

THE CHURCH, CHARITY, AND SOCIAL REFORM

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Opportunities and duties of the Church in social reform are topics heard much to-day. For several years we have been watching the interesting services of Mr. Stelzle, representing the Presbyterian Church in a ministry for laboring men. That Church now has a department of immigration, under its Home Mission Board, aiming especially to get knowledge of conditions and needs of recent immigrants. The Congregational Churches have a national Committee on Industrial Organization. The Methodist Federation for Social Service has published its first leaflet, an open letter to the Church, on "Unemployment and Relief." The American Unitarian Association has established a Department of Social Service, with a secretary, for propaganda, especially to promote co-operation with existing agencies for charity, civics, and industrial advance. The last New York diocesan convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church provided a permanent Social Service Commission with several local branches, chiefly to bring about better understanding between Church and labor, employers and employees. The Federal Council of Churches recently held in Philadelphia, representing thirty-three denominations and eighteen million communicants in the United States, adopted with enthusiasm a long list of resolutions for specific reforms in conditions of living and labor, for a standing commission on the Church and social service. And in England the great councils of the Anglican communion have spoken strongly on the duty of the Church in social reform.

At the same time, with these stirring messages comes the psychotherapeutic treatment by the Church, the so-called Emmanuel Church movement of Boston, which has roused interest everywhere.

What is the meaning of all this? To what extent is it an awakening to the duty of the Church as understood by the Church's true leaders in all the ages, but not always followed? To what extent is it an answer to the plea that the Church must undertake new duties to justify itself, to answer new demands for a ministry of so-called practical service? How shall we relate all this to the modern movement for the use of special knowledge, for differentiation between professions and expert services?

Surely, the Church should strive hard to rouse men to more interest in, and more knowledge of, industrial and social conditions, to the end that ills may be done away with and progress made. Church and denominational organization may well have particular committees to keep in touch with leading industrial interests and moral movements, to help the clergy to interpret the special knowledge and aspirations of those various interests. But most important in this should be the aim of listening to knowledge from various sources and points of view. Significant, indeed, was the action of the National Committee of the Congregational Churches in changing its title from a Committee on Labor to Committee on Industrial Organization, in order to indicate more clearly the duty of listening alike to employer and employee to helps and hindrances in organization in both capital and labor. Such an attitude will not, of course, be satisfactory to those who wish the Church to become the propagandist of a particular method of social reform. If the minister is, for example, a thorough socialist, he will be true to himself and put frankly before his congregation the reasons why he seeks an industrial revolution for the betterment of society. There are, from time to time, conditions and reforms which should be specifically preached in our churches, for Christian people to consider thoughtfully and prayerfully in making up their duty as citizens and as men. But, generally speaking, the Church should not try to become the organ of any political or industrial movement in defining methods. It will do its part best if it rouses men to try to live religiously—to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly with God. That is its particular work, which is as useful to-day as ever, and will be to-morrow!

Said a man of much experience and thoughtfulness to the National Conference of Charity and Corrections: "The evils against which we contend, and the suffering which the Conference seeks to alleviate, are due directly or indirectly to unrighteousness of life; and a rival of righteousness would

do more to check their growth than all the effort in the way of benevolent work which we are able to put forth." It is said that in a great railroad strike in this country the men of a New England railroad were asked to join the strike sympathetically, but they refused. The reason for refusal was their loyalty to the man who happened to be their superintendent. That man did much to prevent a general strike throughout New England and to restore industrial peace beyond. He was able so to do because his men had confidence in him as one who was "open-minded and square."

There is one very practical way in which Churches can often make for social advance: by joining together as a neighborhood and community force in a fight against manifest evil conditions which aroused public opinion can wipe out. This has been well done, for instance, in particular localities, in opposing the existence or the spread of liquor saloons. Such co-operation may lead to a better appreciation of the value of forms of neighborhood work in which persons of all creeds and no creeds may join heartily. A good many philanthropic undertakings of individual churches might well be shifted on to that broader basis of neighborhood work.

