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## A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF REV. HENRY ELIAS DOSKER, D. D., LL. D., L. H. D.

*(Professor of Church History, Louisville Presbyterian  
Theological Seminary, 1903-1926).*

BY REV. JOHN M. VANDER MEULEN, D. D., LL. D.,  
*President of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.*

For those not well acquainted with Dr. Dosker, it may be well, before my expression of appreciation of him, to give, in a few words, the data of his life.

He was born in the Netherlands in February, 1855, at Bunschoten. His father was the Rev. Nicholas Herman Dosker, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church at Bunschoten, and his mother was Wilhelmina De Ronden. Henry Elias, for that was the name given him, was educated in the Dutch Gymnasium, a school of secondary education that corresponds roughly to our academy or high school. The family came to this country in 1870, the Rev. Nicholas Dosker having accepted a call to take the ministry of the Second (Dutch) Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Henry E. was sent to Hope College, Holland, Michigan, from which he graduated and of which he was one of the most distinguished alumni. He then entered McCormick Seminary without, of course, leaving the membership of the Dutch Reformed Church in America. His first church was a country pastorate in Ebenezer, near the city of Holland, Michigan. His second church was the First Reformed Church of Grand Haven, Michigan,

## THE LAST FORTY YEARS IN ENGLAND.

BY REV. ERNEST TRICE THOMPSON, D. D.,  
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(Here Dr. Thompson gives not his own views, but the views of leading British scholars as published in the *British Weekly*.—Editor.)

The last forty years in England have been momentous ones for the Church. They have witnessed epochal changes in the realm of religious thought and ecclesiastical life. The aim of the present article is not to criticize—our space is too limited for that—but merely to summarize some of the more important of these developments. The material on which the article is based has come for the most part from the fortieth Anniversary Number of the *British Weekly*, published on November 11, 1926. It represents the views, therefore, of a large number of the outstanding Christian leaders of Great Britain, men who have lived through the period under discussion. Whether the Church in England has progressed or retrogressed during this period, the general lines of the movement should be understood by Christian leaders in America.

### SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

To begin with, all of the contributors to the *British Weekly*, and other observers as well, agree that the intellectual situation is greatly improved. For one thing, they feel that there is now a much happier relation, in fact, an approaching harmony between science and religion. Sir Oliver Lodge says that forty or fifty years ago a militant and aggressive agnosticism (led by Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford) was storming at what seemed to many to be the crumbling defences of Christianity. Throughout the scientific world philosophical materialism was then rampant. A separate entity such as life or mind seemed a superfluous superstition; the idea of an animating principle or soul was more appropriate to primitive men

or to savages than to men of science; while as to a spiritual world it seemed to many a gross illusion. Man could not survive his brain. Death was the end of him. Matter, especially the complex variety called protoplasm, was able to explain everything. Huxley brilliantly upheld the Cartesian view that animals (including man) were automata, were worked like mechanism by physical and chemical stimuli; that consciousness was an epiphenomenon, a sort of shadow of reality, not reality itself, and that free will was an illusion.

Vestiges of this earlier view still remain, but looking over the world today, the attitude of leaders in science and religion, we can trace a great, an almost revolutionary change. Scientific men have grown more humble. They themselves point out that there are limits to scientific knowledge. Militant condemnation of religious beliefs as contrary to the ascertained facts of science is now out of date. Religious leaders, on the other hand, have accepted many of the teachings of science, which formerly they opposed. The old bitterness has departed.

Some of the facts that bear witness to this growing reconciliation between science and religion (according to Sir Oliver Lodge) are the following : Evolution is now generally accepted, not only by scientists, but also by theologians. It is seen, moreover, that evolution holds not only of species and living things, but that it also describes the history of heavenly bodies and of atoms. This evolution, however, is not a haphazard chance process, with survival value in what happens to suit the environment. More and more are leaders in science coming to recognize design, purpose, plan. As Sir Oliver puts it: Mind cannot be excluded from the universe. It is mind which dominates matter; and the whole course of evolution is full of signs of guidance and intention. The nature of life itself is still unknown, but few now think it to be a mere physical attribute of organized matter. The laws of physics and chemistry are true, as true for organized matter as for any other, but they are no longer dominant; they require supplementing. Mechanism is no longer supreme.

