

difficulty. To frame the constitution apparently there must be a convention representing all the members of the proposed Confederation. But before this convention could be called it would be necessary to agree upon a principle of representation, the difficulty of which has been already touched on, and also to determine whether India was to be included. It would be necessary, too, that each delegate should have and retain the confidence of his state, and the balance of parties, in the Colonies especially, changes so often, that very likely before the session had well commenced the credentials of some of the delegates might be withdrawn.

The ratification of the constitution by all the states would also be an exceedingly ticklish process. In the case of the American Colonies no difficulties of such magnitude presented themselves. There was a group of tolerably equal communities manifestly united in interest as well as geographically, and forced into each other's arms by the pressure of extreme need. Yet we know what efforts were required on the part of the founders of the constitution of the United States to overcome the centrifugal forces with which they had to contend, and how great at one time was the danger of miscarriage in the ratification through the jealousies and the fractiousness of particular States. The Federal constitution of Canada was imposed on the British American Colonies by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and was never submitted to the Canadian people. With Lord Beaconsfield at the head of the Government, the Imperial Federationists had power in their hands to as great an extent as they are likely ever to have it. Yet they took not a single step towards the practical initiation of their scheme. Not a single step have they yet taken either in the British Parliament or in any Colonial Legislature. Notice of a resolution was given in the Canadian Parliament last session by Mr. Dalton McCarthy, the leading man of the party here; but the resolution was never brought forward. We have really had nothing to this hour but platform-talk of a vehement but very indefinite kind, seasoned occasionally with pretty severe strictures on those whose bosoms refused to dilate with generous and loyal emotions in favour of a project which was yet to be revealed.

Yet all this time events are marching, and the forelock of opportunity is fitting away from the Federationists' hesitating grasp. Canada and all the other Colonies daily advance in the direction of complete self-government—that is, in the direction opposite to Imperial Federation. The more convenient season, to which Federationists are always putting off the disclosure of their plan, may be discernible to their forecast, but it certainly is not to ours. One reason which some of us have for challenging the practical intentions of the authors of this movement is, that Imperial Federation is being used by Home Rulers to lure romantic minds into consenting to the dismemberment of the United Kingdom, in the hope that they will thereby be only providing raw materials for an ampler and grander union.

RELIGION IN GERMANY.—II.

In our previous article we referred to the "liberty from ecclesiasticism" in Germany, of which Dr. Beyschlag speaks, as in some measure accounting for the freedom with which men now give expression to their doubts on the subject of the Christian religion. The writer goes on to remark that, although modern liberalism had won for itself "the right to live and die outside the shadow of the Church," comparatively few of the whole people had availed themselves of this liberty. Of the upper classes virtually none had done so, of the lower a very small proportion.

It must not, of course, be overlooked that there are many different causes co-operating to produce these results. But the fact remains, and Dr. Beyschlag mentions that even the Social Democrats, in this respect giving heed to their wives rather than to their leaders and misleaders, have disobeyed the word of command to desert the Churches. It is true that the social motive may here be traced rather than the religious; but at least it is an evidence of religious sentiment existing among the women, and of respect for it among the men. If these cannot be counted religious, neither can they be numbered among the irreligious; and the author thinks they are, to a great extent, sceptical.

The prevalence of scepticism—halting between two opinions in regard to the truth of Christianity—he says, is explained by the progress of thought in Europe generally, and particularly in Germany, since the middle of the eighteenth century. He points out that, among Romans and Protestants alike, there was, at that time, a serious depression of the religious spirit. Those who remember Bishop Butler's remarks on the state of religion in England about the same time, will understand how wide-spread was the tendency here noted. It was not, says Dr. Beyschlag, that religious life entirely ceased in Germany, but it was fitful, uncertain, changeable, at one time becoming pietistic, onesidedly ascetic and sentimental, at another, rationalistic, entering into a kind of compromise with the new intellectual tendencies of the age.

It is very interesting to trace the revival alike of literature and religion in Germany towards the end of the Century. Even if we cannot say, with Goethe, that "he who possesses science and art has also religion," we cannot overlook the fact that the great literary moment, represented by Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe, was almost coincident with the religious movement which found its greatest representative in Schleiermacher—a movement which, Dr. Beyschlag asserts, had its spring checked by "night frosts" of various kinds.

In tracing the various influences which have helped or hindered the development of religious life, he speaks of the philosophy, at first idealist, afterwards realist, which has determined many to the rejection of religion in every form, in favour of a materialistic atheism; but he also sees, in the uprising of German patriotism, a sign of a prevalent idealism, while again

he discerns, in the attempt to naturalize and to Darwinise the idea of the State, a degradation of man as a spiritual being and a blow at religion.

