

# THE CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN.

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## THE PROSPECTS OF ASIA MINOR.

**T**HE following questions have recently been asked by a leading minister in the Church at home: I. Is the British Protectorate to accomplish anything for the good of the people of Turkey? II. Is Palestine going to be colonised? III. What are the colleges, schools, and philanthropic establishments throughout Turkey doing for the good of the people?

### I.

The first question is hard to answer. The writer was one of the most sanguine believers in good to come from the Anglo-Turkish Treaty, and gave expression to this belief both in private and in public in the years 1878 and 1879. The Turkish Government at that time had found itself prostrate at the feet of Russia, and, for the third time in its history, was rescued from utter destruction by the interference of the British Government. British statesmen, British diplomatists and officials everywhere had the confidence of the Turkish Government and people. England demanded reform as the condition of her friendship, and Turkey, under the pressure of such distress, political and financial, as she had never felt before, was only too ready to promise radical and universal reforms throughout the empire.

These reforms were to be in connection with the judiciary system, the collection of taxes, the police, and the admission into the army of the Christians of the empire. British officers were to be invited to organise the gendarmerie, the Indian system of taxation was to be introduced, British judges were to sit in the courts of appeal, and the depressed and oppressed Christians were to enjoy the privileges of military office and service.

Three years have passed. The Turkish parliament, whose short career interested Europe, has been forgotten. British officers have been gradually discharged from the Ottoman service, and German officers are being appointed either to fill their places, or to occupy different positions. The old oppressive system of tithing continues. The courts of justice are in nearly the same condition as before the

Evangelical powers of Germany were assembled in order to deliberate regarding the means by which they might resist the united forces of the emperor and the pope ; and, indeed, it was necessary to say nothing about Church affairs if they did not wish to be overwhelmed by their powerful enemies. The discord concerning theological doctrines, hindered the Evangelical party from being at all active, and rather formed a pretext for sisting all political and military association among those who professed the doctrines of the Gospel. The forces of the emperor were already threatening Franconia ; nevertheless, the Elector of Saxony, who simultaneously, indeed, was treating with the court of Vienna at Leitmeritz, opposed every kind of communion with the Reformed. If any alliance were to be formed among the Evangelicals, he stipulated that the Calvinists should be excluded ; Calvinism, he protested, must be extirpated throughout the empire. The Elector of Brandenburg, indeed, insisted most decidedly upon a close alliance among all the Evangelical powers ; but the Saxon gave a decided refusal, declaring that under these circumstances Calvinism would be promoted, as they would be compelled to protect each prince in that form of religion which he confessed, and this would be against God as well as against conscience. The blindness of these Saxon politicians was extraordinary ; and if we say that the peacemaker was there at his place, unfortunately we must add that he was but a preacher in the wilderness ; on the side of the Lutherans he found nothing but deaf ears.

Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador, introduced him to the meeting at Frankfort, and recommended his purpose warmly enough as one of great importance. But the politicians of Saxony decided that they would not be instructed concerning transactions about Church matters ; and what Dury obtained was merely an acknowledgment of the laudability of his proposals, and a promise to take his suggestions *ad referendum*. With this resolution he had to be content, all the more as at the moment of deliberation, and before settling anything, the Swedish army was defeated at Nördlingen by the troops of the emperor, and nothing was left to the meeting but to start immediately. The miserable imbecility of the whole Protestant party, caused by their discord in regard to Church matters, became most evident on this occasion. Thus Dury was again disappointed.

FREDERIC H. BRANDES.

(To be continued.)

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## RATIONALISTIC TESTIMONIES TO CHRIST.

**I**N my book on the "Person of Christ" (revised edition, London and New York, 1880) I gave a collection of striking testimonies of unbelievers, sceptists and rationalists, from Tacitus and Celsus down to Rousseau, Napoleon, Strauss, and Renan, concerning the moral perfection

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, July, 1882.]

of Christ, which have considerable evidential value ; for the testimony of an enemy is often more conclusive than that of a friend. They prove that there is in the inmost heart of man an instinctive reverence and admiration for the spotless purity of Christ's character. Infidels may deny His miraculous works, but they cannot deny His miraculous character, which towers as high above the greatest sages and saints as the pyramids of Egypt above the sandy désert, or the snow-crowned Alps above the valleys beneath. In proportion as sceptics are honest and earnest, they feel drawn towards Him in a reverence which borders on worship. But admitting once the unique perfection of His humanity, there is but one step to the recognition of His Divinity ; in fact, the former cannot be consistently maintained without the latter. He could not be morally perfect without absolute honesty, and this implies the truth of His testimony concerning Himself as the Son of the living God, and Saviour of the world.

