

CHRISTIANITY AND EDUCATION.

THE relation between Christianity and education is that of cause and effect. By Christianity is meant that perception of truth which has its clearest exposition in the teachings of Christ. It existed before Christ's day; it was announced by Him so distinctly that it became a working scheme for the world. Christianity has for entire aim the good of man; this was the utterance the shepherds heard.

The mark of Christianity is the effort to elevate man; the possession of knowledge is declared to be important. The knowledge urged is not religious knowledge either. Solomon sets forth both knowledge and the value of knowledge; his knowledge was of law, of customs, of ways and means, of practical advice uttered in the epigrammatic style of his times; he was the Benjamin Franklin of his day.

The Apostles had clearer conceptions of the knowledge needed by the world: the knowledge they undertook to impart was but partly religious; as in the case of Jesus they sought to set men to thinking. They had reasons above the Jewish world for inducing men to think and be governed by the highest attainable thought; it was that the Holy Spirit might find a fit temple for His work.

It was a result of the teaching of the Apostles that the monasteries and the churches nourished learning and kept it alive through the dark ages that ensued when the Roman empire was broken up. Very numerous are the evidences that the church did its best to give instruction to the young. Theodulph, one of Charlemagne's bishops, ordered that "the elders establish schools in towns and villages and if any of the faithful wish their children to be taught letters, let them not decline to receive and teach them."

There was to be no charge made for these services. Charlemagne ordered schools to be opened everywhere "to teach children to read." This is one of his laws, in every monastery some one shall teach psalms, writing, arithmetic, and grammar."

It was conceded that really to benefit man knowledge must be imparted to him; that to have a mind capable of understanding religion was absolutely the first thing. The founders of the Reformation, like the main church from which they branched off, saw the importance of education; only as it was vitally important that men should comprehend their views, they strove most for the universal diffusion of knowledge. The New Englanders as soon as the trees could be cut down founded churches and schools. It is a matter of history that within thirty years after the landing of the Pilgrims, education had been made compulsory in all the colonies except Rhode Island.

The establishment of public schools in every part of this country is not caused by a desire to establish Christianity; they are the results of Christianity, not the cause. The early New Englanders proposed to employ schools as a direct cause of Christianity; but not so with the New Englanders of to-day. The argument for schools is based on the recognition of the right every individual has to knowledge that will benefit him; Christianity has enabled man to recognize the right of his fellow-man. A person is passing along the street and inquires his way; the readiness of all he meets to give him the information he needs does not come from politeness, but from a recognition of his right to this knowledge.

The schools must on their part diffuse Christian doctrines—not the doctrines of a sect. The schools are to