christian revelation. It is not free from those hasty hypotheses and crude generalities which characterize all human thought. But it is a progress towards a clearer light and a diviner life; one to be thankful for, not to be regretted; to be aided by the Christian clergy, not restrained; guided, not repressed. If any one who has kindly read this paper through to its end is inclined to lay it down with a smile, saying its author is an optimist, I shall not dispute him. Believing in the inspiration of him who is the greatest optimist of history, except our Divine Master, and who wrote, "Now abideth these three: faith, hope, and charity," I trust that so long as my faith in God and my charity to my fellow-men abide, there may abide with them a joyful hope in a glorious future for the human race.

*Lyman Abbott.*



### FREDERICK III.

THERE fell a king. Not king alone in blood,  
Nor royal throne, by right of which he reigned,  
But by the royalty of soul unstained,  
And heart that beat but for his people's good.

A warrior, yet beyond the battlefield  
The larger victories of peace he saw:  
His life a pledge to freedom, progress, law,  
Most patient suffering divinely sealed.

There fell a king. Nay, there a king arose.  
Stars do not set in night, though night goes down;  
Steadfast they gleam in heaven's eternal crown,  
Though days in nights, and nights in days may close.

"Lord of himself," — that greatest conqueror,—  
No nobler form in all his noble house.  
Dead, the imperial crown still sits his brows,  
And past the grave he still is emperor.

*Ina D. Coolbrith.*