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THE TRANSACTIONS  
OF  
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SECRETARY: E. WALTER MAUNDER, F.R.A.S.

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1914.

556TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,  
HELD IN THE ROOMS OF THE INSTITUTE ON MONDAY,  
MAY 4TH, 1914, AT 4.30 P.M.

THE REV. H. J. R. MARSTON, M.A., TOOK THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the preceding Meeting were read and confirmed.

The SECRETARY announced the election of the two following Associates:—Mr. John Wood and Mr. Francis Chatillon Danson.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Prof. F. F. Roget, Lecturer on English Language and Literature in the University of Geneva, and called upon him to deliver his Address on "Frederic Godet, the greatest of Swiss theologians after Calvin."

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*FREDERIC GODET, SWISS DIVINE, AND TUTOR  
TO FREDERICK THE NOBLE.* BY PROF. F. F.  
ROGET.

**F**REDERIC GODET was born in 1812, and died in 1900, when eighty-eight years old.

The length of his life, and the period of the nineteenth century over which it extended, made him throughout the span of those years a contemporary of Ernest Naville, the "spiritualistic" philosopher and divine of Geneva, whose portrait, course of life, and doctrine, we brought before the Victoria Institute, two years ago in the same month of May.

A complete picture of the philosophic thought, emanating, in conjunction with theology, from the French-speaking parts of Switzerland in the nineteenth century, would demand that we should add to Naville and Godet their compeers Alex. Vinet, Charles Secretan, François Roget and Frederic Amiel. This we hope to do with the help of time. We believe that there is in London an editor who understands the importance of the contribution to philosophy and theology of the Protestant Churches in Romance Switzerland, and is prepared to publish, for the benefit of the English-reading public, such accounts as those which are now being placed before you.

I wish particularly to thank the Victoria Institute for the facility thus given me, which I am confident they will have no occasion to regret.

The Protestants of Romance Switzerland are in every way akin to the English and Scotch Protestants. The national

characteristics of Protestantism in Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel are those which have developed in the United Kingdom. I may even say that some of the best expressions of Presbyterian, and even Church of England, doctrine have been formed in Swiss minds.

The remarkable popularity of Naville, Godet, Vinet, Secretan and Amiel among the English-reading public has been made obvious by the demand for translations of their works, translations which have gone through many editions and are less in request now only in proportion as the newer literature presses them back, and as a younger generation loses sight of them. As for François Roget's book (*De Constantin à Grégoire le Grand*) on the Establishment of the Christian (Roman) Church from Constantine to Gregory the Great, it remains the standard work on the secularisation of Christianity.

Frederic Godet was born in Neuchâtel. This should be noted, as his whole life and work bears the imprint of his "nativity." The Godets were an ancient, though by no means socially eminent stock.

Neuchâtel was still a Principality in the dependency of the Kings of Prussia at the moment of Frederic Godet's birth, though the Principality owed temporary allegiance to Berthier, one of Napoleon Bonaparte's generals: a mere mushroom prince. So the child was born a Prussian Royalist, baptized a Protestant—in the Calvinistic Faith—and educated as a Swiss in a Church which was not quite a State Church, and bore the stamp of fidelity to the Monarchy of Prussia rather than to the Republicanism of Switzerland.

This atmosphere was full of contradictions. Yet the community of 100,000 Neuchâtelois who had breathed it since 1707 had grown into a most harmonious, enlightened and prosperous commonwealth of simple-minded men, distinguished by public merits and private virtues.

Yet the ambiguity of this strange social unit "told" upon Godet and is reflected in every step of his career. But his powerful personality subdued those manifold elements. A minister, he remained faithful to his flock through constitutional changes in the Church; a professor of divinity, he remained faithful to his students, keeping them anchored to the evangelical conception of the Old and New Testaments, through every change in exegesis; a tutor to a most eminent scion of the Prussian House, he retained the absolute confidence of his pupil from early years to the hour of death. Entrusted with his tutorial office as a Royalist, he none the less accepted

as from God the Republican Government which at last severed every tie of Neuchâtel with the House of Prussia.

The secret of this unity must be looked for in Godet's humility, though his was a firm and proud nature, we might even say exacting and imperious.

He was endowed with a lofty and piercing intelligence. Impatience at the dullness or weakness of others should have been one of its exterior manifestations. Those of my hearers who remember Gladstone will best see my meaning. The resemblance between Gladstone and Godet was not limited to the physical likeness in features, bearing and oratorical expression, which struck repeatedly those who knew both. They were alike in character, in self-confidence. They were tractable—and intractable—to the same degree, I may also say on the same points.

From the time he started upon his career, the young Churchman—I mean Godet—fixed his eye upon the enemy which in him most required curbing: pride. For pride he strenuously fought to substitute righteousness—not the saintliness of the priest or monk or ascetic, but the righteousness of a plain, straight man, who was destined to go through life as a teacher, husband, father, citizen, with the additional responsibility of being a clergyman. He “took himself down” daily, from the moment he had outgrown the crude ambitions and rude self-assertions of boyhood. For those motive powers of untaught youth the young minister substituted sincerity in self-examination and humility, but without any degradation of self before the tribunal of God, since men are made after His image and should swell with helpful exaltation in the fight waged against blind pride.

From the age of eighteen, he was intended for the Ministry. His mind, then already, showed the degree of maturity expected only from men ten years older—a not unusual occurrence among such strongly intellectualised circles as those which the persistent emigration of gifted Protestants from France had established, by a kind of selection, in the French-speaking Cantons of Geneva, Vaud and Neuchâtel. Early he took up an important share in tuitional work at the school for girls which his widowed mother kept to support her family and to repay her late husband's debts, debts, by the way, that were quite honourably contracted.

Called to Paris in 1830 by his brother for a short holiday after the *Journées de Juillet*, which violently closed the reign of Charles X., he saw Paris in a still rather disturbed condition.

The gay capital made upon him the impression which is usual with Swiss Protestants: admiration, but an instinctive distrust of French brilliancy, of the Parisian rashness of thought and indifference to the true conditions of Christian manliness. He returned from Paris enlightened and strengthened.

At that time there was no regular School of Divinity at Neuchâtel. Candidates for the Ministry were principally self-taught and depended upon their own initiative for the organization of their studies. They got their lessons in Hebrew from an expert who was none the less proficient for not being a "Professor." He received them informally at 5 o'clock before breakfast for, said he, "at a less early hour those young people would break up my morning." Those apparently ill-organized studies bore excellent fruit. There were in Neuchâtel as many men learned in the ancient languages and in the branches of philosophy and divinity as would have sufficed to man two complete Colleges or Faculties.