When, he goes on to remark, we consider all these tendencies and influences which have been affecting German thought during the last century and a half, we wonder that religion in Germany is no worse off than it is. It speaks, he says, for the deeply religious character of the German mind, it speaks for the quiet tenacity of the religious awaking which took place at the beginning of the present century, that the breach with religion and Christianity in the German heart is, in spite of all, not an accomplished fact.

Still the danger of such a complete breach is a present and pressing danger. Religious faith in the German people, he says, hovers between life and death; it is as "smoking flax." As Goethe has remarked, "the special, unique, and deepest problem in human history, to which all others are subordinate, is the conflict between unbelief and belief. All the periods in which faith prevails, under whatever form, are brilliant, heart-elevating, and fruitful for themselves and for posterity. All the periods, on the contrary, in which unbelief, in whatever form, obtains a miserable victory, even although they may have a momentary appearance of splendour, vanish in the presence of posterity, since no one cares to trouble himself with the knowledge of the unfruitful."

The author goes on to show that faith, in Goethe's meaning, faith in the highest reality, in the alone unconditional value of a supersensual, ideal world, is the motive power of all that is truly great which passes in this world. This supersensual world is the Archimedean prop by means of which man can move the world of sense without him and the world of thought within him.

But he proceeds to point out that the absence of faith, if not positive unbelief, the unsettled condition of scepticism into which the German people, to a great extent, have fallen, if an evil sign of the times, is not the worst. The diseases of the multitude are bad, he says, but it is worse when even the physicians are affected by them, or when the means of cure are corrupted or destroyed. And the worst sign of the times, he says, to put it in the clearest form, is, when faith (*Glaube*) calls superstition (*Aberglaube*) to its aid in order to overcome unbelief (*Unglaube*). The essential difference between faith and superstition is that genuine faith is the freest act of the heart, the innermost act of the will, and only as such, as free surrender to the love of God, produces moral freedom; whilst superstition is blind devotion to something unknown and obscure, an unfree servile submission to an external authority.

Under these heads he introduces the Roman question, more especially in its later developments. He points out that, instead of the venerable objects of faith of Catholic Christianity, we have a kind of heathen religion hidden under plausible Christian forms; the Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Saints and the Pope being the actual *numina* of Roman piety, whilst the doctrine of papal infallibility has been introduced to bind these burdens securely upon men's shoulders. Worst of all, says Dr. Beyschlag, even through Protestant Germany there is blowing a Roman Catholic wind. He refers to the acceptance of the Vatican decrees, and even to the influence of Roman teaching upon those who are outside the sphere of the papal obedience. This Romanizing current, he says, can be accounted for only by a depression of the impulses of the Reformation, and for this he regards the "Evangelical Church" as responsible. Chief among its errors he reckons a participation in the dogmatic spirit of Romanism, an evil reaction, as he regards it, from the scepticism which brings all things into doubt.

Among the defects in Lutheran teaching to which he refers, we are somewhat surprised to find that he places mechanical views of Atonement and Justification. Among ourselves these prevail only among the very obscure and uneducated sects and teachers, and we had thought that the freer and more spiritual teachings on these subjects had been greatly derived from modern German teachers. Dr. Beyschlag, however, maintains that many of the clergy in Germany, at the present time, have departed from the spiritual teaching of Luther in regard to the power of faith. This "faith which alone justifies" was "an active, powerful, moving principle," which does not go about asking for good works, but which produces good works spontaneously out of its inner power and force. But soon, he says, faith was changed into an act of the understanding, a submission to certain revealed and beneficial doctrines; and thus it came, if not in theory, yet practically and in fact, from being a principle of good works to be a substitute for them.

We know quite well that such a criticism might have been applied to a good deal of Christian teaching in Great Britain some years ago; but we had thought that it had almost disappeared from our Protestant pulpits. It appears that it still lingers in Germany, and we agree with Dr. Beyschlag that it must be a great hindrance to the real power and influence of the Christian religion. Still, he says, he does not despair, because he discerns among Germans something of the working of that true faith which is the evidence of things not seen. Even if he is forced to confess that the power of Rome in Protestant Germany is great and oppressive, when the "Evangelical Confession, the true German religion, is thrust to the wall, pushed on one side, overshadowed by its old opponent in public life, and at all points thrown on its defence, while the hereditary foe of the German name and kingdom rides aloft with the Vatican trumpet in his hand, triumphing over the most powerful German State," still he will not despair of victory, since in former days it was won over the same adversary at a time when his power was far greater than at present. A new Luther may soon be given to revive and carry forward the work of the past. "The kingdom of God cannot perish, and the centre from which its power will go forth into all the world, so far as human eyes can determine, is on German soil."