

of pamphlets devoted to the issues of the day. They come and go like meteors—suddenly, unexpectedly. They discuss the doctrines, the life, the methods, the organization of the Church. However varied the views, in one respect all are agreed—a reform is needed; it must be radical and universal. The Gospel instead of human formulas; Christ as the essence of the Gospel; spiritual power in place of mechanical forms; preaching that is scriptural, but with modern adaptations; more grace in persons, less grace in dead things; the destruction of clerical arrogance and the development of lay activity; the division of parishes, so that instead of twenty to one hundred thousand souls, each shall have but five or six thousand; Christian contact with the masses, in the home, the socialistic meeting, the workshop, if they cannot be reached from the pulpit; the abandonment of quarrels among brethren, and compact union to meet a united foe—these are among the demands ceaselessly emphasized in the current religious literature. The need of reform is so apparent that the failure to see it sooner is evidence of the spiritual death that prevailed. The appeal is now made to Christian women to lend their aid in the mighty conflict; and yet the traditional position of woman is such that she must break with her past record and with present customs if any enlarged sphere of Christian usefulness is to be open to her besides the deaconess' work. Ministers have done their utmost to suppress lay activity, and have ridiculed women whose Christian love impelled them to public service for the Master. The present order must be destroyed to make efficient lay activity possible. Take this typical instance as evidence. At a recent conference in Kiel an intelligent layman declared that he was earnestly desirous of taking part in the work of the Church, but complained that, according to present arrangement, there was scarcely anything left for him but external and merely formal work. Even where ministers are will-

ing to let laymen work, the laymen cannot, it is said, be found, for the reason that they have not been trained, and have had no opportunity to be trained.

Parallel with the demand for the reform of the Church is the demand for a renewal of theology. The thinkers insist that they will not be doomed eternally to chew the cud, but that they will go directly to the Word for fresh food, as the fathers did, as the reformers demanded. A marked change is taking place in the method of faith. It is notorious that in State churches the method has heretofore consisted in the evolution of faith from traditions, catechisms, and creeds. But the religious consciousness has been aroused; men inquire into the source and validity of the traditions, into the authority of catechism and creed. Now there is a demand for a new evolution of faith—namely, from the Bible itself. The living fountain is declared to be sweeter than standing water. The new method makes the personal faith inspired by Scripture the source of theology, not theology the source of faith.

Thus a new life has entered theology, or, rather, the theology of the day is but an expression of the new life of faith, a life created and nourished by Scripture and the Divine Spirit. This theology is not to domineer religion, but is an effort to give the intellectual expression or formula of religion. Hence the demand now heard everywhere that theology is the handmaid of the Church, a help and inspiration to religion. The Bible is original, faith is original, but theology is an echo. Theology is vital only so far as it is permeated by the religious life of the Church. The energy of Christian theology is but the energy of Scripture embodied in a theological form.

How far the new life will be able to leaven the whole Church will have to be determined by the future. In ever-increasing numbers Christians are made aware of the deep spiritual needs of the day. And necessity develops creative energy where it does not induce despair.