The lodestar of Godet's mind and soul began to shine down upon him amidst those influences. His opinions were then most uncertain, but his faith in the *divinity of the Bible* was entire. He owed his life-long security of religious tenure neither to Apologetics, nor to Dogmatics, but to Experience.

Philosophy, he found, runs into theology, for who can relate reason to the one necessary thing, unless it be by pondering over the fruits of Christian experience? It is a matter of reaching *Knowledge* through *Life*. And he prayed that, while judging himself in that light, he might abstain from judging others. There is no instance on record of Godet's having *judged* others, though instances abound of his having told his mind, but never with any reflection upon character or motives. Having to steer his way and that of the Church through considerable political and ecclesiastical disturbances, his fairness and gentleness preserved for him the love and admiration of all.

In 1831, Godet tasted of military life. We have seen the same feature in Naville. There are indeed few divines in Switzerland who have not, in their youth, served in the ranks. The case of Godet was that of a Loyalist called to arms to quell a Nationalist rebellion.

In spite of the example set by Paris, so-called Liberal and Republican opinion, resting upon Swiss support, had not yet grown strong enough in Neuchâtel to defeat the Royalistic tradition. Godet found himself called out in support of the existing Government, which was not Swiss, but locally autonomous in the Republican form under Prussian suzerainty.

Yet neither was Godet actually a Prussian subject. Indeed Neuchâtel had been joined to the Swiss Confederation in 1815 by an international compact to which Prussia was a party, to secure the Principality against the renewal of any French attempt at annexation, and now the attachment to Switzerland was gradually encroaching upon the more ancient and distant connection with Potsdam and Berlin.

But, as long as the Government should remain in the hands of magistrates loyal to Prussia, Godet would follow them, since Prussia, when contributing to the inclusion of Neuchâtel in the Swiss Confederation, had not abandoned any of its rights upon the internal regime of the new Canton.

The hour for the superseding of the Prussian Loyalists at the head of the State was not to strike for some years yet.

For Godet, when it should come, the passage from Prussian suzerainty to Swiss citizenship would not wear an aspect of public law only or of foreign policy alone. It would involve his personal conscience in consequence of his oath of allegiance.

The sacredness of the oath has always played a very great part in Swiss political and military fidelity. The burgesses of Neuchâtel were in the peculiar situation of having contracted a double oath: one of fidelity to the Kings of Prussia and another of fidelity to the Swiss Confederation. As a writer on this public topic, the young soldier Godet declared roundly that both pledges must be kept. There are not oaths and oaths, he said: an honourable man has one word only. The conscience of Godet as a Christian and a gentleman was here severely and repeatedly tested. Need we add that when this vexed question of the double oath came finally to be settled to the detriment of Prussia, Godet, who viewed it as falling within the purview of individual and personal discretion—because it was for him a moral and religious issue—found in the House of Prussia gentlemen ready to meet him half-way because they were Christian and conscientious like himself.

Why did Godet, in 1832, choose Berlin when he made up his mind to prosecute philosophical and theological studies at a University? It was quite natural that young men from Neuchâtel, belonging to what we now like to call *les classes dirigeantes* (and which were then more strictly called the political classes, because they were the recruiting ground for Governors, Magistrates, Officers and Officials, Lawyers and Divines), should seek their learning at the seat of Royalty. But it was also pretty plain that, unless he went to Scotland (as

many young Swiss used to do, and are still in the habit of doing, principally in order to complete their theological studies in a congenial atmosphere), Lutheran Germany must exercise a greater attraction upon a Protestant than France, which could not but appear, from Godet's point of view, as being too libertine, too Roman, too revolutionary or too profane: too libertine in morals, too Roman in religion, too revolutionary in politics, too profane in philosophy.

I am prepared to say that, had there been, at Oxford or Cambridge, a University, College or Faculty of Theology, set out on German lines, but in the hands of the Church of England, whose recognised repository of doctrine it might have been, such men as Godet, Naville, Vinet, and Roget would have repaired to this place willingly to complete their studies.

In the political and ecclesiastic relations belonging to each of these in Church or State, their conception of Christianity, their public doctrine and conduct showed a striking agreement with the doctrine and conduct of English Churchmen in like circumstances in their own Church.

The Swiss divines mentioned above, though complete strangers to the "internals" of the Church of England, such as the form of worship and the episcopacy, were led to the same conception as most of the Anglican clergy on the relations of the Church to the Gospels and Old Testament on one hand, and to the State on the other hand.

Godet hardly visited England at all and knew but little English. He was a little more at home in Scotland. Yet English divines sought him out in his home quite as much as Scotch ministers. They read his translated works. His contributions to the religious Press of Britain were quite English in spirit and in tone. It is not open to doubt that the Swiss mind, however Calvinistic or Zwinglian it may have been before it grew up to its true identity, has shown itself throughout the nineteenth century to be nearer to the Anglican than to the Lutheran mind. This, I hope, will appear as I proceed, with the help here and there of a suitable illustration.

At Berlin, young Godet's first call was paid at the State Office for Neuchâtel affairs, just as a young Australian might pay his first London visit upon the agents for his colony in Victoria Street, Westminster.

The Neuchâtelois were among the most trusted servants of his Prussian Majesty. This traditional confidence is still reposed in some families by the Hohenzollern Emperors of Germany. The German Ambassador to St. Petersburg, for

instance, is a member of the de Pourtalès family. England can produce an example on all fours with this in the person of Sir Louis Mallet, whose Genevese ancestors show an unbroken line in the service of the English State through three generations.

It has been, throughout the nineteenth century, a habit with the Hohenzollerns—as with the Romanoffs—to look to the Protestant French-speaking Republics of Switzerland for tutors and governesses. The Hohenzollerns would naturally look to their faithful subjects in Neuchâtel, while the Romanoffs—be it said by the way—have, through five consecutive generations, been partly educated by gentlemen from Geneva or Lausanne, whom they cause to feel quite at home in orthodox and autocratic Russia.

To return to the Hohenzollerns, their leanings to Calvinism have been constant with the single exception of Frederick the Great. The present Emperor of Germany will tell you quite frankly that the form of worship in his household is Protestant. He misses no opportunity that offers in which to recall his Calvinistic collateral ancestry, in the persons of William the Silent and of Admiral Coligny. The Huguenot Church of Frankfort remains the most fashionable in the realm, and the names of its incumbents, now Correvon, and—when Godet passed there on his way to Berlin—Bonnet, Pilet, and Appia, have the true Protestant ring about them.

