

LATER CENTURIES.

It will not be necessary to trace these lines of influence through succeeding history. The causes operating against the social transformation in the first century were such as those outlined above; and each succeeding century till the present has had its own. The ascetic tendency, bearing fruit in monasticism, was a very considerable cause. True, the social instinct could not be killed even in the monastery; and the monastic life was in many ways a blessing—preserving, as it were in cold storage, the seeds of Jesus' social teachings, till they could be taken out and planted in a society over which the wave of barbarism had passed, leaving it richer than before. But during the millennium, let us say from the fourth to the fourteenth centuries, monasticism cast a blighting shadow over social progress. It branded life in the family—the real unit of society—as a second-best arrangement; it discouraged social improvement by its "other-worldliness," and by its formation of closed corporations of piety which kept as far as possible out of touch with the defiling world; and finally by its celibacy. "Monasticism," says Prof. Rauschenbush, "eliminated the morally capable, just as war eliminates the physically capable. God alone knows where the race might be to-day if the natural leaders had not so long been made childless by their goodness."¹ "A celibate ministry is perhaps more efficient for the Church; an equally good married ministry is of more service to the Kingdom of God."

DEVELOPMENT OF DOGMA.

Other causes came to the fore in the course of history. One was the development of dogma, and the central place it held in creeds and discussions of creeds. "When dogmatic and speculative questions absorbed the religious interests, less of it was left for moral and social questions." It has been the practical West rather than the subtle East which has brought social reform. Another cause was the emphasis placed on ecclesiasticism. "The Church substituted itself for the Kingdom of God, and thereby put the advancement of a tangible and very human organization in the place of the moral uplifting of humanity." More than that, ecclesiasticism is the foe of democracy in the Church; we have too many Bishops of Lancashire.² Any social work the Church attempts is apt to be carried out in the attitude of patronage, and therefore to no purpose. We can do no work for the poor except as we work with the poor.

It would be very easy to illustrate the operation of these forces in particular cases. It was, for instance, because of the "other-worldly" tendency of the early centuries that Augustine was able to depict a convincing substitute for the tottering Roman Empire. It was because of the ascetic ideals of the Church of their time that Dominic and Francis founded monastic orders. It is a

¹Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 174.

²Vide The Master in the House, by Charles Rann Kennedy.