We present here some additional testimonies of distinguished writers, which we have met in the course of recent studies.

#### DR. PAULUS.

Dr. Heinrich Eberhard Gottlieb Paulus (died at Heidelberg, August 1851, at the age of 90 years), the author of a life of Jesus, and a commentary on the Gospels, is the chief champion of the rationalistic misinterpretation of the miracles of Christ. Dr. F. W. Krummacher, the famous pulpit orator, gives the following account of an interview he had with him in his old age at Heidelberg. [*See "Krummacher—An Autobiography,"* edited by his Daughter, translated by Rev. M. G. Easton. Edinburgh, 1871, p. 187.]

"I ventured to visit old Paulus also, when on my return journey I touched at Heidelberg. The good-natured Suabian, in whom I found the same contradiction between the heart and head which I had found in Hebel, received me with true fatherly heartiness, although he was sitting at work surrounded by his huge folios. He at once engaged in conversation with me on theological questions. When in the course of my observations I expressed the idea, that to him Christ seemed to be nothing more than a mere man, he sprang suddenly from his seat, and replied with great passion, and with glowing cheeks, "That is an unjust statement which people are not weary of repeating against me! Believe me, that I never look up to the Holy One on the cross, without sinking in deep devotion before Him. No, He is not a mere man as other men. He was an extraordinary phenomenon, altogether peculiar in His character, elevated high above the whole human race, to be admired, yea, to be adored." And much more to a similar intent he spake, with true animation, regarding the person of the Lord. Highly delighted at hearing such an altogether unexpected effusion from his mouth, I left him, wishing him the peace of old Simeon, which he took in a friendly way—indeed, replying to me, "I heartily thank you." Perhaps in my

(CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, July, 1882.)

simplicity I gave too favourable an interpretation to his confession; yet, I read also in one of his later writings the words, "Christ is a miracle, a meteoric stone which has fallen down between our two ages of the world."

DR. DE WETTE.

Dr. M. M. L. De Wette, Professor of Theology at Basel, where he died 16th June, 1849, was one of the most learned of German rationalists and critics. He was constitutionally a sceptic, but of deep religious feeling and high-toned moral character, an honest seeker after truth, and longing for clear, strong faith. He characterised himself admirably in these sad lines, which were found among his papers:—

"Ich fiel in eine wirre Zeit,  
Die Glaubenseintracht war vernichtet;  
Ich mischte mich mit in den Streit,  
Umsonst, ich hab' ihn nicht geschlichtet."

His best work is his "Exegetical Handbook on the New Testament," which has gone through several editions, and is almost as much used as Meyer's Commentary. In the Preface to the Commentary on Revelation, dated Basel, 20th June, 1848 (amidst the storms of revolutions), occurs the following remarkable passage, which may be regarded as his dying confession:—

"In studying the Apocalypse, I have not learned to prophesy, and the vision of the seer did not reach down to the present age: I cannot therefore know what will be the fate of our dear Protestant Church. Only this I know, that there is salvation in no other name but the name of Jesus Christ and Him crucified ("dass in keinem anderen Namen Heil ist als im Namen Jesu Christi des Gekreuzigten"), and that there is nothing higher for humanity than the God-manhood realised in Him, and the kingdom of God planted by Him ("die in ihm verwirklichte Gottmenschheit und das von ihm gepflanzte Reich Gottes"), an idea and a task which is not yet fully understood and carried out in life even by those who otherwise are justly considered as the most zealous and devoted Christians. If Christ were really and truly our life, how could such an apostacy be possible? Those in whom He lived would, by their whole life in word, writing, and deed, so powerfully bear witness to Him, that unbelief would be struck dumb. . . . Christianity must become life and deed. . . . More than seven times seven plagues will be necessary to teach us where true salvation is to be found."