At Frankfort, Godet called upon a young governess from Neuchâtel, Caroline Vautravers, who, twelve years later, became his wife. Let us say at once that he married twice, his second wife being the governess of the orphan children. The mother of Mademoiselle Vautravers was herself governess to the Princesses Luise and Anna, daughters of Prince Charles—another of those trivial instances which show how willingly the Hohenzollerns applied to Neuchâtel for the kind of brain-stuff they wanted, whether in the schoolroom, the camp, or round the *tapis vert* of diplomacy.

A mind as firm as that of Godet would use his course of studies and his sojourn in a foreign capital to find out and determine his own bearings, rather than yield himself to the dominating influences to which he was now subjected.

We have said how he had seen, in Paris, much that he had noted down as evil. He foresaw, with some trembling, that his proposed three years in Berlin, too, must bring along for him intellectual and religious strife. So he had made up his mind that no external influence should shake, no personal

experience should weaken, no theory should undermine in him the sense he had formed of the gravity of sin. Such a pledge showed that with him the crisis in faith usual with young men reading for the Church would not turn upon the ordinary theme: scepticism. He thought that the sense of sin, which lays bare the core of one's Christianity, is the moral essence of all Christianity. It is an issue neither entirely emotional nor wholly intellectual. The conscience of Godet was extraordinarily exacting on this point and acutely alive to its ideal of righteousness: Jesus Christ.

For Godet, the touchstone of Christ's Divinity is to be looked for in His *conduct*. How to reduce to practice the divine saintliness of Christ's *human* life became the centre of Godet's religion, the test of his own moral life.

His reasoning was very simple. As related to His day, Christ must have been *absolutely* righteous. The Gospel Scriptures are authentic: consequently they are the repository of absolute righteousness. By the labour of our conscience we have to lay bare that righteousness, to transpose and apply it to our own lives. To fail in this is to fall into sin. Intellect, sentiment, and will, are all wanted for this effect: the recognition of the morality divine. All three are wanted to translate it into terms of life.

The religion of Godet is thus seen to be an intellectual, emotional, and volitional communion with the holiness of God; the test of faith to be conduct—a conduct practical, to which intellectual power, emotional power, and volitional power are contributory in the Christian individuals, as they were in the living Christ.

We need not hesitate a moment in describing this religion as aristocratic: the keener the intellect, the purer the emotions, the stronger the will, then the more perfect is the religion of the servant of Christ. It rests with the developing, the refining, and the sanctifying of the three spiritual parts of man on to complete conversion.

Conversion is a progressive religion, a moralising of life. It civilises as it Christianises.

But no pride, no self-love; only charity, humility, and self-surrender. The Christian who through superstition, fanaticism, intolerant zeal, bears witness to his convictions, then does so in a manner unfamiliar to Christ. With such Christians, authority usurps in the heart the place of conscience. In the efforts of conscience it is the moral guidance of reason that should shine foremost.

To continue in his own words : " May I proffer no affirmation as long as I fail to be aware within myself of sufficient grounds for my contentions. May I rather dwell in doubt till God enlighten me. I shall thus best enlighten myself and be the means of bearing no false light for others. Conscience is nothing till it be tolerant, impersonal through love, as was Christ, who suffered rather than raise a material hand to prove His right. From the intellect theological knowledge should pass into life and into the heart. Thus a slave, ceasing to stoop before authority, may become an upright child confiding in the fatherhood. Conscience, drawing us on to the good, purifies by love; and dragging us away from evil, purifies by stern rebuke."

His mother, when he went to Berlin, had laid upon herself the burden of meeting his expenses; but his prayer that he might be enabled to meet those himself was granted. He was offered some tuitional work in French. Dining on fivepence and being his own shoe-black he made both ends meet as long as his student days lasted.

Madame Godet was, however, soon drawn herself to the field of labour whither had gone her son. She was summoned, in 1834, to take care of the little Prince of Prussia, Frederick William, aged 3 years, who was to come to the throne for a few weeks, in 1888, as Frederick the Third, Second Emperor of Germany.

At that time (1834) Frederick William was not yet actually heir presumptive to the throne of Prussia. He became so in 1861 when his father was promoted to the throne by the death of Frederick William the Fourth, whose brother he was. The new King of Prussia was crowned first Emperor of Germany in 1871.

Frederic Godet naturally became a visitor at his mother's rooms in the Potsdam and Berlin residences of the Royal Family. The mother of the baby prince had occasion to see him. She formed views upon him for the time when her young son should have outgrown petticoat government. Meanwhile, and suspecting nothing, Frederic Godet left Berlin in 1835 and attended lectures at Bonn.

From that moment, his life became more and more closely woven into that of the Royal Family of Prussia, but at first only through his mother, who sent him amusing "tit-bits" about the baby boy in her charge. He remained quite unconscious of his own future connection with that family till the middle of 1838, when we find him, after undergoing his

first examinations at Neuchâtel, engaging in subordinate parish work as an ordained minister.

Trueness to conscience, even in its temporary and provisional phases of imperfect enlightenment in youth, he proposed then as a safeguard to those who were about to enter upon the studies he had painfully gone through, at such length, and with so much thoroughness. "Be ready," he admonishes the student of divinity, "to allow the truth of what strikes you as true, whatever it may be that strikes you as such, even should the sacrifice of half the Bible be the result. Sincerity, nothing but sincerity, let that be with you the whole measure of truth, *advienne que pourra.*"

"It is only since I made up my mind to this that I have studied with freedom and *impartiality*. The *foundations* of the Book remain firm, its kernel remains sound, however much may have to come off at the circumference. So let no human hand set a limit to your latitude. As for the reflex action of the Bible upon life, there is but one rule. Distinguish *two* purports in your reading. Either you read the Bible for edification or you read the Bible for scientific purposes. Keep each of those intents well apart from the other. When you read for edification do not allow your devoutness to pass into curiosity, scientific or critical. It is a most common occurrence that a poem—even the most spurious—may be morally elevating. I speak from experience. Fear not that your scientific examination of the Book will suffer from this apartness. To sever externally is often the way to join internally."

None clung more tenaciously than Godet to the authenticity of the Scriptures. Yet he would see the whole rejected on intellectual evidence—which is an eminently variable quantity even in one and the same mind—rather than fall into the moral error of believing prematurely. We shall see later how insistently he feared lest we should choose hastily our own way, instead of waiting for God's later and more patient way.

"The completion of faith should go hand in hand with the enlightenment of conscience, should even follow upon it, rather than precede it; lest we bring into the employment of faith unenlightened, powers with the exercise of which the most discreet conscience alone can be properly trusted."

