



THE RELIGIOUS WORLD



THE CHURCH AND FREEMASONRY

FREEMASONRY is taking such an active part in the anti-clerical campaign in Catholic countries as to rouse some to ask why it is so hostile to the Church. One cause of antipathy is traced by a writer in *The Living Church* (Milwaukee), a Protestant Episcopal weekly that has a very friendly feeling for Latin Christianity. Freemasonry in its modern form, this writer avers, is not two centuries old, yet it is popularly supposed to be descended from the Knights Templar of the Crusades. At all events, we read, it is founded upon like ideals. "The knighthood of the twelfth century was a religious order whose members truly lived in the world, but whose ideals were very similar to those which St. Francis gave to his friars minor a century later." Both the Knights and the Franciscans "sought to ennoble the common life of their respective ranks. Both were intensely religious. Neither had the remotest thought of rivalry with the Church." Modern Freemasonry "springs from the reorganization into a 'grand lodge' in 1717 of four English lodges." He goes on to give some account of the political and religious conditions in England in the early eighteenth century, when this movement took its rise:

"A century and a half had elapsed since the English Church and realm were shaken by the rupture with Rome. A half-century had rolled by since the restoration of the monarchy. The German Protestant régime of the house of Hanover had entered upon its dreary course. The Georges preserved the traditions of English royalty, but yet had little in common with the brilliancy of Tudor and Stuart courts, and still less with the Anglican conception of religion which, despite their differences, was a continuous policy of English monarchs from Elizabeth to Charles II.

"George I., to whom the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne formed but a prelude, broke with English past almost as completely as did the American Declaration of Independence. The Anglicanism of the Caroline era had been frowned upon by his two predecessors, and was effectively suppressed in his own reign. Churchmen of the Caroline school were Tories. The King established a Whig ministry, dissolved Queen Anne's Tory parliament, and used crown patronage so liberally as to insure the return of an overwhelmingly Whig parliament, in 1715. The Jacobite uprising signalized the difficulty with which England was being wholly Protestantized in the interest of the Hanoverian succession, which, at the beginning, stood on a very precarious footing; but the uprising was promptly suppressed. In matters ecclesiastical all the influence and patronage of the Crown were used to build up Continental Protestantism. England gradually settled down to that century and more of coldness and apathy in religion, of dormant Catholicity, of latitudinarianism in teaching, which only ended with the partial triumph of the Oxford Movement in the middle and later nineteenth century."

Out of those early eighteenth-century conditions Freemasonry arose, so the account proceeds, and quickly spread throughout England. It extended also into other lands, but England and, afterward, America, are its chief fields, and the place of its greatest successes. Further:

"Is it not easy to see that the warmth and the fraternity and the ritualism of the lodge were a protest of *the people* against the coldness and the lack of sympathy and the formalism that were ascendant in the Church? The fervor of the old-time worship of two centuries before had filled a need that was firmly planted in the English breast as in the Italian and the Spanish. Indeed, until the sudden revolution in the Church's ceremonial that began under Edward VI., but was not finally triumphant until German kings on the English throne effected its consummation, England was the 'ritualistic' nation of the Catholic Church. Medieval Roman influence was constantly curbing the ritual excesses of England and Western Europe. To-day, when we are seeking to reestablish ceremonial on a historic basis, the advocates of Sarum and other old-time Eng-

lish uses are embarrassed by the fact that pre-Reformation English ceremonial was much more elaborate than either medieval or modern Roman. Roman, and not Sarum, ceremonial has the recommendation of simplicity. As the Church of England was historically the 'ritualistic' Church of Christendom, so the curbing of its ritualism, first by popes and then by Puritans, was always due to foreign influence. It only became finally triumphant, and ingrained into the English system, when Englishmen acquiesced in a government of foreigners, for foreigners, and by foreigners.

"And then arose Freemasonry, with all its wealth of ritualism and its warmth of brotherhood. Is it not clear that it was because men yearned for that which had been effectually stamped out of their religion, that the Masonic orders spread so rapidly among them? In theory the Masonic ritual embraces bodily worship of the Incarnate Son of God, as did the earlier worship of the Church. Its symbols have the same foundation as the symbols of Catholic ceremonial. And Freemasonry is the standing disproof of the common contention that Anglo-Saxons are not a ritualistic race. So inbred is the love of dignified ceremonial in our racial characteristics, that when Ritualism was driven out of the Church, Englishmen allowed themselves to be driven out with it, and Ritualism and Englishmen were together established in the Masonic orders."

THE SCENE OF THE COMING REVIVAL

THE COMPARATIVE failure of any revival that does not concern the young gives reason for the belief that the Sunday-school will be the center of the revival which is to come. Investigation shows, says Dr. David G. Downey, that not more than 20 per cent. of the Christian world became Christian after the age of twenty. "This simply proves that if any large proportion of the world is to become Christian, it must commit and consecrate itself at some time during the Sunday-school age." Dr. Downey is a secretary of the Board of Sunday-schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, in special reference to his own church, thinks that the revival is already well begun, as evidenced by the increased interest his church is showing in Sunday-school organization. Elements of this interest are "the preparation, adoption, and use of graded lessons; the employment of Sunday-school missionaries; the larger place given to Sunday-school interests in the literature, the conferences, and the pulpits of the Church." The history and experience of the Church, he points out, show that the failure of the Sunday-school means the loss to salvation of 80 per cent. Writing in *The Western Christian Advocate* (Cincinnati), he continues:

