

sibility which is demanded of research and often claimed for it by German investigators. This freedom from all restraint and tradition has been a source of not a little trouble to German churches and Christians. It is notoriously the case that many theological chairs are occupied by men that are thoroughly theological in their sentiments, and that the rising generation of pastors and preachers are being, to a considerable extent, educated by men whose principles applied to practical Christianity would work most direful havoc. And yet the churches have no right legally of resisting such influences, or of demanding the removal of such men. They must submit, because, according to German ideas, theology, too, is not a science fixed in its great truths by an objective revelation, but one that must show the fluctuations of all other sciences based only on human observation and reflection, and one that must work out its own destiny.

That these ideals are a great source of strength in German thought only a moment's reflection will show. In the nature of the case there will be less traditional faith and more based upon ambition and faith. It achieves the end more than other ways that a man can give the reason for the faith that is in him. It effects an intelligent and personal assurance of the position maintained. A mechanical acquisition and adoption of dogmas is less a possibility than under other circumstances.

But it is always the case, the greatest weakness is nearest to the greatest strength. This is true here also. Extremes will meet, and men's thoughts like human history, often swing from one extreme to the other. The great danger in German theological thought in this connection is the depreciation of what has been traditionally handed down from earlier generations. The confidence in one's own ability to find and to determine truth solely for its own sake and on a basis that is perfectly reliable and trustworthy, has a tendency to cause disregard for what has been the achievement of earlier generations. In theological discussions this tendency is only too apparent in the more advanced thought in a lack of reverence for the truth of Revelation and of the historic teachings of the church. Recognizing no feature and force of determining power in the establishment of truth except one's own deductions and observations, the development of subjective criticism and radicalism is closely allied and intimately connected with the development of ideally independent thought.

That this process has been gone through in German theology also is clear from the state of affairs. It is there where the new and radical lines of thought in theology originate. Its development is aided by what is considered there the chief requirement of scholarship. Not he who has acquired what others have discovered is, in the eyes of a German, a scholar, but only he who has made independent investigation in fields hitherto undeveloped and unexplored. Only the dis-