

CHURCH AND STATE IN FRANCE.

A Lecture by Prof. W. F. P. Stockley.

CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.

The property of religious communities was already taxed to its full value and paid as much to the treasury as any other property.

And as to the practical justice: "One method of illustrating the hardship of the new tax is to compare the case of the religious congregations with that of the most wealthy civil society in France, whose chairman is Baron Rothschild.

And then with the nuns as hospital nurses. The government indeed, had enough gratitude and wisdom to keep them in the great military hospitals.

How can this be? Perhaps you would find some answer if you knew what Freemasonry meant in France; in its patronage of thorough-going naturalism it would make short work of the feeble compromises fashionable amongst ourselves.

It is the violent and noisy few who lead astray and make use of the many. An instance may illustrate how desperate is the ignorance in which some of these victims of French Radicalism live.

Where, outside the Church, is this now the spirit of the higher education? But if you wish to see things worked out study France.

How many men, who think themselves enlightened and learned, are struck down by every piece of false reasoning and carry about its conclusion in their minds like a shaft which no armor has beaten off and which the unskilled or fearful hand does not know how to pull out.

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Why, the very poor women of the town know better. They will leave a house if a priest, unknowing of their presence, comes to lodge in a flat of it; they feel shame too much, and they have been known to kiss the posts of the very door through which a priest had passed. Indeed, is there on the face of the earth such a body as the French clergy? I often think the answer is "no."

Or, to quote even M. Renan again. It is he that speaks of "the coarse materialism of anti-clericalism." Or, is it Victor Hugo who writes: "The tendency to make this life everything is the misfortune of our times. If earthly life, material life, is made the only end of man . . . that which by the ordinance of God is only suffering, becomes despair.

As Joubert says, we are threatened with a return to barbarism—dividing the social body into two classes: "the selfish who are hungry, and the selfish who are satisfied."

But, for the popular rulers of France to day, the Cardinal and V. Hugo and M. Renan are all "Jesuits" together. So are all our good Protestants Jesuits in this sense, for those to whom in France they unwittingly give their support.

Books do a great deal of harm when, instead of moderating our minds, they disturb us or deprave us in casting a glamor over what is the worse, that is excess, and disorder, and obscuring what is the better, that is moderation and order and law.

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value. Much as in a museum we look at and admire the workmanship of the statue of the god, but do not think of the god himself. (Fragments de philosophie: Louis Peisse.)

How these men make light of irrational temporary compromises that may be suggested with modifications from time to time. As regards such we may quote in substance the grave and profound Burke when he says, speaking of the Established Church in England, "It were indeed great folly to suppose that this or any other Protestant Church would survive if the Catholic Church ceased to exist."

France, then, is logical; and so French Catholics, being both Frenchmen and Catholics, have a double reason for being so. They, even above all, know what is meant by education in its bearing on life.

As you may know, the Parisian Public schools have excluded the name of God from all their books. The substitute for Almighty God is "the State." That is the answer to all questions as to the source of blessings or of right.

A certain time is allotted to "civic and moral instruction." There is a general cry from teachers and inspectors that this is the least satisfactory part of the routine. "We do not know what to teach."

The contemporary facts are that juvenile crime seems to have doubled. Read what I said by Paul Bourget, the French novelist, who has just visited America, as to the moral habits of the government lycées as contrasted with the Jesuit colleges: just as he notes that he believes that "the classes who practice the Catholic religion are free from the moral disorders I have depicted in my books."

As to the present non-religious system of education in France M. Lichtenberger, Dean of the Protestant Faculty in Paris, prepared for the Paris exhibition (1889) a volume containing the opinions of leading educators that the system was a failure.

The programme has been for more than ten years, under the semblance of religious neutrality, to make the ethical education in the schools, to consist in the morality of scientific Positivism, i. e., in the affirmation of the dignity of man, in the teaching of patriotism, in the worship of mankind.

What a contrast between what it learned in school and what it learns in actual life! This is the great disappointment which the morality of Positivism ever produces. Man was Auguste Comte's god; but man is a kind of god who puts an end to faith as soon as we become acquainted with his real being.

It is so wearisome and silly to suppose there can be a reconciliation between two fundamentally distinct judgments on life and all its actions. As to divorce, which was established by law of the State in 1830, the statistics of seven years mark a gradual rise to seven times the number of the first year.

Everyone knows in France how theory and practice are bound up and how one effects the other. But you may see an example of the same thing in a vaguer, less systematic way across the Channel in the struggle the Church of England is making in such matters as these of education and divorce; and again in the purely Protestant league lately formed in the United States to fight the degradation of marriage.

faith makes one suspicious at the outset. And so one finds the frank admission that this spiritual teaching must be put down. "It has always been our plan," says L'egalite, "never to discuss things at all with Jesuits (sic), to refuse altogether to discuss these matters concerning the religion of Jesus. . . . We shall not discuss things with them; we shall stamp them out."