Frederick Lynch, writing in a recent issue of the *Christian*

*Century*, bears additional witness to this fact. He says: "There is a widespread feeling that all scientists accept a materialistic interpretation of nature. As a matter of fact, the opposite is the truth. Practically all of the great scientists of today are saying that there is no explanation of the universe except in terms of the spirit, and from them is coming great reinforcement of the religious interpretation of matter. Back of matter, pervading it in all its manifestations and energies, giving it purpose and meaning, is intelligence and will. Evolution, instead of putting God out of the universe, calls for Him as creator of life and guide of the unfolding world. It is a method of God's working and reveals Him even more manifestly than does direct creation."

The growing reconciliation between science and religion, the acceptance of the general theory of evolution, as helpful to the religious interpretation of the universe, is one of the outstanding developments of the last generation of religious thought in England.

#### PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.

The contributors to the *British Weekly* feel that philosophy as well as science has become more favorable to Christianity during the last forty years. John MacMurray, of Balliol, Oxford, writes that in 1885 the prevailing philosophical temper was essentially naturalistic. It ran in two main channels. The first was a mechanic naturalism, originating in the psychological philosophy of Locke and Hume, represented by the dominance of the logic of Mill and Bacon, and by a narrow utilitarianism in ethical and political theory in which the creative processes of the mind were caricatured as merely the association of primary sensations. The second was a biological naturalism under the influence of the new theories associated with the name of Darwin, which expressed itself with popular applause in the philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Both of these currents of philosophical thought, whether secretly or openly, were essentially materialistic and agnostic. The wave of ag-

nostic materialism which devastated the spiritual life of England toward the end of the nineteenth century in the name of the "proved results of science" was entirely in accordance with the temper of the ruling philosophy.

Into this materialistic and agnostic atmosphere there burst a belated apprehension of the epoch-making work of Kant and Hegel. Hegelian Idealism, as modified by the essential empiricism of the British mind, rose rapidly and inexplicably to a position of dominance in English philosophy. At the present time its influence in England has about ceased. But its permanent contribution to English thought has been twofold:

1. It has been an effective critic of naturalism. Arising out of the Romantic movement in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it insisted rightly, if with a certain aesthetic bias, upon the falsity of any mechanical conception of the spiritual activity of the mind. It indicated that all mental life, since it is rooted in self-consciousness, must be creative and synthetic. As a critic of naturalism in the practical as well as in the theoretical field its triumph has been complete and well deserved.

2. It has contributed to thought the idea of organic interconnection, and built up on this basis a logic of the organism.

Its later developments, however, show that its criticism of naturalism can be turned upon itself. Human personality cannot be explained in organic terms. Its unity is super-organic. Thus the triumph of the new evolutionary empiricism raises afresh the problem of Personality, but at a new level, a level where philosophy feels the need of setting the religious, the scientific, the artistic, and the practical and social activities of the human spirit side by side on a common level of validity, and of creating categories of thought which will enable us to grasp them together as functions of one self-conscious personal life.

Principal Cairns of Aberdeen sums up some of the positive gains for religion in the realm of philosophy: (1) The old materialistic philosophy has been badly shaken. There is a growing conviction among thoughtful men and women that

whatever is true, materialism cannot be true. The best modern thought is moving toward a wider and more spiritual view of life. (2) The case for theism has been strengthened. The whole intellectual case for faith's certainty is growing steadily stronger with the growing recognition of the reality of Eternal values. There is no conceivable explanation of these values except that which lets purpose into the very heart of things: a purpose which realizes Goodness and Beauty is only another name for God. (3) The argument for Christianity has been reinforced. The only God worth believing in is the God of perfect purity and goodness. Yet man's religious nature can be content with nothing save communion with God. The two deepest things in us are thus at strife, for who is at ease with his own conscience. And if no sane man is quite at ease with his own conscience how can he be at home with God. There can be only one solution, an initiative of the Divine Grace, in other words, the Cross. Obsolete theories of the Atonement may be weaker than they were, but the cross is gaining in meaning and power.

#### BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

We are interested, however, not only in the recent spiritual trends of both science and philosophy (according to these British observers), but even more in the British reaction to modern Biblical Criticism. B. W. Bacon, in his recent book, "The Story of Jesus", says truly that the man who knows something of the growth both of science and theology in the last forty years knows that the issue of today lies in a totally different field. The foe of the Biblicist today is not the geologist or paleontologist, and the field of conflict is wider. It has spread over the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The foe of the Biblicist today is the critical historian. The Churches in Great Britain, however, seem to have made their peace with the critical historians. In the main they accept both the methods and the results of the higher critics (of the moderate school). T. R. Glover, author of "The Jesus of History",

says: "Apart from the small group known as the Bible League, all the fuss and worry about higher criticism is over." Rev. T. Herbert Darlow says: "Today Christian orthodoxy is less rigid, though not less devoted and sincere. Forty years ago there occurred the Down Grade controversy. The real questions at issue were akin to those involved in the Fundamentalist conflict that is at present disturbing so many churches in America. The *British Weekly* helped to bring about the result that Evangelical scholars and preachers in Great Britain have now accepted the broad conclusions of Old Testament criticism. When similar critical methods are applied to the Gospel narratives there emerges a much more difficult problem which is not yet fully solved." John A. Hutton, editor of the *British Weekly*, and acceptable evangelical preacher in America, says: "Looking back over the past forty years from the point of view of theological and religious concerns, one of my chief emotions is the sense of shame for certain unworthy panics which from time to time good people indulged. I can remember in my early ministry hearing one minister say to another, after having read a book in which it had been suggested that perhaps Moses after all had not written the account of his own death: I tell you, if things go on like this there will be nothing left to preach. We see now that the universe may be trusted to look after itself. For myself, I will say that what has happened to the Bible during the last forty years is nothing short of a raising from the dead. Of course things have been shaken that could be shaken; but it is our own fault if the last clause which completes the verse is not equally true, namely, that this has happened in order that the things which cannot be shaken may remain."

As has been stated, English scholars have reached greater unanimity regarding the criticism of the Old Testament than they have of the New. A. S. Peake tells us that forty years ago the dominant issue in Old Testament study was the criticism of the Pentateuch. The analysis of this section of the Old Testament into four main documents had been accepted by English scholars since 1853. The Graf-Wellhausen view,

which put the priestly writing last, during the period of the exile, made slower progress in England than in Holland and Germany. Driver's "Introduction", published in 1891, played the most decisive part in swinging educated English opinion into line.

#### OLD TESTAMENT STUDY.

During recent years a great change has come over Old Testament study generally. The immense widening of our horizons by the processes of excavation in Bible lands, archaeology and epigraphy, have lifted Israel out of its earlier isolation and reacted on the reconstruction of its history, the criticism of its literature and the interpretation of its religion. This wider knowledge (according to Peake) has not upset the documentary analysis of the Pentateuch, nor shaken the order of its documents, nor the dates assigned. There has been a great deal of critical activity, however, some in a conservative direction, some in a radical direction, centering especially about the identification of the Law Book of Josiah with some form of Deuteronomy. Nevertheless, the Grafian criticism still holds the field, and when distinguished Old Testament scholars speak of the breakdown of the Grafian reconstruction, they refer not to the Grafian arrangement of the documents which they themselves hold, but to the view of the development of the Hebrew religion, held by such Grafian leaders as Kuenen, Wellhausen, Stade, and Duhm.

The rest of the Old Testament has not received the same attention as the Pentateuch. General agreement as to the division of Isaiah had been reached before the beginning of this period. Duhm and Marti have attempted to reduce the genuine Isaiah elements, and to assign the fragments to much later dates, much to the second century. Scholars generally, however, have tended to revert to earlier dates, and to be less suspicious of the authenticity of optimistic traditions in pre-exilic prophecy. In other directions, too, great scholars like Sellin, Gunkel, Gressman, and Eduard Meyer have represented a reaction, not to tradition, but to a more conservative view. There

is a growing tendency to recognize the pre-exilic element in the Psalms and in the book of Proverbs. Job, apart from the Elihu speeches, is generally dated about 400 B. C., Ecclesiastes about 200. The dramatic character of the Song of Songs is now generally denied, and it is regarded as a collection of marriage songs, with pre-exilic elements perhaps, but dating in its present form from the post-exilic period.

