

that of a wanderer from his footsteps. Against Kant, Strauss, Schopenhauer, Mill, Spencer and others, the author defends the cosmological proof of the divine existence. He also defends the teleological argument. He holds that religion has its seat in the will, and that submission to the divine will is its essence; but religion also permeates the whole being, affecting the intellect so as to produce faith, influencing the life so as to work morality, and also affecting the heart in all its relations.

To the testimony of philosophers in favor of religion we must add that of Professor Lasson, of Berlin. It is the more significant because he defends Christianity against the attacks of the naturalistic views of a professor of theology. In *Preussische Jahrbücher* for March, he published an article on *Zeitgenössische Religionsphilosophie*, in which he reviews Bender's book on *The Essence of Religion*. Professor Lasson says: "The problem of religion is one of those which are brought home with special emphasis to the present generation. It consequently cannot be ignored. In our public life particular prominence has for a long time been given to the question of the proper treatment of all that pertains to religion and the Church; and every person who is accustomed to determine intelligently his relations to burning questions finds himself obliged to determine his personal relations to the religious life of the present. To the practical is added the scientific consideration. Never have anthropological and ethnological studies been pursued with more zeal and greater success." In this way a large mass of material respecting the history of religion has been collected. All that pertains to the essence and to the philosophy of religion in general has a special interest in our day. But he regards Bender's explanation of religion—namely, as the product of the struggle for existence—as the result of loose and unphilosophical thinking; and proceeds to show that the professor of theology is neither a philosopher nor a theologian.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, for 1885, gives some interesting views of the religious condition of the different countries where the society operates. M. Monod, the agent for France, writes: "That no religious aspirations are inspiring this nation, taken as a whole, is but too evident; but not less evident is it that professed unbelief and contempt for religion are the lamentable and distinctive features, *not of the masses*, but of some mostly political circles in large towns, and, in smaller places, of a few individuals who have no other means at their disposal to attract public notice. For a keen observer, the wind of atheism that has been blowing over France for years is slowly

yielding to better influences, and, if the field of our labor remains indeed rocky, there are numerous indications that the Lord Himself is breaking up the soil." It is stated that, on the whole, there was no great increase of hostility on the part of the Church to the work of the Society, but unbelief was becoming more bitter and more demonstrative. The circulation of the Bible shows a considerable decrease over the previous year. Yet the colporteurs "have taken more pains than ever, traveled more, suffered more."

In practical as well as in theoretical theology, the influence of Schleiermacher is still seen in Germany. Professor Dr. Bassermann, of Heidelberg, has published a work on *Pulpit Eloquence*, based chiefly on the views of that eminent theologian. The work is divided into three parts, discussing first Eloquence in General; then the Cultus; and thirdly, the Eloquence of the Pulpit. He holds that the preacher should regard his people as a congregation of believers, and that, therefore, the sermon should not be of a missionary character. The author is a liberal, and holds that the doctrine of the Church need not be the substance of the sermon. Not instruction, but edification, should be the chief aim of the discourse.

Another writer on the evangelical standpoint holds that at no time heretofore have ministers so fully met the demands made on them as during the last few decades; yet it cannot be denied that there are faults which should be removed. He regrets the view that orthodox ministers move too much within the dogmatic formulas. Having heard hundreds of ministers preach, he rarely found dogmatic formality characteristic of the sermons. "The principal fault in the sermons of preachers of all tendencies is that they so largely lack application to life. With a desire to be all things to all men, the minister will find meditation on God's Word and the study of what transpires in his own church and the kingdom of God the best means of preaching to the heart and life as well as to the ear. It must, of course, be remembered that there is scarcely another calling which finds it so difficult to meet the just demands made on it as that of the minister. This is owing to the fact that hardly any other calling is so many-sided; this is particularly the case in our day where the minister is expected to be informed respecting the progress of science, art and literature, and to understand politics and social reform, and yet not to be a partisan." While thus exorbitant demands are often made on him, he is frequently in a pecuniary condition, and in social relations which are unfavorable for culture, and seriously interfere with the highest intellectual and spiritual life.