Each side understands what principles are at stake. "It has come about at last that the Christians, and especially the Catholics, a great many of whom in the last century used to be afraid of science and liberty, are convinced now that if you give only the premises of enlightened reason and true liberty, then the triumph of full Christianity, that is of Catholicity, is certain."

"What is wondrous to behold, too, is that those who openly attack Christianity are convinced of this themselves. 'Voltaire,' they say, 'attacked faith in the name of reason, but in his writings he has kept principles enough to bring him again to Catholicism. He is really, they say, on the side of Catholics; his principles are the same, and you will end in Catholicism if you admit Deism. Those who admit the fundamental point, the distinction of good and evil and the notion of the moral law, really throw in their lot with Christianity. The only real opponents of all this religious imposture are ourselves and our doctrines purely and radically negative.'

And so, as Le Pere Gratry continues: "It is boldly avowed that whoever admits speculative reason with its immediate datum, the existence of God, whoever admits moral reason with its immediate datum, the distinction of good and evil, is sure to see Catholicity rise again on that basis."

The lecturer summed up what had been said of (1) history, (2) present condition, (3) causes of this: and spoke of the parties, political and ecclesiastical, in France and of the recent acceptance by the Pope of the fact that France seemed to have broken finally with monarchical tradition. Again, all the Church needs is freedom for her own work.

A sketch was given of what the Republic have meant for the clergy in France—their ferocity, or intolerance, or injustice. Hence much irritation and much indiscretion, however natural, on the part of the clergy, as many of them are very willing to confess. "When the Church entirely ceases to be political she will be invincible," someone said of France. But, indeed, it is there, often, a very case of wolf and lamb. One indiscretion seems a justification for a mass of oppression.

Why not sever Church and State? (1) The Church would be too strong, many say; you must first wean the people from Christianity and Theism, say the French Freemasons. (2) There are the necessities of support of public worship and institutions.

As to what is seen in French churches, you can see every Lent in Paris at many churches, congregations from 500 to 1,500 men only, every week at evening sermons; and at Notre Dame, where, of course, there is a great preacher, some 3,000. And there you can see, too, on Easter morning, 6,000 men at Communion. These are not great figures for a large town. Still, compare with other towns in other countries.

Further, people do not, in France and Germany, ask you about going to church; and many people might be fulfilling their religious duties and saying nothing to you about it. And then, services in Paris churches begin at 4 and 5 a. m.

There are many sides to most questions. The lecturer spoke, at the close, of the responsibility of speaking on any such subject, when it is considered what the claim is that is made by the Church in the world.

And he concluded by saying that though to submit one's opinions absolutely to any man or any body of men was desperate and irrational, still to submit one's expressions about revealed truth to the organ of truth, if such there be, was to make the highest use possible of reason, the forerunner of the further knowledge through faith.

that comes under their notice, or to study deeply perhaps into the problems they present. Yet it takes a certain expenditure of time, money and feeling simply to listen to a tale of woe and to drop a thoughtless coin into the hand of the beggar. If, instead of this careless and somewhat selfish indulgence of the benevolent impulse, they would devote even that small amount of time and means to some wiser and more hopeful method of charity, they would far better fulfill their responsibilities in this matter.

"Lead Kindly Light." In the May number of the Strand Magazine Mr. Francis A. Jones tells the story of some of the most popular of English hymns. He confides to the reader the fact that he has been hymn-hunting for a considerable time; and he gives the result of his discoveries:

The original MS. of "Lead Kindly Light," owing to the circumstances under which it was composed, is one of the most interesting in the collection. The hymn was written during the summer of 1833, at a time of much mental distress, and the words are a very echo of the author's own loneliness.

In his "Apologia pro Vita Sua," Cardinal Newman tells the story of how the hymn came to be written. While traveling on the continent he was attacked by a sudden illness, which necessitated a stay at Castro Giovanni. Here he lay weak and restless for nearly three weeks, the only friend at hand being his servant, who nursed him during his illness. This occurred early in May, and on the 27th of that month he was sufficiently recovered to attempt a journey to Palermo.

"Before starting from my inn," he wrote, "I sat down on my bed and began to sob bitterly. My servant, who acted as my nurse, asked what ailed me. I could only answer, 'I have a work to do in England.' I was aching to get home; yet for want of a vessel I was kept at Palermo for three weeks. I began to visit the churches, and they calmed my impatience though I did not attend any services. At last I got off in an orange boat bound for Marsailles. We were becalmed a whole week in the Straits of Bonifacio. Then it was that I wrote the lines, 'Lead, Kindly Light,' which have since become well known. I was writing verses nearly the whole time of my passage."

A Correct View. The Arroe (Protestant-Episcopal) of July has the following very pertinent paragraph: "Why cannot Anglicans leave Catholic countries alone? Brazil, Mexico and Spain, each is the seat of a petty so-called reform movement endeavoring to Protestant-Episcopalianize the country. We hope converts are scarce in this un-Christian work. Other things being equal and an Ave and Pater in Spanish will go further than a Lord's Prayer in English, because it implies a more complete grasp of the faith. Few persons are narrower than those who think that the English channel is the only road to heaven."

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James E. Nicholson.

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