To put it like Godet: in no man is the grace of God inactive. By an excess of words, and by too urgent entreaty, we may intercept its action. An atmosphere of confidence, of trust, a servant of God may create between Him and the object of his care, or may find it to exist. But he may also destroy it, or prevent

its appearance, and then what he may do or say is useless or worse than useless: nay positively injurious to the working of the Spirit of God. Godet would not have our initiative precede the time appointed by God. He would have us wait for Him and follow behind Him. Enoch, it is said, walked *with* God. To have walked ahead would have done no good. David, who wanted, was not allowed to build the temple, though God too wanted it, but Solomon was to build. So ask yourself, when about to build, whether you are David or Solomon. You may pride yourself on *venturing*, to the confusion of all human wisdom. But beware lest you run counter to divine wisdom too.

In June, 1838, came a letter from Prince William of Prussia, who purposed engaging Frederic Godet as a tutor to his son, then seven years old, and passing out of the care of Madame Godet into that of a military governor, assisted by a civil governor who was to be Frederic Godet. The appointment was for ten years, but, actually, did not extend beyond six, from the autumn of 1838 to the autumn of 1844.

The relations of Godet to his pupil, and later to his Royal, and, for a few weeks, Imperial, friend Frederick, would all by themselves fill a whole book. We do not think that the inwardness of these relations has yet been appreciated to any degree. For one thing, the life of Frederic Godet by his son Philippe was not published till last year (1913), and in that book alone could it be expected that the relations in question would be comprehensively surveyed, as from Godet's side.

On the other hand, that is from the Prussian point of view, the public part played by the Crown Prince Frederick was so great as to cast into the shade his personal and intimate association of heart and soul with his tutor. This association was unbroken from the childhood of Frederick to the hour of death, and was kept up by the members of the Imperial family to the last hours of Godet himself; so from 1838 to 1888 in the case of the pupil, and, in the case of the tutor on to 1900, Augusta, the Emperor's mother, and the present Emperor William, her grandson, showed to the end their interest in Godet.

There are three points in this life-long association which clothe it with the most exceptional interest. The first is the personality of Godet, which gave it its true value. The second is the temperament of his pupil and the disposition of the Hohenzollern family, whose homely, gentle manliness gave the opportunity wanted for such a friendship. The third is the

magnificent public part which fell to the Hohenzollerns to play in the history of Europe, and which gave its characteristic to the nineteenth century—a part in which their earnestness and quietness fitted in so efficiently and one of the secret main-springs of which appears so plainly in the correspondence of the Crown Prince with his former tutor.

Should we seek an illustration from a parallel class of grandeur, by comparing the Bonapartes with the Hohenzollerns, would it for a single instant be tenable that Napoleon the First might have had Frederic Godet for a friend? No.

We venture to say that this impossibility throws a great deal of light upon the opposite fortunes of those families which were pitted against each other in a way which seemed to confer all the chances upon the Bonapartes, first after Jena, and then from 1850 up to Sedan, in 1870.

Godet could be a friend to rulers who had a conscience, both public and private. He could not have found in either Napoleon this fundamental requirement for the just and equal friendship of a Protestant clergyman with a ruler of men. There is no small lesson in this apparently insignificant lifelong friendship of a plain Protestant clergyman with the Prussian House. To my mind, therein is contained the explanation of the rise of Germany above France. The plain clergyman had a conscience, a commanding sense of the gravity of sin. He could associate with the Royal House in which a like conscience and sense were alive.

While he trod busily along his own little path of life, the Hohenzollerns kept clear of the dreadful sin of pride, which ruined Napoleon the First, and of conceit, which ended Napoleon the Third. The quietly *bourgeois*—or rather humbly Christian—conscience of the Hohenzollerns proved in their hands an absolutely reliable Empire-building instrument. The downfall of the Bonapartes before the Hohenzollerns showed earthly power gathering round those to whom to acknowledge the law of conscience was a duty to God.

By none was the allegiance of conscience to Christianity more clearly expressed in State affairs than by the Prince whom the Germans styled Friedrich der Gütige and the English Frederick the Noble. His tragic end, before he could actually reign, found him full of Christian resignation at a moment when he might have been most bitterly resentful. In the story of Godet's life is reflected, as in a side-mirror, the history of that soul, making this plain that the nearest support it had in this world, it found in the firm, clear spirit of the Neuchâtel

minister who had informed it in childhood. Were it consistent with the present monograph, we should like to show in detail how the association of tutor and pupil took effect, developed into an enduring relationship, and passes out of our sight only when the curtain was drawn over their earthly lives.

The connection with the young prince first appears on page 107 of a book of some 550 pages—the book we have spoken of—and runs right through it to the end, when the widow and mother of the dead Emperor are seen making daily enquiries of the last moments of his tutor, then 88 years old.

We have said that the prince was also placed under the authority of a military governor. This authority seems to have been quite shadowy and distant, as General Unruh—whose name has not a very propitious sound—was in weak health. So it came about, more unavoidably than purposely, that Godet dominated the situation for several years. When, however, the prince was older and General Unruh thought he would make his presence felt, he seems to have failed to win the heart of his pupil.

Under such circumstances it cannot be said that either governor was at fault, but the military tutor none the less conceived some jealousy of the civilian. The latter, after an appeal or two to the parental and royal authority, though most heartily supported and furnished with a full endorsement of his conduct, realised that the age of the prince—he was then 13 years old—justified the granting of a more important function to the military element. This was done in 1844. Godet handed his office over to another civil tutor, the famous historian Georg Curtius. Then General Felgermann, who had succeeded General Unruh, had the opportunity in which to gain for himself a share in the attention and affection of the prince. But the heart of the prince somehow remained with the “Neuchâtelois” and his conscience, too, continued to seek nurture from the “Man of God.”

The prince did not work alone, but had an *émule*, a fellow pupil, in the person of young Rodolph von Zastrow, whose father had filled the office of governor in the principality of Neuchâtel.

The tutor's bed was placed between those of his pupils, so near that the prince, an affectionate and clinging nature, would seek the hand of his teacher at night. The children rose at six. The prince's mother came every morning at ten o'clock with her needlework to take her share of the instruction given. The whole savours of plain, well-ordered home life.

We shall not say that the young prince never kicked over the traces. He had his bad days, fits of temper and unruly outbursts. But by nature he was full of consideration for others, tender-hearted, reposing easily his confidence in those about him. He could be slow and dreamy over his work, even absent-minded, his well-developed gift of imagination enticing him away from his desk to the realms of fancy. The tutor would then say: "Where are you, prince?" and the prince would answer: "At Weimar," or wherever his memory, reminiscent of brilliant scenes of pleasure or of solemn functions of State, had dragged his mind away from his lesson.

