

Religion and the War.

(PROF. FALCONER)

I.

THE VISION OF SIN.

The war has uncovered the hideous features of evil. By its entail of calamity it has confirmed the Scripture, "Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." We had been flattering ourselves upon the progress of the world and on the manner in which by slow evolution man had laid aside the baser aspects of nature and had put on the finer garments of modern civilization. We were priding ourselves on our refinement, our ability, our humanism, thinking that culture was winning its way towards a human perfectibility. We were coming to look upon the earth as the natural home of virtue, and as a place where the children of God might find their rest. This was, we were saying, the best possible of worlds where vision and realization were met together. Even the Church had begun to forget that this is an evil world, where the children of the Heavenly Father cannot go on their way unmolested.

But we have suddenly been disillusioned, and are now faced with a spectacle such as seldom has been beheld. The theory of progressive development has been rudely shaken as it has come into conflict with a sudden upheaval of moral perverseness, such as we read of in the apocalyptic visions of Scripture. The very throne of Christian truth has been assailed; the court of heavenly virtues has been attacked; the primary teachings of the Gospel of Jesus have been flouted and despised. There has been, as one says, "A great conspiracy against the Christian conception of life." So that at a time when we expected to lay aside our weapons, there has come this call to arms. The dragon who we thought had been slain has reappeared, and we must cry aloud for Michael and his sword.

The war has cleared the air. The teutonic apostasy has become a touchstone for our age, and has proved to be one of the best interpreters of existing problems that we have had. In this giant evil and its disastrous consequences we see more clearly the character of sin as it moves about in our midst in lesser forms; for the same malign influences that brought on the war are at work in many other directions.