"The comparative failure of every type of revival that does not aim at the child is further seen in the fact that even when successful it saves only a fraction of life. Very frequently the fraction saved is exceedingly small. Every one admits that for a man to have forty, thirty, twenty, ten, or even five years of clean, healthy, wholesome Christian living is better than to have none. Every one also sees that this is not the ideal way, and can not possibly be God's way. Begbie's book—'Twice-born Men'—is a wonderful book; a book revealing the limitless possibilities of God's saving grace. The sub-title of the book reveals both the type and the limitation of the salvation it depicts—'A Clinic in Regeneration' is the sub-title. It is the language of the hospital, and the salvation depicted is simply the salvage of life's remnant. It can not be that God intended his Church to be nothing more or better than a hospital. It is a 'hospital, thank God! for the religiously poor, halt, lame, blind, and decrepit—a place where all such may obtain sight, healing, cleansing, and redemption. But it is also, thank God again! much more than a hospital. No father prefers to have his boy come to Christ through the experiences depicted by Begbie. No mother wishes her daughter to get to heaven by that route. There must be a better way. There is."

Another reason for his expectation that the Sunday-school



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LEADING FIGURES AT THE WORLD'S CONGRESS OF FREE CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS PROGRESS.

will be the field of the next great revival is "found in the fact that only so can the Church maintain its hold upon the world." Here is another statement of proof:

"The net gain of the Methodist Episcopal Church at home and abroad for the year 1909 was only 63,047. The religious census of the United States published in 1909 shows that the gain of membership in our Church was 33 and a fraction per cent. We have just kept pace with the growth in population. It requires no argument to prove that a church that is barely maintaining itself is not in a strong and healthy condition. A man must be able to do more than pull his own weight in a boat's crew. If the world is to be won for Christ, the Church must do more than pull its own weight. We are told on apparently good authority that 60 per cent. of our Sunday-school scholars slip away from the Sunday-school, from the Church, and from Christ. We know that the remaining 40 per cent. furnish at least 80 per cent. of the membership of the Church. It is easy to see how the Church would leap forward if only it would turn its attention seriously, earnestly, wisely, and winsomely to the winning of the 60 per cent. now carelessly allowed to slip away. We have two millions of young people in our care who have not yet come to spiritual consciousness. They have not yet personally committed themselves to Christ, nor dedicated themselves to his service. What a harvest field is here!"

The third reason relegates to the background the "other-worldly" motive that actuated the old-time revival:

"Many revivals are organized on the basis of fitting men and women for heaven. God wants us to fit ourselves for earth and be ready to do his work while we live. If we do that, he will take care of us in death. The matter of supreme importance is life, not death. God wants life—not the fag end of life, not the weakened and wasted, the vitiated and blasted life! No! no! God wants, man wants, the world needs the morning of life, the noon of life, the evening of life—all of life consecrated to him and spent in his ways. For the getting of life for God in the beginning and the holding of it to him until the end, the Sunday-school offers the supreme opportunity. The Sunday-school age is God's best time for the development of the spiritual life. God has other times, second best, third best, tenth best—but his best time comes but once.

"The minister, the layman, who would do most and most effective work for God and his fellows will not fail to see the significance of all this. If he is wise, he will invest his time and influence and talents where they will count for most. The Sunday-school offers to Christian men and women everywhere the most inviting and productive field for Christian service that the world of to-day affords. To be a true pastor of young folk, to superintend a Sunday-school, to take charge of a department, to teach a class of alert, eager, inquiring, and impressionable boys and girls, is the supreme opportunity of the Christian worker in the morning of the twentieth century."

SPIRIT OF GERMAN LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

LIBERAL Christianity is afforded some useful lessons at the hands of the very people from whom most of the forward movements have sprung. This is the gist of the report furnished by Prof. Daniel Evans, D.D., of Andover Theological Seminary, concerning the demeanor of the German contingent at the World's Congress of Free Christianity and Religious Progress held in Berlin during July. These men, says Dr. Evans, "have their liberty and use it for the tasks which it imposes upon them." Liberty is for them "a condition of work" and "the work they do justifies the freedom they have." Their attitude is thus further characterized by the writer, one of the American delegates, in a letter to *The Congregationalist and Christian World* (Boston):

"They do not boast of their freedom; they do not make a shibboleth of it. They said far less about it than one is wont to hear in such meetings at home, but they showed the results of the free workings of their minds.

"Again, they are very earnest and serious speakers. They are more concerned with the content of their message and its communication to alert minds than with smart expressions. Their addresses were full of substance; they made great demand upon the intellect of the people. They partook of the nature of university lectures rather than town-meeting speeches. The audience may have justified this, but in that case the speakers treated the minds of their hearers with respect! I do not recall 'smart' things said by any one—except an American! Both speakers and listeners appeared to care only for the truth!

"Once more, these men, while most free in their thought, and exceedingly broad in their sympathies with other religions, are absolutely convinced that religious progress lies in the deeper understanding of the moral and spiritual significance of Jesus for the soul and the race, because of the revelation of God in and through him. There was not the slightest suggestion of grading all religions on the same level. There was no hint in their speeches that in remembering the truth in other religions they had forgotten the truth in their own religion. These men, . . . are profoundly Christian in their thought as well as in their spirit. They do not expect 'a spiritual theism' to become a substitute for the Christian religion. They believe in a free Christianity—but it is in Christianity they believe.

"Consequently, these greater liberal thinkers believe that the one great need to-day is religion. They do not expect salvation by liberalism, nor by orthodoxy, but only by the Christian religion becoming a reality in the souls of men. Salvation is not by emancipation from old masters, but by obedience to