It is not to be gathered that England as a whole has accepted these critical and scientific conclusions. As previously stated, the Bible League stands for more conservative views. Edward Shillito, in a recent letter to the *Christian Century*, says: "It must not be imagined that in this country there is no party that holds firmly to the plenary inspiration of the Bible. There are many in all the churches who dread modernism, and in many ways they deliver their testimony." Dr. Cairns adds that in some quarters there has been a reversion to past standards of belief. "In Catholic lands this means reversion to Rome or to Catholic antiquity; in Protestant lands to Puritan theology or Fundamentalism. This is partly a protest against that boneless wonder of which some good folk are so enamored, an undoctinal and indefinite faith, and a relativist morality. It is partly a result of fear, of reaction to the great cataclysm through which we have been passing." Nevertheless English scholars and ministers generally seem to have accepted the results of a moderate criticism of the Bible, and to have made the theological readjustments rendered necessary thereby and by the newer scientific theories. At the same time the Church in England has not lost its evangelistic zeal. Edward Shillito says: There is in this land in all its churches a large body of evangelicals who have accepted the main methods of criticism and are at the same time great believers and evangelists.

As would naturally be expected from the above, the old doctrines have undergone some important modifications during the past forty years in Great Britain. Only two, however, are discussed at any length by the contributors to the *British Weekly*.

## CHANGES IN DOCTRINE.

The first of these is the doctrine of the hereafter. Forty years ago, says Rev. Frederic C. Spurr, all the churches admitted in a general manner a doctrine of the hereafter which had been bequeathed to them by the Reformers and which appeared to be supported by the Holy Scriptures, the righteous at death enter into eternal happiness, and the wicked are condemned to eternal misery and punishment. Once the line of death was passed, no change was possible. Today the situation is entirely different. The old beliefs in a static heaven and hell have largely disappeared. One indication of this is found in a comparison of the sermons of forty years ago and today. Then sermons holding out the allurements of heaven, the terrors of hell, were common; today in Protestant communities they are scarcely ever heard. A more careful Bible exegesis, the study of other religions, the new approach to the missionary enterprise, the study of psychology, the growth of humanism, the better understanding of apocalyptic literature, and finally the terrible experiences of the great war, have been important factors in creating this change. Present thought on the subject, however, seems to be very much confused and the situation is far from satisfactory. On the one hand there are those who retain the old phraseology in all good faith because of their loyalty to Jesus Christ. They believe in a static heaven and hell, and in the finality of the death line. But they seek to mitigate in various ways the severity of the conception of eternal punishment which for them means never-endingness. On the other hand there are those, and this includes the majority, who emphasize salvation as a process rather than a clean-cut thing done in a moment once for all. This conception joined to a belief in the continuity of life, and in the perpetuity of the Saviour's intercession, opens the door of hope to all men. Yet there is a hesitancy to dogmatize. And with the passing of belief in a static heaven and hell there is grave danger that the solemn truth of retribution should be obscured, and that the note of urgency should be lessened.

A second significant theological change during the last forty years is to be found in the new attitude toward Christ. J. Armitage Robinson says that forty years ago the general attitude of men was still controlled by the creeds, and by the older view of Scripture which was not yet dissipated by criticism. The union of the two natures in the one person was the great and insoluble question. The humanity of Jesus was almost swallowed up in His divinity. The outstanding element in Jesus' character was His gentleness. "We tended to think of Him as an amiable and winning soul, delicate in features, sensitive as a woman, a frail, slight form, emaciated, pale and worn; inconspicuous; sad-spirited. One who as the martyr Church of the early centuries loved to imagine Him, had never been seen to laugh, but oftentimes to weep; unassertive, shrinking from the storm of the world's hate and scorn which broke about His short and tragic way; a Lamb for whom the rough, untempered winds of the world were to prove too much in the end."

But within these forty years there has come the attempt to get back to the Jesus of history. The emphasis has been shifted to the humanity of Jesus. And much has been done in the way of recovering a more virile portrait of Christ. Many of the portraits have been overdrawn, or badly drawn, nevertheless the present generation has discovered for itself the strength, virility, courage and force of the human Jesus. And it is carrying these things with it into a great campaign for social righteousness. There is no doubt that as a result this age has become a Christ haunted age.