He had a natural leaning to piety, was of a practical disposition, with no particular partiality to learning, his judgment was calm and sound, and he showed much self-possession. A lively imagination and a cool reasoning power, much gentleness overlaying, as it were, much latent energy, an unswerving sense of duty, would complete a description of his character as a boy.

When he grew into a man he developed a character of great energy in the constant will to do right, which dominated his career from childhood to his last and supreme hour.

"He served God," says Godet, "under the form of the good which could be done on every occasion."

The religion of the Crown Prince, like that of Godet, was the religion of moral obligation in the sight of God. This affinity between their natures explains the friendship of forty-four years' duration which followed upon the termination of Godet's tutorship at the Court.

Godet confesses that he twice felt called upon to apply the rod to his pupil, driven to that extremity by one of those instances of rebellion when a young tutor is at a loss to know the right thing to do. As the use of violence was expressly forbidden him by the father, Godet felt he must at once report himself, with all particulars. He was granted a bill of indemnity. Godet admits that he misread the cause of the child's rebellion, which was not directed against him. The whipping brought on tears, and all was made right by this solvent. But, under the circumstances, the child's passion might have been fired with a sense of injustice and then the rash tutor would have found that he had gambled away his pupil's affection.

And yet this is the man whose watchword was patience, who said that to know how to *wait* is, perhaps, more important than to know how to *do*. "A steady flame amid embers is worth

more than the quick fire of a revival. To reap a sudden reward is not good for the heart. Instead of quickening it and winning it slowly to God, it lulls it to sleep after a short excitement."

One of the most solemn moments in the childhood of Godet's pupil was at the death, in June, 1840, of his grandfather, the King Frederick William the Third, so well served by Blücher.

It should be said in praise of the Prussian Court that nothing pompous came then to offend the eye of the child or disturb his *naïveté*.

He walked out of the palace of the dead ruler, holding his tutor by the hand, and so they strolled about in the Tiergarten. It was a fine evening. One may imagine with what golden opportunities so much simplicity furnished the child for the outpouring of his feelings into the sympathetic ear of the young minister.

"What was faith?" the young tutor asked himself, after such talks with a guileless little boy. The answer came that "faith, to have power to save, must be an exchange of life between us and Christ. We make Him a gift of our sins, He renounces the exercise of His justice. By the first act in this exchange we make over to him what is ours: sin. By the second act, we make ours that which belongs to Him: justice. This mysterious exchange, by which God foregoes His justice for the cleansing of a sinner, is the secret of the salvation that takes place in the depths of the soul working out its repentance. From this perpetually renewed and ever-recurrent exchange of grace and sin, issues, as from a bubbling spring, the stream of a Christian life."

We gain here our next profound insight into Godet's conception of salvation. As a philosopher and divine he had to conceive salvation intellectually. His mind conceived it, we see, almost as a legal transaction. That Godet had the same sense of law as a true Calvinist—which sense should not be confused with the blind dictates so often mistaken for the law given from above—will appear from his whole life as we mark its onward steps, and when we look backward upon his career as it comes nearer to completion. That he was a "moralist," who found the seal of divinity impressed in man upon the conscience striving to grasp the divine righteousness of the Man Jesus, has already been illustrated.

Now we see all the *common honesty* of his soul, if I may use such a term. To be saved, man has to keep the bargain. He should strive to give to the justice of God no object. This is

not done by weak melting into tears and unfruitful supplication. A blissful contemplation of the perfections of the Divinity does not do it either. There is no other way than working out one's own redemption in a downright way, by the sweat of one's brow, as Godet puts it somewhat tersely. Godet became more and more wedded to that conception.

In the same year, 1840, A. L. Bonnet, the Huguenot Minister at Frankfort, wished for his help in preparing certain commentaries to be attached to an edition of the New Testament intended for use in France. Godet resisted. "Should we not," he said, "be then thrusting the smallness of us poor little men between the Word of God and the reader? Is it not as though we would say: 'Look here, reader, my friend, you are about to read Chapter No. so and so. Well, mind you find in it this or that, nothing else, nothing more. We are there to tell you what.'"

Godet was a magnificent temporiser and it was a matter of self-respect with his soul not to usurp the prerogatives of its Master. He looked upon the Osterwald Catechism, in use at Neuchâtel, as pernicious. He could not admit that authority should pose as being infallible. When, exasperated by the slowness of his sometimes dreamy pupil, his vivacity and keen sense of duty got the better of his patience, he knew how to apologise for his own errors in judgment.

Upon the problem of the reciprocal positions of Church and State he began to form his views in 1842. Seldom was a man so well served in this respect by contemporary history in his native land.

The Church in the Principality—later the Republic—of Neuchâtel exemplified varied phases of association with the State, and also various degrees of dissociation. Godet would not hear of a *separation* of Church and State, because such a separation is inconceivable in the government of the world by God, which either is a Christian government or is no government at all. His doctrine was that the powers that be are from God and that the form of government is an immaterial aspect of principality, but principality *there must be*. The power exercising sovereignty has a right, a duty even, to exact obedience to principality. Principality being from God, no wrong that is done can be ascribed to principality, but the responsibility for the wrong must be looked for in man's general imperfection.

So our friend Godet, with his insight into the imperfection of governors, pleaded early the independence of the Church. In

his idea, the force of love, the inherent sense of union, that of the universality of Christian penetration, should, by independence, be served and set free to act without falling into political entanglements. But, with him, the independence of the Church did not mean its separation from the State. It meant the free diffusion of Christianity throughout the Body Politic without the interposition of the State.

This conception gradually proved itself to be true to the temper of the Protestants of Neuchâtel to a sufficient degree to bring about, as we shall see later, the constitution of a Free Church in the Scotch sense of the word. But we have plenty of evidence that, previous to this consummation, Godet did not go beyond the present expression, in the Church of England, of a like aspiration to spiritual independence without breaking with the establishment formula under the Royal prerogative. But we must not anticipate considerations which Godet did not really develop till after he had left the service of the Royal House of Prussia.

Of an integral or literal inspiration of Scripture, within a reasonable and prudent acceptance of those words, he was quite prepared to allow the possibility or even the intention, provided sufficient reserve were shown in ascribing purposes to the Almighty, but his reverence and good sense could not admit that the state in which the Bible documents are laid before us shows this intention to have been carried out in its entirety.

"The question of scriptural inspiration," he said, "why, this is theology, not religion. How many thousands of years have the flowers of God's making delighted man by their shapes, colours and scents, and borne good fruit unto their gardeners without taking any heed of botanists? So it is with Holy Writ. Theologians are the botanists of religion."