The cry of the institutional church is that it should minister to the whole man. The appeal of common sense is that the various needs of men should be met by those particular agencies best fitted to fill them, by experience and knowledge. The Church may well maintain directly such agencies as are plainly a part of its own work of spiritualizing persons. But growth of knowledge and the complexity of our life makes specialization imperative. The duty of specialization within reasonable bounds in church, as in other things, is well shown by the real significance of the Emmanuel health classes, of psychotherapy in the church. That movement should teach doctors and clergy alike to insist on more thoroughness in treatment of this complex being, man, in physical or mental distress. But it certainly shows the value of diversity of gifts in doctor and clergyman, used in sympathetic co-operation.

Modern preventive medicine is teaching, among many lessons, that the warfare against disease is not limited to medical men. Thus, if infant mortality is to be checked, many mothers must be interested and instructed to do their part; and, further back, employers of working women must be prevented from employing them at times when the life of mother and infant may be injured by work. The campaign against tuberculosis depends largely for its success on the knowledge of the man in the street and in the factory. So in the grave matter of hygiene of sex, there is the duty of the parents, as well as of family physicians, to give proper instruction to the young. In all such matters as these, the minister has a duty in rousing the people to do their duty.

The Church can also make an important contribution to social advance in taking the right attitude as to charity. This is a matter which may not attract attention, but it is very practical. The Church should help to clear away all confusion from charity being thought of merely as alms material. Let a church leave to charitable agencies co-operating the material aid for persons strangers to it; and urge parishioners to become generous givers and doers with such agencies. Let it preach the value of personal service, of individual efforts to share with others opportunities, knowledge, and friendliness. Most of all, should the clergy strive to bring the spirit of charity into church life. There must be less distinction between the choice pews and those who sit in them and the gallery seats, if our churches are to be indeed households of faith. Let the clergy preach on the democracy of the greatest needs; for rich and poor, educated and untutored, are alike needy in the fundamental virtues of living. To help men to those fundamental virtues is, after all, the chief duty of the Church. By personal service in the spirit of true charity will come wider knowledge of men and more sympathy. Little tasks of service, individuals working with individuals, will inevitably lead to intelligent interest in larger efforts for social advance. Charity thus becomes a part of civics. The clergymen should preach also the responsibility of consumers for their purchases, of rich persons for their investments.

MRS. HOWE'S BIRTHDAY

General public interest was displayed last week in the ninetieth birthday of that remarkable woman, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. With Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mrs. Howe is associated in our minds with those tumultuous days just prior to the Civil War, when the abolition of slavery was the burning issue.

The author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" at ninety years of age has as much zeal as she had when pleading the cause of the black man in the South. She has seen the mission of her life accomplished in the liberation of the Negro, but she will not be satisfied now until the emancipation of woman is an accomplished fact, and the gentler sex is accorded the right to vote. The cause, while not so important as anti-slavery, is nevertheless worthy of a woman like Mrs. Howe, and she may even live to see the day when her sisters, armed with the ballot, march up to the polls. This change, if it comes at all, will come gradually, and as a result of the position which the new woman is occupying in the world's work.

If she had done nothing else, however, in the course of her busy, useful life, the composition of "The Battle Hymn" would have entitled her to the admiration of Americans for all time. The suggestion of Mr. Roosevelt, while President, that the hymn should be authorized by Congress as our national anthem is worth thinking about. It is sung on every patriotic occasion, sharing the honors with "America" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." Perhaps our national song is not yet written, for we are still a young nation, and great events may transpire within another hundred years. Meanwhile we congratulate Mrs. Howe and wish her the usual happy returns.

A BRACE OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

"The Most Delightful Calling in the World—
A College Presidency."

President Eliot to President Garfield on the latter's inauguration at Williams.

The purpose here is not to extol the individual man or institution, although the visit to the Ohio Valley of the retiring and incoming presidents of Harvard might well justify both. The event, however, may be used for a larger purpose, namely, to point out the traits and characteristics of the successful college president—how to enlist and retain the sympathy and co-operation of graduates in Alma Mater, the true ideal of the university, the elective system, discipline, and the thousand and one incidents and essentials of university life, which are all the more matters of general interest as the annual Commencement time approaches.

The annual meet of the Harvard Alumni Clubs of the United States was held at Cincinnati, Ohio, last week. The very size and enthusiasm of this body illustrates the fact that no college in the world surpasses Harvard in winning and holding the enthusiastic devotion of its graduates. Nor is there anything meretricious in this. The university wins because worthy. But it is a case of acting and reacting. The enthusiasm is begotten and in turn begets. It is a case of having and having more given.