But the age is not satisfied. It is seeking to find new thought forms in which to express its attitude to Christ. "We are finding new meanings in Divinity, a new sense of the immanence of God in human life and supremely in the life of Jesus. Once more we are becoming aware that by His perfect response to the pressure and solicitation of the spiritual world, that spiritual world was finding, and even now finds, perfect access to the life of humanity through him. That in his constant dwelling in the life of God, God dwelt and evermore dwells

completely in Him. That through His perfect obedience to the will of God, God has accomplished His supreme purpose for mankind; and has come down all the way to meet our struggling humanity. That because in Him finitude saw into the heart of the unseen Godhead, in Him the Godhead has looked out on us from the seen. That He has carried His manhood into the Godhead, and now as the head of the mystical body of believers seeks through the Eternal Spirit to incarnate the divine in humanity."

Some indeed, says Dr. Robinson, cannot go this far, others would go farther, nevertheless men are again bowing before Him, surrendering to Him their faith, acknowledging that He is Lord.

#### MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES.

Many of the changes in British Christianity during the last forty years are reflected in the thought and work of the ministry. The Rev. Prof. George Jackson, of Didsbury College, says that he has seen little of that reluctance on the part of young men to accept the responsibilities of the Christian ministry. His experience, however, has been confined to the Methodist Church, and so far as the Church as a whole is concerned does not seem to be born out by the statistics. Ordinations in the Church of England have fallen off rapidly; Scotland also, the home of preachers, is facing a serious decrease in the number of ministerial candidates. The number required every year to fill vacant posts is about forty, says the Glasgow Herald—speaking for Scotland. In 1925 only twelve divinity students left the four divinity halls of the Church of Scotland, and the number of those who are expected to leave this year is only fifteen. A similar problem besets the United Free Church, and indeed all the other Protestant churches.

Though there are fewer candidates for the ministry in the present generation, Dr. T. R. Glover thinks the type is higher. Dr. Jackson also feels that the educational equipment of the average candidate has been raised, though he doubts whether it has kept pace with that of the nation generally.

Observers agree that present day students for the ministry are not interested in all the questions that agitated their fathers and grandfathers, and are not so amenable to authority in matters of belief, but that they are sincerely desirous of getting at the mind of Jesus, and are much more exercised over the social implications of the Gospel. The appeal of the mission fields is as great, if not greater, than ever.

### PREACHING.

Preaching has undergone some important changes during the last forty years. For one thing, sermons are shorter in the Free churches, and prayers are much shorter. Then few sermons were less than forty-five minutes; today few are longer than thirty minutes. The preaching is more simple and direct. The "ore rotundo" style, save in solitary survivals here and there, is a thing of the past. Perhaps there is an excess of unconventionalism. Dr. Gossip reminds us, however, that the Scottish preachers (and we judge that the same is true of the English ministers) have not been stampeded into running after popular stunts and cheap substitutes for Christianity. They have continued to bring men into the presence of God and to preach Jesus Christ. They have brought Him near to men, perhaps too near, forgetting that He also said: Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. At the same time there is a tendency to see God everywhere, to claim the whole round earth for God. All observers agree that both in England and in Scotland there is less theological preaching. There are fewer sermons about God, and more about men. Even in Scotland, where we had thought that theology was bred in the bone, Dr. Gossip says, there is much silly talk against beliefs, as though a man could do without them. And yet there is a ray of hope, for he continues: "Nothing is more interesting in Scotland today than the rising demand from youth for much more theological preaching, than their weariness with interesting skirmishing with pretty and unusual texts, and their demand for the big central theme. That

is a claim becoming both emphatic and insistent." All agree, too, that during the period under consideration there has been increasing attention to the social implications of the Gospel. The social Gospel was a term just coming into frequent use forty years ago. Today there is a danger, some think, of it obscuring or swallowing up the individual gospel. Another development has been away from the Old Testament. There are multitudes of preachers who, to their own great loss and that of their hearers, never preach from it. There has also been an undoubted development away from the sterner aspects of the teaching of the Lord. Dr. Charles Brown says: It is a rare experience now to hear a sermon on the Judgment Seat of Christ, or on His own solemn warning concerning the fate of unfaithful, self-indulgent and disobedient people. People are led to believe that Christ can be trifled with. Preachers of fifty years ago seemed to realize more poignantly than today that men are lost apart from faith in Christ. The development greatly needed today is along the line of enlightened and fervent evangelism whose primary and urgent plea with men is, 'Be ye reconciled to God'."

