

RELIGION AND EDUCATION.

A SERMON PREACHED BY THE VERY REV. DEAN CARMICHAEL, D.D., D.C.L.

Text—St. Luke, chapter x., verse 27.

“**T**HOU shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” No student of the times—of the day and hour, can fail to realize that we are living in a period of marked discontent with the foundations and framework of society as it exists, widespread discontent, breaking out at times into widespread antagonism between class and class; the routine work of the world going on, under a varied voiced protest that at times speaks out in tones that augur mournful things as far as the future peace of society is concerned. And underneath this discontent, there exists, in some countries, a conspiracy of lawlessness that is wholly destructive in its hopes and actions, that exists to tear down and stamp under foot all existing institutions, divine and human, and that if successful in its policy of remorseless destruction, could not fail in time to reduce society to a state of social chaos, in which evil, as we now understand it, would be regarded as the highest good, and the highest good as the worst form of evil. Now, there never yet has existed a widespread and multiform spirit of discontent between class and class, between master and servant, between employer and employed, that there has not also existed a certain amount of realizable cause for such discontent, and such cause or causes left unremedied may result in the most serious complications, if not in open public antagonisms. This fact the wealthier and more educated classes of society are apt to forget, and hence, as in the

present day, they under-estimate the ever-increasing force and power of what is socially called the “lower classes.” They forget that free education, ever increasing the area of its irresistible influence, is steadily permeating the class that in days gone by was almost wholly uneducated, and that, whilst that class in its daily work and toil remains much the same, a mental change is sweeping over it, unexampled perhaps in the history of man. If education goes on as it is going, it will be almost impossible in seventy-five or a hundred years from this to gather together in civilized countries such a crowd as tore down the walls of the Bastille in 1789. You might have the bitterness of heart, and the brutality of action intensified, and the suffering and starvation equal, but every man in such a crowd will be able to write his name, and read his paper, and go to his work of spoliation as an intelligent being, instead of being whirled to it as an atom in a vortex. Now, a great fact like this should not be forgotten, and other facts that are necessarily connected with it. For instance, regarding education as a great social force—in what class is it working with the most powerful intensity? Not certainly in the highest class of social life—for that has ever been fairly educated up to the light of its age, and has also been content with a reasonable kind of mediocrity. In the middle class it is working with magnificent worldly and material effect, bringing its influence to bear on politics, on commerce, on art and science, on all avenues of industry, but it is bursting as a new revelation