

THE RELATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO RELIGION.*

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PASSING by agnosticism on the one side and pietism on the other, as equally irrational and consequently altogether out of relation to knowledge and education, we may resolve all genuine religion into two elements, worship and service. The problem of the relation of religion to higher education resolves itself into these two inquiries: What does higher education contribute to the worship of God? What does higher education contribute to the service of God?

Let us consider first the dependence of worship on higher education. Worship must have something definite to lay hold on. "No man hath seen God at any time." No thought of man can represent him in the depth and fulness of his Infinite Being. Yet on the other hand worship can not go out into empty space. You can not direct it toward blank vacuity. Worship must have a medium. Praise and thanksgiving, adoration and homage must have something present to the mind. What shall that something be? This is the problem of problems in religion. To it there are two and only two answers. Either worship may seize on some external object, some arbitrary rite, some artificial ceremony and make that the contents with which to fill out the form of worship. This is idolatry: the substitution of some creation of God or some fiction of man for the uncreated spirit and truth of God. Or else worship must lay hold on the creative thought, and reason, and wisdom, and word of God, as he has revealed himself in nature, in history, in literature, and in the mind of man. This is true

worship, and obviously it is higher education in its various departments of science, history, literature and metaphysics, which alone can furnish to the common consciousness the true conceptions of the expression God has made of himself in creation and Providence. Truth forms the contents of which worship is the religious form. The Hebrew religion demonstrates its divine character and is assured of a lasting place in the world's devotion by the fact that her prophets and psalmists did thus identify their religion with the learned culture of their day, and worshipped God through the medium of his historic acts and his creative will, as revealed in the history and science of their day. It was the works of God that they seized on as the medium of communion and praise. "One generation shall laud *thy works* to another and shall declare thy mighty acts." "Wonderful are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."

In the 136th Psalm, that grand pæan of Hebrew praise, the motive is found throughout in those expressions of God which it is the province of history and science to trace. Thanks is to be rendered.

"To him that by understanding made the heavens.

"To him that spread forth the earth above the waters.

"To him that made great lights.

"To him that smote Egypt in their first-born.

"And brought out Israel from among them.

"With a strong hand and a stretched-out arm."