

THE RELATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO RELIGION.*

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THE higher education can only vindicate its lofty claims by showing its vital connection with the every day concerns of average men and women. Let it be suspected of exclusiveness, and it will be distrusted. Let it be judged impractical, unrelated to the real interests of the people, and popular support both of money and of men will be withheld.

Last year, in a most thorough and conclusive manner, the material and social benefits which higher education brings to the community were here set forth. To-night I shall endeavour to indicate the points of contact between the higher education and those spiritual aspirations which it is the function of religion to satisfy.

This is a subject on which two diametrically opposite views have been held. In a general way, allowing for individual exceptions on either side, it may be said that the Latin Church has regarded the relation as external and arbitrary; a matter of judicious expediency if not a tolerated evil. Tertullian, the Father who contended for the materiality of both the soul itself and its future environment, refused to allow a Christian to be a teacher in secular schools where Greek and Latin mythology were taught; and only on the plea of necessity did he permit the children of Christians to acquire "*saecularia studia sine quibus divina esse non possunt*." Cyprian, the Father whose political philosophy is indicated in his remark that "kingdoms do not rise to supremacy through merit, but *are varied by chance*," likewise in the references he

deigns to make to "pagan philosophy," is strenuous to separate it as far as possible from Christian faith. Jerome, trained himself at Rome in classic literature, conceded the reading of authors like Terence and Virgil to the young as a necessity, but regarded a love for them cherished and indulged in later life as criminal.

Augustine also laments the delight he found in youthful study of the Latin poets, and though he, like Jerome, defends the employment of such learning as an efficient aid to the defence and exposition of Christian truth, yet he defends it by the analogy of the Israelites who took the gold and raiment of the Egyptians, leaving behind the idols and superstitions, and at length falls back on the practical utility of such studies as helps in the technical work of the preacher. Gregory the Great threw the weight of his powerful influence against secular studies, forbidding the study of classic literature to his bishops, and declaring instruction in such studies to be unworthy of even a pious layman.

In the eighth century Charles the Great undertook, with the aid of Alcuin, the restoration of learning. Here, however, the motive put forth for such study is still external, appealing to the better understanding of Scripture which general culture would bring about. "For," says the capitulary, "since the Scriptures contain images, tropes and similar figures it is impossible to doubt that the reader will arrive far more readily at the spiritual sense according as he is the better instructed in learning."

It is needless that I here recount the long and familiar story of the

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