In a way they are such as those who would educate by means of a scientific education. "My present experiences," he wrote in 1843, "all go to impressing upon me the powerlessness of the *formal* rules of education. One *does* get educated and the external influence of educative agencies is certain. But tastes, tendencies, that which makes this or that individual out of the common clay, to that workshop, or sanctuary, we do not gain admittance."

That year was marked by the sharpening of the unpleasantness between him and General Unruh. We have seen how the parents of Godet's pupil gave their decision in favour of the civil governor, a fine example of sweet reasonableness in a family so completely addicted to military life. As those

difficulties coincided with Godet's engagement to be married to Mademoiselle Caroline Vautravers, it was easy for him to suggest that he should give up his post on that account, and his employers might have followed him upon such an opportune bypath. But they would not part with him on any other issue than his actual marriage and this was postponed for a year so as to meet the Royal pleasure.

Asked by a fellow-theologian, of the same Evangelical convictions as himself, to be unrelenting in declining joint action with Rationalistic clergymen, he wrote that, on the contrary, the more he should fight them to the quick on the point of dogma, the more also should he seize suitable opportunities in which to join with them in works of Christian charity. This would not be a surrender, but a confining of opposition to the useful point.

Godet was married on 16th October, 1844, on the estate of Madame von Scharnhorst, in whose house his bride had been a governess. He left the Royal Household with every evidence of his having been a trusted servant: a pension for life, and, for life also, the title of Royal Chaplain at Neuchâtel, with a good salary, much more than the traditions of economy prevailing in the Hohenzollern *ménage* seemed to justify. Augusta, Princess of Prussia, mother of his pupil, later first Empress of Germany in the Hohenzollern line, never forgot the obligations of heart and soul she had contracted towards the educator of her son. Godet describes her as a woman endowed with a faith that shunned words, whose religion was visible in her life, whose eloquence lay in her actions, and, for the remainder, veiled in womanly reserve.

"From the first to the last day of my sojourn with the Princes of Prussia," wrote Godet emphatically, when he felt he must leave on this point a testimony for posterity, "I experienced from them every possible mark of affection and esteem, and received from all those personages, who have so often been represented as haughty and thankless, none but proofs of natural benevolence. I was till the end an object of their most delicate attentions."

This testimony may be the more readily believed as Godet was a *strong* man and incapable of any *complaisance*.

During the period of his tutorship he naturally had but rarely occasion to write to the prince. But it was a different matter when he returned to Neuchâtel, where his life work detained him practically without intermission for 56 years (1844-1900). Letters passed then regularly and frequently

between them, and this regularity means not a little as between men who are poor letter-writers. These were extremely busy men too. The letters that have been freely circulated are obviously restricted to two points: such occasions as births, marriages, deaths, in either circle. But the private friendship which united prince and parson, enabled them to exchange thoughts outside what we may call the professional occupations and family interests of each.

Theirs is the correspondence of two gentlemen who, within the limits of what their friendship may take cognisance of, are on equal terms. Religion is not the topic of those letters, but neither is it ever absent from the minds of the writers, though in the case of Frederick, the letters came from a Royal personage actively engaged in generalship and state business, at a time when the making of history was proceeding apace. The light thrown upon the "mentality" of Frederick is such that by the time one has finished reading these letters, the reader has conceived for him a genuine love.

Since the post-Waterloo general resettling of affairs in Europe, the period from 1845 to 1857 is the only one that was attended by some serious upheavals in the internal history of Neuchâtel and Switzerland. The internal affairs of Switzerland were then marked by a violent opposition between Protestants and Catholics, culminating in Civil War in 1846, and ending in the strengthening of the Federal bond, a struggle which was closely watched by foreign powers, some of which were interested in the triumph—which did not take place—of the Catholic Party; while others, with Britain at their head, were simply interested in the strengthening of the Confederation as a whole by means of the Protestant majority—which came to be.

But the crisis bore also another aspect that entered more deeply into the sphere of what are called foreign or international politics. The wish of a large section—soon to be the majority—of the Neuchâtel people was to break off the tie with Prussia entirely, to proclaim a Republic, not after the French model of 1848, but on the Swiss pattern, and to be Swiss and only Swiss.

This scheme went through phases, but ultimately succeeded in 1857, thanks mainly to the support of Britain. France and Prussia bargained in vain with each other, till the matter got beyond the haggling stage, thanks to the unanimity of the Swiss in accepting the arbitrament of war between them and Prussia—which, however, was in the end dispensed with, when the

Hohenzollerns preferred a reasonable concession to the lust for domination in which a Bonaparte would have indulged.

In March, 1848, the Swiss Republican Party proclaimed the Republic at Neuchâtel, the Royalists offering no resistance. At Berlin, as one knows, a revolution was attempted at the same time. This failed, within limits. The account which the Prince Royal gave of it to Godet is, unfortunately, too long to reproduce here. He was then 17 years old and his narrative is quite worth reading. There is not a word in it breathing defiance of, or want of confidence in, the people. The ruling king distinguished himself by his oratorical gifts in patriarchally addressing the crowd, but the prince's father, as one knows, found it necessary to remove himself for a time, and went to London, whence he was soon recalled.

From that time, there is a political barrier between the heir-apparent and his former tutor. The latter has *de facto*, though not yet *de jure*, ceased to be a Prussian subject, but, as we hinted before, there occurred no change in the personal relations of Godet with the rulers of Prussia.

Should we say here how interested Godet was in the Confirmation of the young man? The letters exchanged show that though Godet, externally, was not connected with this chapter in the religious life of his pupil, Frederick did inwardly, and as it were in the privacy of his closet, apply to Godet for the consecration of his soul to the service of God.

The young prince clearly expected from the Almighty some perceptible reward, some spiritual acknowledgment of his dedication to the service of the Lord, but his Neuchâtel friend reminds him that by impatiently forestalling the hour of God we spoil both present and future, so that the counsel, given to us by our Divine Teacher and Friend, that we should *possess our souls in patience* is advice as kind as it is wise. "Do not filch anything away from your present and future happiness by taking it unto yourself before it is offered to you. Endeavour rather to gain and keep possession of your soul, and do not share it with any but One."

Fifteen big pages of writing were not enough for the young prince's revealing of himself that was elicited by the above monition, and to these he added his confession of faith.

This eventful year, 1848, eventful in the spiritual life of the young prince, eventful in the history of the Prussian monarchy, eventful in the political history of Neuchâtel, was eventful also in the annals of the Church of Neuchâtel which the Republican revolution brought suddenly into a quandary not unlike that

which profoundly affected in 1846 the Church in the Canton de Vaud.

