

possessions, but really our friend of the *Adorate* has put us fairly into the—*to coin a word—damned*. We bow to the corruption, but would suggest that they should not keep their light under a bushel; and when they have a more numerous ministry than the Wesleyans, that they should answer, and take the shine out of their sister brethren who now hold the aristocracy of Methodism. Canadian Churches cannot certainly be charged with modesty, for every one proclaims louder than another its excellence, growing strength, popularity, &c., &c., but, for once, in this respect, we see a wonder under this Canadian sun, a church so strong that has not told our little world before now that it was here not the least, but doubtless, in miniature, the largest of all our tribes.

GERMANY.—ADDRESS BY THE REV. J. G. ONCKEN

The Rev. Mr. Oncken, Baptist minister, from Hamburg, being on a mission to the United States, to collect funds—if possible, \$10,000—for building places of worship, paid a hasty visit to Canada, visiting only Hamilton and Toronto. At both places he preached, being at each on a Sabbath, and afterwards held a public meeting on the Monday following, to give a general address. At Toronto the meeting was held in Knox's Church, on the evening of the 23rd January. The subject—in both places was necessarily the same, and the mode of treating it very similar—the defects of the Reformation in the Lutheran Church, and the Origin and Progress of the Mission in Germany, Denmark, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, and parts of Poland. In continental Europe, no secession from the dominant Church is permitted; and hence every attempt to form a sect, even in Protestant countries, generally, is put down by the strong arm of civil authority. Religion in all the established churches is at the very lowest ebb. Many of the Lutheran clergy are disguised infidels; others are Rationalists of various grades; a few are partially evangelical; and very many are low Arminians. In several of the large city churches, where the charges are collegiate, the most opposite doctrines are frequently preached from the same pulpit; one minister will maintain that Christ is God, while his colleague, in the evening, will insist that he is only a very excellent creature. In consequence of such an uncertain sound, the people are bewildered. Such being the melancholy state of things in Germany, the attempt to revive religion by any denomination of Christians, must be regarded as a great blessing; while additional interest attaches to this mission from the fact, that Mr. Oncken, its originator, was long employed by the Edinburgh Bible Society to circulate the Scriptures, during the period of the Apocryphal controversy. We give the substance of Mr. Oncken's very admirable address. The lecturer pointed out the following defects in the Lutheran Church:—

1. The connexion of the Church with the State. Before the Reformation, there was only one Pope; but after it, there were thirty-three; every petty prince being the head of the church within his own dominions. The Headship of Christ, as the only Lord and Lawgiver of his Church was virtually denied; and the Church herself became not the handmaid, but the bondmaid of the State.

2. The most evangelical ministers in Germany believe in Baptismal Regeneration. Several passages were quoted from the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, that go to show that such was the opinion even of Luther.

3. The practice of Confession. This ceremony is gone through in a room, capable of admitting a large number of people. If the confession-children, as they are termed, are rich, and able to pay well, they are admitted by families, or at most by select parties. The Confession chair stands at the door. The Confession-father, *Beichtvater*, the name given to the officiating minister, calls upon a certain individual, quite promiscuously, to make confession; when he recites some flowery piece of poetry, or prose, containing the sentiment that man is weak and frail; that God is merciful; and that on his mercy we must trust. The minister then looks round on the audience, as much as to say, Is that your confession too? when they reply by a bow. He then pronounces the words of absolution: "In consequence of the power committed to me, in virtue of my office, I pronounce your sins forgiven. In the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." He stands at the door, and each, in passing, presses into his hand the Confession-*penney*, *Beicht-*

penning, which he slips into a pocket in the inside of his gown. It is not literally a penny, for the poorest do not like to appear as poor as they really are; but generally from the lowest class, *fourpence, sixpence, eightpence*, while the rich give large sums. The clergy likewise derive large revenues from the celebration of marriages, from baptisms, receiving confessions from the sick and dying, and afterwards administering to them the Lord's Supper. They have also a small salary from government. As a proof that Luther taught the doctrine of absolution, the speaker quoted the following passage from one of his catechisms: Minister's question: "Don't thou believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness? Answer—I do so believe. Minister's answer—In virtue of this office that God has given me, I pronounce your sins forgiven. In the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

4. The Lutheran Church has no idea of religious liberty. Luther taught that those who would not submit to religious institutions should be banished from the realm; and the Lutheran Church still acts upon the same principle. Sects are not even tolerated.

5. The low estimate entertained of the moral law, and especially of the Sabbath. The Roman Catholics, in their Catechism, blot out the second commandment, regarding it only as a part of the first, to which they affix an excommunicatory sentence. In order to make up the number ten, they divide the tenth into two. In the Lutheran Catechism, the fourth commandment is blotted out, and in its place we read as follows:—"The Holy Day thou shalt remember to sanctify;" placing the Sabbath merely on a footing of equality with the church holidays. The Augsburg Confession describes the Sabbath as resting wholly on Church authority. There is, therefore, no Sabbath in Germany, and consequently little vital religion. After three o'clock in the afternoon, the theatres and ball-rooms are open; and more sin is committed in a few hours than during the rest of the week. A corpse may remain without material change, for a considerable time; but here both body and soul have vanished. The very form of godliness has fled. In Hamburg, out of a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, not more than eight thousand attend all the places of worship together; and the number of churches, since the Reformation, is continually decreasing. The Dome has been destroyed by fire; St. John's and St. Gertrude's have been taken down, and no other churches have been erected in their place. There were more churches a hundred years ago, with a population of 75,000, than there are now with double that number of inhabitants. The clergy oppose church extension; for their income is chiefly derived from fees, and, of course, any increase in their numbers would be prejudicial to their worldly interests.

The lecturer next gave an account of the Rise and Progress of the Baptist Mission in Germany. He was employed by the Edinburgh Bible Society in 1829, as their agent for the distribution of the sacred scriptures. He had, about this time embraced Baptist principles, and when he went to Robert Haldane of Edinburgh, to send a minister to baptize a few converts, and to organize a church, he received the following singular answer, dictated by the fear of exciting a prejudice against Mr. Oncken in the midst of the Directors of the Bible Society:—"In existing circumstances, I see no objection to your baptizing yourselves." But as there is no evidence of self-baptism, in the New Testament, the converts determined to wait, till God in his providence, should send a minister to baptize them. After long waiting, Dr. Sears of the United States, came to Germany, and organized a Church of Christ. Mr. Oncken preached his first sermon to seven individuals; and the first church, at its organization, also consisted of seven persons.

Persecution was apprehended; but God, for a time, disappointed all their fears. The chief of the police, who was also a member of Senate, feared God, and, therefore, prevented all open persecution. But in process of time, he was succeeded in this office by another Senator "who knew not Joseph." In an interview that Mr. Oncken had with him, he said, "I am determined to crush you; you may go to England and America, where there are sects, but you shall have no sects here;" and, in spite of the most earnest remonstrances, he adhered to his resolution. When the little church was engaged one Sabbath in worshipping God, the police broke into the apartment, seized Mr. Oncken, and committed him to prison for five years. The church was in the meantime divided into sixteen sections, and met in as many different parts of the city.