

had occasion to deal with the people at large, in behalf of their souls, that I obtained any just appreciation of the working of the Lutheran Church, and the relation in which professors, pastors, and Church stand to the people.

You may have seen an article in the January number of *Evangelical Christendom*, in which a report is given of Dr. Wichern's speech at the Brädenburg Kirchentag.—After stating that the rationalist professors and theologians are no longer the most formidable adversaries of the Church, he goes on to make the appalling admission that the enemies of the Church are natural philosophers, physicians, lawyers, philologists, and the teachers in the schools; and that this army of adversaries carries on an incessant propaganda among the artists, manufacturers, educated and uneducated classes, and society in general. So much for the testimony of the most active and best informed among the theologians of Germany; to which I will only append the words of the late Mr. Kunze of Berlin, which I had from his own lips two years before his death:—"There are whole *classes* (stände) of the people completely fallen away from the faith. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of those who, in compliance with custom, come to the communion at confirmation, never approach it again."

Let me give you in the same connection the words of an ably-written pamphlet on the infidel side, published in 1862, which is now exciting the interest of the leading reviews. It is entitled "The Spirit of the Age and Christianity," by V. Schweitzer, and published in Leipzig. This pamphlet triumphantly proclaims the downfall of Christianity as a thing accomplished, and as having happened exactly at the right time; for as the democratic principle of our age is at irreconcilable variance with Christianity, the former would otherwise have had to enter on a war of extermination with the latter.

In proof that this is not a mere audacious assertion, this apostle of infidelity produces three arguments, to which we must subscribe as being substantially, although not yet, perhaps, to the extent of his assertion, borne out by fact. They are, in truth, all comprised in the admission of Dr. Wichern in his speech. These arguments are:—First, That science is advancing in all directions, calmly moving on in its own path without regard to the truths of Christianity, and often with manifest contempt of all religion. Second, That unbelief prevails in the higher, and among by far the greater portion of the middle classes, sometimes avowedly, sometimes under the impression that all religions are equally good. Third, That in all places of public concourse, where every other topic is discussed—news, amusements,

events, politics, science, law—the doctrines of religion are never in any case referred to or mentioned; showing that Christianity and its peculiar truths have lost all hold of the public mind. The pamphlet then proceeds to demonstrate in as many separate sections what advantages the extinction of Christianity would bring to society, in respect of bodily health, intellect, morality, social life, national economy, and civilization in general. There is no shutting our eyes to the fact that the crisis is rapidly advancing in Germany, the same which the leaders of the Sunday League in England have probably in view, but which they dare not thus openly proclaim, for fear of alarming some of their less resolute supporters.

Would that we could point to one hopeful symptom in any quarter of the horizon! The evil is becoming too palpable to be ignored by any party; and while Professor Lobe of Halle, one of the Coryphæuses of Hegstenberg's party, does not scruple to exclaim, in a mixed conference of the Popish and Evangelical party, "I will not desert singly; I will stay in the sinking ship till it goes down;" the half rationalistic party, as Rother and Schenkel of Heidelberg, are loudly declaring that "the old Christianity must be entirely cast overboard, and a new system introduced in its stead, suited to the taste and ideas of the age!"—We cannot join in the admiration that is accorded to Wichern, for the position which he takes up towards this enormous evil.—"Faith in revealed truth"—"preparation for the conflict, by the most diligent employment of science and philosophy in subservience to the gospel"—"unity"—and "ministering love"—these are all excellent things; but just as disproportionate to this case as they would be towards terminating the struggle in the "United" States. If there the abolition of slavery is as plainly prescribed by God as the casting overboard of Jonah was to the Tyrian mariners; if this is the essential condition towards averting the calamities that are rushing on to swallow up the nation, there are in Germany not less patent marks of the controversy the Lord has with the nation; and if these be overlooked by those who profess to guide work of the Church in this eventful hour, all the hollow phrases of piety can excite no feeling but distress or disgust.

Surely it is fittest to excite sentiments of humiliation in any Church, to have to confess that all the influential classes have been alienated, not only from its pale, but from the very Lord in whose name it subsists!—Surely it becomes such a Church to retrace its history, and search out the secret causes why Jehovah's countenance is thus hidden and his displeasure so awfully manifested. If we could only point to a step like the setting free of the oppressed Israelitish bond-