

THE OPPORTUNITY OF BAPTISTS IN PRESENT RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.*

The topic on which I have been asked to speak seems to me to imply (1) that there is at the present time what may properly be called religious progress, and (2) that there are opportunities for Baptists in connection with this religious progress that up to the date of the Sixteenth Baptist Congress they are neglecting to utilize or to utilize in full measure.

It stands to reason that if we as Baptists would avail ourselves, as is meet, of the opportunities that present themselves to us because of current religious progress we must have some definite conception of what constitutes religious progress. I venture to suggest, that religious progress is not necessarily involved in the growing influence of the latest forms of speculative philosophy on the theological thinking of the time. Everything here depends upon the determination of the question, whether the current philosophy is fundamentally true. If modern philosophy, or any particular phase of it, is unquestionably true in its methods and in its results, then we must conclude that it is the correct human expression of the divine thought, and the more our theology is dominated by it the better. To say that there cannot possibly be any contradiction between true philosophy or science and true theology is to utter an axiom. Each within its sphere must express the thought of God himself, and where their spheres touch there must be perfect harmony.

It may be said with equal confidence, that for the Christian the grounds of assurance regarding the reality and the finality of the divine revelation that led up to, was embodied in, and proceeded from Jesus the Christ are vastly superior to any that are possible regarding the maxims of any merely human philosophy. So far as modern theologizing represents a weakening of the influence of the eternal verities of divine revelation and a substitution therefor of the products of the unaided human intellect, it would be a misnomer to speak of it as an exemplification of religious progress.

*Read before the recent session of the Baptist Congress in Buffalo, N. Y.