The Church of Neuchâtel, such as it issued from the Reformation, as has been pointed out above, was not an ordinary State Church. It was quite independent of the political power, and was ruled by the venerable Company, not of Apostles, but of its ministers. The Republic struck a deadly blow at that constitution, but the Company, while sacrificing its authority, insisted on not transmitting it to the State, but on vesting it in the membership of the Church.

One sees that the inner purport of this was to preserve the ancient autonomy though the Company abandoned the headship of the Church. Nobody resigned. The body of the Church was preserved whole.

The new government demanded no more than they got by the voluntary abdication which the Company of Pastors made of its episcopal powers into the hands of the Synod elected by the members of each parish, with a large representation of the laity, the direct election of parish ministers by the people, and the passing of the School of Divinity into the hands of the Synod.

Those principles were laid down by Godet and led to the adoption of the ecclesiastical law under the working of which the Church at Neuchâtel escaped disruption till 1873. All citizens accepting the forms of the Protestant Church were declared Church electors.

Thus the government of the Church did not pass into the hands of the State as in the Canton de Vaud. The need for a secession was averted. The new Church bore the stamp of self-government. This excellent result was obtained principally through the insight Godet showed in separating the essentials of Christianity from temporary and political admixtures.

It is a remarkable thing that at the moment when the House of Prussia might so easily have issued a pronouncement to its Neuchâtel subjects in a sense hostile to the new order, it refrained from any step that would have embarrassed them. It even formally empowered them to follow any course that might seem to them favourable to the happiness of their country and in accordance with the new situation.

In 1850, the Synod of the reconstituted Church appointed Godet teacher of Biblical exegesis. With this appointment began his long and arduous labours as a commentator upon Holy Writ. He became a prolific writer as well as an inspiring teacher in that domain of theology.

In 1851, after having done pastoral work in the town for six years, he was formally appointed a minister of Neuchâtel on his election by the citizens of the parish. On reporting to Berlin his acceptance of the post, not only did his devotion to his pastoral obligations meet with approval, but he was allowed to keep his title of Royal Chaplain. Godet then insisted on abandoning the remuneration attached by the Court to a title now without possible application. His request was granted, the money being transferred to a fellow-minister whom the Revolution had injured in his pecuniary interests.

It would be difficult to imagine suzerains more careful not to involve their followers in political trouble than those Prussian princes of Neuchâtel. They seemed to share Godet's doctrine that, when once an authority is set over a community, individuals owe to it the obedience to superior powers demanded of them by St. Paul. "Obey," Godet said, "though the government to which you are subjected should be the outcome of violence and sedition. Refrain from trusting your own judgment as to the legitimacy of that power."

Chronological sequence demands that we should interpose here (1856) the engagement of the Prince Royal of Prussia to the Princess Royal of England, Victoria, but only in so far as it is a topic of correspondence with Godet.

Frederick William had first met Princess Victoria in 1851 and a regular friendship had arisen between them. What a full-hearted and simple-minded love match that was, the letters make it clearer now than was ever suspected before. In fact the whole correspondence between Godet and the Prince, from 1844 to 1888, ought to be translated and published in London, in a book that would describe the tie of religious friendship that, acting upon a pre-existent affinity, bound together these two men throughout their lives.

This friendship was so close that the next and most severe commotion in Neuchâtel left it unshaken. We have said it before: this time it was the Royalists who took up arms, in September, 1856, and endeavoured to upset the Republican government which Godet and so many after him had come to serve on the principle recommended by Paul.

The insurgents did capture the seat of government, but it was too late to hope to complete such a retrograde step. Federal commissioners entered the Principality, with the Federal troops of Switzerland at their beck and call. Royalistic insurgents were captured to the number of 530. Many others fled from the country with their families; many of those remained who

might have been harassed, being known for the trueness of their attachment to the king.

We need not dwell here upon the negotiations which ensued. Prussia very rightly intervened on behalf of those who had risked their lives on her behalf, though it was without her assent. The rebels were liberated. But Prussia's formal and final renunciation of her rights to Neuchâtel ensued as her contribution to peace. It is strange to have to note that the loss of Neuchâtel to a neutral, but military power, is the only check which Prussia experienced in a century marked by her triumphant career in every other field.

In 1857 Godet wrote to the prince, attributing this solution to a higher Power than resided either at London, Paris or Berlin, and frankly professing his henceforth undivided allegiance to Switzerland, thanks to the magnanimous generosity of the Prussian House.

Here again, Godet, though still the open and well-known friend of the House of Prussia, not only was not molested in any way by the victorious party, but was even asked to direct the solemn church service which inaugurated the new constituent parliament of the small Republic in 1858.

He preached on the spiritual sovereignty of God which subsists in the changes of temporal sovereignties, reproaching the Royalists with having wished to resume possession of the City *without* God, that is by returning to what had existed for no other reason than because it did exist. They made no earnest examination. They clung to tradition, habit, prejudice, pride, self-interest, for want of putting themselves in the place of those who urged a change.

He then turned to the Republican part of the audience and warned them that impatience was just as un-Christian as obstinacy, that a change must be a change *with* God, if it was to be an improvement, that progress in liberty spelt anarchy unless a man's conscience bound him the more closely as his exterior bonds were loosened. And he instanced Christ, the most radical of reformers, and the most scrupulous caretaker of the inheritance of Israel : the law and the prophets.

This speech shows Godet in his usual character : a vigorous optimist. It suited the mood of the people, and was printed and circulated at public expense.

We should not dwell at such length upon these local occurrences but for the strange paradox : a Chaplain of the House of Prussia acting with perfect ease and much approval as Chaplain to the Republic. It shows how much goodwill was put forth

to save the Church. The event proved that Godet was a man who could be trusted to dominate the contradictory aspects of such a situation, turning them to good purpose for the political consolidation of the community. The Republican regime, from the point of view of the safe-guarding of the Kingdom of God, seemed to afford no worse opportunity than the good old regime it displaced.

In 1860 Godet lost his wife, who had made him the father of seven children. The man who said of books: "View them as dust and let them return to dust," was now for the first time put to a serious personal trial. He would have wished to dwell upon his loss and cultivate the memory of the one who had gone. But the torrent of his occupations, lessons, letters, pastoral visits, did not allow him to linger beside that grave, where, when it closed over the body of his wife, his heart swelled with gratitude that he had been allowed to keep for fifteen years the treasure that God had given him.

In 1862 he entered upon his second union by marrying Mademoiselle Caroline Alioth, who for some time already had supervised the education of the two eldest of his daughters.