LECKY.

Mr. Wm. Edward Hartpole Lecky, M.A., a native of Ireland (born 26th March, 1838), and graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, a rationalistic, but very able and fair historian of "Rationalism in Europe" (1865, 2 vols., 5th ed., 1872); of "European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne" (1869, 2 vols.); and of "England in the Eighteenth

CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, July, 1882.]

Century" (1878), pays the following tribute to Christ in his "History of European Morals," Vol. II., pp. 9 and 10 (New York ed.):—

"If Christianity was remarkable for its appeals to the selfish or interested side of our nature, it was far more remarkable for the empire it attained over disinterested enthusiasm. The Platonist exhorted men to imitate God, the Stoic to follow reason, the Christian to the love of Christ. The later Stoics had often united their notions of excellence in an ideal sage, and Epictetus had even urged his disciples to set before them some man of surpassing excellence, and to imagine him continually near them; but the utmost the Stoic ideal could become was a model for imitation, and the admiration it inspired could never deepen into affection.

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions—has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence, that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists.

"This has indeed been the well-spring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft and persecution and fanaticism that have defaced the Church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration. Perfect love knows no rights. It creates a boundless, uncalculating self-abnegation that transforms the character, and is the parent of every virtue. Side by side with the terrorism and the superstitions of dogmatism, there have ever existed in Christianity those who would echo the wish of St. Theresa, that she could blot out both heaven and hell, to serve God for Himself alone; and the power of the love of Christ has been displayed alike in the most heroic pages of Christian martyrdom, in the most pathetic pages of Christian resignation, in the tenderest pages of Christian charity. It was shown by the martyrs who sank beneath the fangs of wild beasts, extending to the last moment their arms in the form of the cross they loved; who ordered their chains to be buried with them as the insignia of their warfare; who looked with joy upon their ghastly wounds, because they had been received for Christ; who welcomed death as the bridegroom welcomes the bride, because it would bring them near to Him."

THE AUTHOR OF "SUPERNATURAL RELIGION."

"Supernatural Religion: An Inquiry into the Origin of Divine Revelation." Sixth edition, London, 1875-79, in 3 vols.

The anonymous author of this work reproduces in English the most advanced German and Dutch Rationalism of the Tübingen and Leyden

[CATHOLIC PRESBYTERIAN, July, 1882.]

schools, and endeavours to divest Christianity of all its supernatural elements, explaining them away as the aftergrowth of the fervid imagination of the East. Yet he is forced to admit that the historical Christ represents in doctrine and life the highest attainable summit of moral purity and perfection. The following quotation is from Vol. II., pp. 487 and 488 :—

“ It must be admitted that Christian ethics were not in their details either new or original. The precepts which distinguish the system may be found separately in early religions, in ancient philosophies, and in the utterances of the great poets and seers of Israel. The teaching of Jesus, however, carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or even attainable, by humanity. The influence of His spiritual religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of His own character. Surpassing in His sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Sākya Muni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied, though generally admirable, teaching of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers, He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles, so that the ‘imitation of Christ’ has become almost the final word in the preaching of His religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence. His system might not be new, but it was in a high sense the perfect development of natural morality, and it was final in this respect amongst others, that, superseding codes of law and elaborate rules of life, it confined itself to two fundamental principles—love to God and love to man. Whilst all previous systems had merely sought to purify the stream, it demanded the purification of the fountain. It placed the evil thought on a par with the evil action. Such morality, based upon the intelligent and earnest acceptance of Divine Law, and perfect recognition of the brotherhood of man, is the highest conceivable by humanity, and although its power and influence must augment with the increase of enlightenment, it is itself beyond development, consisting as it does of principles unlimited in their range, and inexhaustible in their application. Its perfect realisation is that true spiritual *Nirvāna* which Sākya Muni less clearly conceived, and obscured with Oriental mysticism : extinction of rebellious personal opposition to Divine order, and the attainment of perfect harmony with the will of God.”

PHILIP SCHAFF.