Judged by results, President Eliot, who is the idol of the throng, is the most unique, forceful, and successful college president America has ever produced. In fact, he has won international fame. He made his office so great that it was considered none too small for the most forceful executive the United States has ever had, and the name of Theodore Roosevelt was persistently associated with it when it was known that President Eliot would retire. On the other hand, the latter had made himself so conspicuous that he was named in connection with the foremost embassy of the Government, namely, that to the Court of St. James.

President Eliot came within one of being the superintendent of a cotton mill. One holds his breath as he asks, "What if he had?" Happy would have been the corporation that secured him—happy the employees. In some respects, he would have been fortunate himself. He would have begun with a larger salary than he has ever received at Cambridge. But this generation at least would have been the loser—for Eliot is in himself the answer to a crass commercialism which estimates everything in terms of the dollar. His aptitude for managing men, money interests, and material properties is sufficiently indicated by the fact

that it was seriously proposed to invite him to reorganize a railway system of New England. No doubt of it! A millionaire was spoiled when this college president was made. But America could survive the loss of one millionaire. She would have been bitterly impoverished if she had missed having President Eliot.

The youngest president Harvard has ever had struck out an entirely original path. He Eliotized everything. His greatest innovation was the expanding of the elective system to its utmost capacity. It is said, more truthfully than facetiously, that there are now two thousand ways of getting into Harvard. Scientific discovery and expansion of the field of knowledge simply made it impossible for a college to include in its required studies all of the old and new subjects. Limitation of time and energy made choice inevitable. President Eliot faced the problem. The elective system was the solution. The essence of which is, that inasmuch as one man can not do his best in the same field of labor where another can do his, the same form of training may not be adapted to bring out the best which is in each of them. In Harvard the "humanities" now include all studies whatever their subject matter which really widen the mind, refine taste, and strengthen character. It was a long fight with precedent and prejudice, but it proved a winning fight, and is now a universally accepted principle destined to maintain, even in common school education, where flexibility enough to reach every child's personality will ultimately be attained.

At the Massachusetts No-License League dinner in Boston, October 29, 1908, President Eliot said, in substance, that although all his life he had used wine and beer on occasion, although not habitually, without in his own person experiencing any ill effects whatever, it seemed to him that the recent researches in physiology and medicine tend very strongly to show that the moderate drinking of alcohol is inexpedient. Although opposed at first to no-license in Cambridge, he had come to favor it. He felt that much had been proved that it is physically, mentally, and morally for the advantage of a population as a whole to go without alcoholic drinks, and he proposed in future to make this the rule of his own conduct.

Harvard without Eliot will be one of the greatest changes that has taken place in the educational world in a generation. That world will look out of the tail of its eye at the successor. Already it is being deprecatingly said that Lowell has not learned to think in terms of the continent and that he belongs to the Boston clique. But it must be remembered that Eliot himself began his career with scant praise and abundant criticism. There is something coming to Lowell on the score of heredity. He belongs to a family which has shown the same persistence as the Adams, Dana, and Eliot. His education began as Emerson says every man's should, a hundred years before he was born. But he has traded on this capital. Like his predecessor, he is a child of the institution he now governs. He is said to have been a grind, rooming alone in the "yard," and specializing in mathematics. But this did not prevent him from breaking the record in the two-mile race. Graduating in law; practicing in the care of large vested interests; governing the Lowell Institute, one of the greatest lectureship endowments in the world; besides authorship of volumes upon civil government, lecturing upon law in Harvard—all conspire, fit, and furnish him for a position which he himself has described as the most influential in America.

The General Committee for Foreign Missions will meet in Albany, New York, November 10, 1909, at 10 A. M., in Trinity Methodist Episcopal church.

"To Miss Helen M. Gould, the friend of all soldiers, I hereby give and bequeath my death benefit, to be paid to her by the United States Government and to be used by her, her heirs and assigns as she or they may see fit." The author of this last will was a soldier who had seen Miss Gould going like a ministering angel among the sick soldiers at Montauk Point. He knew her love for the soldier boy, and this will was his only way of returning that love. No wonder the beneficiary states it is the "most touching tribute of her career."