

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSTHE NEW LIBERAL ROMAN
CATHOLICISM.

From the Boston Daily Transcript.

With the ending of the Concordat in France between the State and religious ecclesiastical establishments, affecting Roman Catholic, Protestant and Jew alike, but creating, of course, especially grave problems of administration for Roman Catholics, the development of religion in the republic, it is admitted by all, enters upon a new epoch. The Roman correspondent of the Transcript has recently set forth in some detail the differences of opinion among the French Catholics as to what is best for the Roman Church to do under the new circumstances, and has described the hesitation of the Pope in directing a course to be followed since his advisers on the ground give differing reports.

One of the most gifted and influential of French Protestants, known throughout Europe and in this country as a man capable of doing justice to Roman Catholicism at its best, M. Paul Sabatier, author of a notable biography of St. Francis of Assisi, in a brochure on the recent momentous separation of Church and State, has admitted that he does not look for control of the future in France's religious life by Protestants, which he says has no real hold, but to a reformed, revived Catholicism, following the lead of M. Loisy in scholarship and of the more liberal bishops and clergy in matters of polity. He reports that in the training schools of the secular clergy a new spirit is to be found, a spirit of revolt, an ineffective distrust of miracle, in mechanical devotion, in rites and incantations, and an immense ardor for services of humanity. He cites many recent utterances by Catholic laymen and scholars, showing that the critical spirit has invaded every domain, and that hereafter only that will be held to be orthodox which is demonstrable today as vital in religious experience.

One has only to read the more liberal of the Roman Catholic reviews of this country, such for instance, as the New York Review, founded recently by Archbishop Farley of New York, of which four numbers have been issued, to see how many scholars of the Church there are in this country and in Europe who have mastered the technical problems of the Higher Criticism and the implications of modern philosophy. They show that within the Roman Church a leavening traditional theology and attitude toward doctrinal and institutional development. These scholars have not gone as far as Protestants in their adjustment to new views respecting inspiration of Scripture, the human element in the faith of the early Church, and the mingling in the Christian scheme with the teachings of Jesus of elements derived from Greek, Roman and Oriental philosophies; but they have gone much farther already than the rank and file of the Protestant clergy or laity in Europe have any conception of, as a reading of these journals will prove.

Scrutiny of such articles as progressive English and American Catholics have already contributed to the New York Review will indicate clearly to the reader of them that there is unrest at the charges of stationariness and wilful blindness to facts, commonly brought by Protestants against the Roman Church; that the first profoundly significant steps have been taken to accommodate the ancient faith to twentieth century scholarship; that the Higher Criticism has a foothold not to be shaken, they trust, by any papal decree which timorous pontiff with no pretension to scholarship may later issue; and that they are aware of the need of a new apologetic utilizing all that modern psychology has to offer in determining just what was the consciousness of Jesus with respect to himself, his mission, and his relation to God.

If men like Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishops Farley and Ireland, Bishop Keane and the faculty of the University at Washington can be left free to shape the scholastic ideas of the Church in this country, American Catholicism will serve in the future as it does now to inspire Gallien and other national types of European Catholicism with hope for the future, enabling the venerable and majestic institution to adjust itself without further schism to world conditions which cannot

be essentially altered, but which may be modified by such prudent action as an institution with such a hold on men may decide to take. Those Americans who, as Rev. William J. Sullivan, in the October New York Review, candidly admits, are suspicious of the Roman Catholic Church, will welcome the proof that is now being given in this country, and which M. Sabatier predicts for France, that "there shall be no silenced or suppressed minorities;" that there is to be a wholesome public opinion; that organs which give it utterance are to be held in good repute; that along with traditional deference to established powers there is to be cultivation of true initiative and vigorous individuality.

No better statement of the problem of the Christian Church at large, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, as it faces modern democracy, with its emphasis on collectivism and freedom of thought, could be easily found than Judge Albert Revaud of New York has stated in this same liberal Catholic journal. He sees, as do many modern Catholic laymen, that "there is need, and pressing need—in view of the quickly progressing developments of modern life and times—of all the most intense individual effort and of all the organic and collective power and agencies, of religious-minded men to assert and enforce the harmony of ancient truth and modern thought . . . to keep liberty, that alluring modern goddess, in love with faith." He admits that democracy has "enlarged and enabled the right, and the corresponding duty of each of us to share in and to advance the harmony of faith and reason."