#### DRIFT AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.

In spite of the fact that the pulpits both of Scotland and England have been filled during the last forty years with many outstanding men, the contributors to the *British Weekly* agree that there has been a steady drift away from the church, or rather from attendance upon the services of the church. Some have argued that the day of the preacher is done. Rev. James Reid, however, says: "If the pulpit has waned the fault has not been in the method, but in the message. The ministers of the past generation have not been able to adequately express the Gospel in terms of the new age. The prestige of the official ministry is gone and will only be recovered by an efficiency which makes its own place because the world finds the need of it. Today we are finding our way to a message which we can preach with a joyful confidence and a sense of the freshness

and surprise of good news. More than that, we are looking into the restless eyes of a world which is becoming aware of its need of Christ. The pulpit is recovering its power."

There have also been changes in the work of the ministry—changes similar to those we have experienced in our own country. For example, Rev. James Reid says that forty years ago there was little effort to capture the interest of the young for the church, except by the Sunday school. Now all of this is changed. The main attention is given to the young. A minister is judged chiefly by this criterion—whether he can secure the interest of youth.

There have also been changes in the pastoral work of the ministry. The emphasis used to be put on pastoral visitation. Now the minister is kept busy with organizations, night meetings, a multitude of activities. "At the present moment, however, the pendulum is swinging back. We are realizing that a minister must know his people. He must establish links of personal relationships and get to grips with individual problems with which the pulpit is inadequate to deal. The best minds are seeing afresh that the most effective way to get the Gospel home to many people is through the mediating power of personal contact."

#### MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

It seems that the Church in England is also giving a larger and larger place to the ministry of women. Forty years ago a woman in the ministry of the Anglican Church was unimaginable, and hardly imaginable in the Free Churches. These ancient "prejudices", says Miss Maude Royden, herself one of the most noted preachers of England, have not yet been transcended. Nonetheless women may receive theological training in the Congregationalist, Baptist, and Unitarian Churches; it is still unlikely that they will be given a church, yet women are occasionally called to take charge of independent churches, and "this is the interesting point, nobody seems to think that it is extraordinary". A woman acted as President of the Free

Church Council two years ago for the first time in history. Women have been admitted as elders and deaconesses in the Presbyterian Church of England, though not in that of Scotland. They may act as deacons in the United Free Church, but not even this is yet permitted in the Established Church. They are occasionally invited to preach in Presbyterian pulpits. There are some Presbyterian ministers who are ready to go even further. A recent news dispatch says: The Presbytery of Edinburgh has resolved to submit to the approaching General Assembly of the United Free Church an overture regarding the ordination of women. The overture asks that the Assembly initiate legislation "declaring the eligibility of women for admission to colleges of the Church, regular theological students who on completion of their full course of study may be licensed to preach and be ordained to the ministry on the same terms as men, or otherwise, as the Assembly in its wisdom may determine". Women are also being given a place in the services of the Church of England. A few years ago they were not allowed to sing in the choir. Miss Royden reports that now "even the citadel of 'orders' is invaded. The Lambeth report recognized the fact that the diaconate for women is an 'order', though with admirable ecclesiastical precision 'not holy orders'."

#### RELIGIOUS LIFE MOVEMENTS.

Many new manifestations of the religious life have appeared in England during the last generation, as also in America. Rev. R. F. Horton summarizes some of these developments as follows: "Into the new century there came new movements offering a hope for those who felt that the Church had failed: Christian Science with its offer of help; Theosophy with its unveiling of mysteries; Spiritualism offering free intercourse with the dead. These were substitutes for Christianity, but within the Christian borders there were developments. The Student Christian Movement, coming from America, hardly less influential than Moody's Mission; the Boys' Brigade, the

Scouts, the Girl Guides, compensating to some extent for the decline of the Sunday Schools. The Adult Schools and the P. S. A.'s and the Men's Meeting, compensating in part for the absence of males from the churches. Also the Church has become more active in the practical life. Copec has opened a great new hope. The Church is beginning to see that Christ's purpose is to regenerate society and to achieve a better social order. The socialism of Marx and Hyndman would take the place of religion; the new birth of society was a substitute for the new birth of the soul. But Copec is seeking a new social order as the expression of Christianity, and realizes that the regeneration of the individual gives the only promise of a regeneration of society.