If the Roman Catholic Church will but recognize the worth of the Protestant contention of individual liberty more than it hitherto has done, it will find not a few Protestants willing to admit the principle of authority more than they have done; for the fruits of individualism in religion are not wholly wholesome viewed from any institutional point of view. With each side making concessions and admitting the relative worth of the principle for which the other stands as well as its own historic position, the Church would enter on a new era of amity and co-operative strength. Signs are not wanting that in the camps of both individualists and collectivists in religion there are searchers of the heart. The more individualistic Protestant denominations are restive under the waste and the lack of coordination of their polity. The closely articulated, episcopally-governed churches realize that the modern man must have larger liberty of belief and more initiative in action.

THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

Life is not entirely made up of great evils or heavy trials; but those perpetual recurrence of petty evils and small trials in the ordinary and appointed exercises of the Christian graces. To bear with the falling of those about us—with their infirmities, their bad judgment, their ill-breeding, their perverse tempers; to endure neglect when we feel we deserve attention, and ingratitude when we expected thanks; to bear with the company of disagreeable people whom Providence has placed in our way, and when he has placed in our way, or purposed for the trial of our virtue; these are best exercises of patience and self-denial, and the latter because not chosen ourselves.

To bear with vexation in business, with disappointment in our expectations, with interruptions of our retirement, with folly, instruction, disturbance—in short, with whatever opposes our will, contradicts our humor—this habitual acquiescence appears to be more of the essence of self-denial than any little rigors or inflictions of our own imposing. These constant, inevitable, but inferior evils, properly improved, furnish a good moral discipline, and might, in the days of ignorance, have superseded pilgrimage and penance.—Hannar Moore.

The less a man thinks he knows about his virtues the better we like him.—Emerson.

BABEL AND BIBLE*

These three lectures by the eminent German Assyriologist are not entirely new to us, for already in 1902 the enterprising Open Court Publishing Company printed in book form the first two of these lectures and the accompanying criticisms and answers. Then, in the March and May numbers of the Open Court Magazine for this year the remaining lecture was published. But it is valuable to have these three lectures complete in a single volume, and the very fact of its appearance is a sure evidence of the interest which this Babel and Bible controversy has aroused in all quarters.

This is undoubtedly the day of archaeology and of its more special offspring, assyriology. Probably the excitement attendant upon the extensive excavations being carried on all over the old lands of the Orient and the possibility of startling "finds" account in considerable measure for the widespread interest in this new science. Undoubtedly the information thus added to our fund of knowledge is valuable almost beyond calculation. The writing of history has been almost revolutionized, the theories of earlier writers being often quite upset by the unquestionable evidence of graven tablets and monuments, and the ruins of vast centres of civilization. It seems right, however, to sound a note of warning to the more general reader of such a book as this. The application of certain assumed "results" of archaeology within the sphere of another highly specialized science, the much-reviled Higher Criticism, is at least to be accepted with caution. The very presence in this volume of criticisms on the lectures by such eminent archaeologists and critics as Cornill, Harnack, Teremias (not to mention the German Emperor, who figures prominently in the discussion), shows that Dr. Delitzsch has not said the final word in the matter. The specialists themselves are not agreed; we must therefore proceed warily. Prof. Cornill well expresses the danger: "the impression that the lecture is apt to make on unprofessional readers is that the Bible and its religion is to a certain extent a mere offshoot of Babylonian heathendom which we have in purer and more original form in Babel." He also says that "Babel and Bible offers nothing essentially new to Old Testament scholars," and that it is not so much Dr. Delitzsch's facts as it is his method which is dangerous.

However, this volume is one which should and will be read with a great deal of interest. The style is crisp and popular, even racy in its appeal to imagination and fancy. The book is profusely illustrated with cuts and photographs of Babylonian discoveries. Even in popularizing the general facts of the importance of his science the book will perform a very valuable office. Such an entertaining introduction into the great history of antiquity which archaeology has unfolded for us should serve to widen our horizons and to make us see the real purpose of history and of God's great work in the world in a wider and truer way. "Babel and Bible" should be read from this point of view and not so much as a sort of free apologetic for certain views on the interpretation of our Bible.

*Babel and Bible, three lectures on the significance of Assyriological Research for Religion, embodying the most important criticisms and the author's replies; by Dr. Frederick Delitzsch, Professor of Assyriology in the University of Berlin, Chicago. The Open Court Publishing Company, 1906.

THE CHRISTIAN THE BEST.

Do you say, "I can be a good man and not be a member of the church?" Certainly you can, and you ought to be. A man can be a good husband, father, citizen and a good neighbor, and not be a Christian, but he can be a great deal better man if he will add Christianity to morality. But where is that Scripture which promises eternal life to the good man, as such? It is not in the book.

We attract hearts by the qualities we display; we retain them by the qualities we possess.