As to the churches themselves. The Roman Catholic Church has gained a great deal of ground. The Established Church has been quickened into remarkable life. Unhappily, it is more Anglo-Catholic in its tendency. But a Modern Churchmen's movement and an attempt at Liberal Evangelicalism keep up what is regarded as the breadth and inclusiveness of the English Establishment. The Free Churches, in spite of the Free Church Council and the Federal Council, and the constant efforts at reunion, are relatively weaker than they were forty years ago. As the Anglo-Catholics drift to Rome, so the new generation of the Free Churches steadily drifts to the Establishment. But all the churches together play a smaller part in the nation's life than they did forty years ago.

#### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

"The most remarkable advance has been in the field of Foreign Missions. The Edinburgh Conference of 1910 marked a new era of missionary enterprise. Then for the first time all the missionary societies took counsel together and laid down the considered lines of future progress. The Continuation Committee has continued its work. There is now a comity and cooperation on the mission field, with the result of a progress which is remarkable."

## CHRISTIAN UNITY.

A number of contributors agree that one of the most cheering proofs of religious progress in Great Britain since 1886 has appeared in the movements on all sides toward a closer Christian unity. In England the Free Church Council, supplemented in 1919 by the Federal Council of the Free Churches, have done much to draw denominations together and to emphasize the essential faith which they hold in common. The Student Christian movement has taught similar lessons in university and college life. Progress is steadily being made in the plan to unite the three leading Methodist churches of England. It is now hoped that the enabling bill may be placed before the Parliamentary Committee in the spring of next year, and that parliamentary sanction may have been obtained by the summer of 1928. This union, if consummated, as now seems probable, will result in a United Methodist Church of approximately 1,000,000 members. The Baptist Church will then come second among the non-conforming bodies with over 400,000 members. The Presbyterians will come third with a few over 60,000. Still smaller are the Congregationalists, the Unitarians, the Quakers or Friends. The Church of England has a membership of about 2,500,000, containing more than half of the professing Christians in England. Feeling between the Church of England and the non-conforming churches has been none too good in the past. As the Lord Bishop of Manchester says: "Forty years ago there was little cooperation or fellowship between Anglicans and Free Churchmen. The tendency was for each party to regard the other as enemies and to lay stress on their points of difference." The feeling is happily better at the present time. The Lambeth appeal resulted in conferences being held between representatives of the Anglican Church and those of the non-episcopal churches. A large degree of unanimity was reached. The conferences, however, have all come to an impasse because the Free churches have not been willing, and are not willing, to consider the mat-

ter of re-ordination. "Meanwhile," the Bishop of Manchester declares, "there is a vast field open for practical cooperation which is being exploited in increasing measure. It is all to the good that occasions for mutual conference are being multiplied; that united services are arranged; that councils of Christian congregations unitedly act to uphold Christian standards before municipalities. A survey of the last forty years fills one with a great hope." The tendency in Scotland is also towards reunion, instead of disruption as in so much of the history of the past. The United Presbyterian Church and the Free Presbyterian Church united in 1900 to form the United Free Presbyterian Church. For several years now the movement between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church has been slowly making progress by the removal of barriers and the clarification of the relations of the churches to the State. At the present time an agreement has been reached which Dr. John White, of Glasgow, says, harmonizes the respective principles of spiritual freedom and the national recognition of religion which the negotiating churches were charged to safeguard. "Neither church loses anything of what it prizes as most valuable, while a United Church will gain by combining the rich heritage and historical traditions of both." Both churches have voted almost unanimously that union is desirable, and it seems certain that the two historic churches, which between them almost cover the field in Scotland, will soon be one united body.

In spite of some discouraging facts which have emerged during the last forty years of England's religious life, facts which the writers of the various articles in the *British Weekly* do not hesitate to face, there is running through all the articles a note of optimism. Rev. R. F. Horton speaks for them all when he says: "While there is much in the survey of these forty years to sadden and to dishearten us, there is this to put new heart into us and to sustain a deathless hope. Christ is clearly coming into His own; and His own is not an elect nation, but an elect world."