At that time Godet was far forward with his Commentary on St. John, his principal work, in which his son George was the scribe. The manuscript of this work was almost lost in a fire. Its publication began in 1863, at Paris. It should be noticed that the author of that, and of so many other excellent contributions to biblical philology, lacked the academic title of Doctor of Divinity.

In 1866, tiring of the double burden of his pastoral and professional duties, he laid down his pastoral charge. He was right in sacrificing his pulpit to his chair.

His credit as a commentator of Scripture kept increasing, and though his life became more monotonous, immersed in books, lectures and letter-writing, so that we have henceforth little to relate about his long career, his influence waxed in direct proportion to his concentration of effort upon an object suited to expand his notoriety. His authority lay in this, that he was a man of brain, flesh and temper, rather than a scholar; a Christian rather than a divine.

The dogmatic formula of his faith sprang from the innermost sanctuary of his Christian soul; his theology was all employed in the service of righteous living. He would accept or reject a dogma according as it brought him nearer to, or seemed to part him from, Christ. He upheld the pre-existence of Christ for no other reason than that. But he asserted also the

Saviour's actual humanity to an extent that alarmed the Trinitarians.

Meanwhile his credit, from France and Switzerland, extended to Germany and Holland. English and Swedish translations followed upon the German and Dutch. The University of Basle made him a D.D. *honoris causa*.

What was there then in Godet that made his teaching of such worth in countries teeming with most varied and able exponents of Scripture? That the Reformed churches of Romance Switzerland and France should gladly greet in him the originator of a kind of scriptural interpretation in which they were sadly deficient fifty years ago is not surprising.

Must we assume then that the same lack existed in England and Germany? That would be assuming too much. But close at hand was the fact that in Germany philological theology had undergone an enormous development, partly owing to the extreme activity engendered in every field of research by the Universities. There was therefore room for a man whose intellect would collect, and act as a strainer to, the accumulative mass of German thought and newly built-up knowledge, who would pass it, as it were, through his vigorous, independent, keen Latin mind.

Of course, we no more have in view here Baur and Strauss in German Bible criticism, than we think of Renan in French criticism. The German "constructionists" who honestly prepared scientific material as servants of Christ, are alone those whom we have to consider here.

Godet went to school with them, after having begun his studies of Scripture in an atmosphere full of the most reverent spirit. When he ceased from his German studies, it was to return within the Church, which, though Calvinistic and French, was closely allied to the centres of political and religious thought in Prussia. Godet thus became a link between the non-German and the German Protestant minds.

But he was not a subordinate instrument or what might be called a passive link. However painstaking his scholarship, however close his preparatory labours, with a magnificent Greek scholar at his elbow in the person of Professor Prince, yet his primary gifts were fire, intuition and plastic power, a rapid judgment, originality of imagination, much vivacity in expression, a perpetually strenuous and eager grasping forth for knowledge.

He was a thinker, something of a seer, much of a poet and an accurate scholar. His poetic gift was characteristically

indigenous ; it was that of a lover of nature, of an admirer of the Alps at whose feet he dwelt. He was one of those simple souls who cannot understand that, in the face of so much beauty, man should import evil and unhappiness into the world. This was to him an absurd infatuation. His grand brain failed to comprehend so much smallness of mind. He was blessed with that rare power over-self, and that insight into causes and occasions of giving offence, which distinguishes the best men in every generation, whatever their creed, their country, or their calling.

The young men who passed through his hands felt that he had won over them the rights of a spiritual parent ; in the words of Calvin, that "he who administers the doctrine as the seed of eternal life, fills a father's office and deserves the name of a father."

It is impossible to drag into this definition of spiritual parentage the cold objectivity of the indifferent psychologist. Thus, in Godet, does one meet the warm-hearted, kindly disposition of a Bible lover.

He did not hold that science as an end terminated within itself. He conceived it in close association with all life, with his own life and the life of the Church. To his mind there was but one legitimate theology, that which, by producing an increment in Christian knowledge, brings about an increase in the Christian life of mankind.

What lends charm to his commentaries and clothes them with persuasive fervour, is, not that they are a collection of scholarly papers, but that they record the testimony borne to the Gospel by a personality imbued with the Spirit of God.

His personal teaching was so influential that when the so-called Broad Church ideas put in an appearance at Neuchâtel, in 1869, not one member of the national clergy countenanced them. The learned lectures delivered then by the objector to the Broad Church contentions were published in a volume which was translated into several languages.

However, one result of a statement made on one side and badly confuted on the other, was to show the right-minded folk in both camps that there was a flaw in the "multitudinous" conception of the National Church.

This flaw was namely that, to be "multitudinous" on terms of fairness, a National Church must cease accepting payment for its ministers out of the public rates.

To be "fair," a Church must assume a voluntary adherence, and this assumption is ill-founded when the expenses of the

Church are met out of the State funds, which are a compulsory levy upon the civil community. The formula therefore must be: the Church open to all, but defrayed out of the pockets of the willing.

Godet was led to this conception from the time when Broad Churchmen began to complain that all the resources of the Establishment, to which *they* contributed as citizens, went to the maintenance of a clergy exclusively evangelical. This was clearly wrong in the sight of God, since a free assent could not be assumed when its "material" expression was legally enforced.

When war broke out between France and Germany in 1870—a war during which Godet naturally pleaded discreetly, but perspicuously, with the Prince Royal and Imperial, for the neutralization of Alsace-Lorraine—public attention turned away for a time from Church topics. Godet completed, meanwhile, his Commentary on St. Luke, the first edition of which went out of print in a few weeks. He went to Berlin at the end of 1871 on a visit to the Imperial Family; to Palestine and Jerusalem in 1872.

In 1873 the Liberal Party in Neuchâtel planned a modification in the ecclesiastic status of 1848, which, owing to the supremacy of an evangelical Synod over the whole Church, and over the Faculty of Divinity, stood in the way of the formation of any but evangelical ministers. Godet gave vent to his convictions as to the unfairness of the Establishment to the Church as a whole, since there were now two parties within the Church. He advocated a free secession of the evangelicals, should the political electorate ratify the proposed new ecclesiastic status which would deprive the Synod of its autonomous powers of spiritual church government. The dreaded law was actually promulgated. Then Godet actually seceded, though no conscientious holder of the principle of separation of Church and State, but anxious to make it clear that he would not be responsible before God for a Church in which the pulpits would be accessible to others than evangelical clergymen. The whole staff of the Faculty of Theology, with all the students, declared for the Free Church, naturally, headed by Godet their principal professor.

From that time Godet must be viewed as a leading member of a Free Church, though no Free Churchman, for he looked upon the relations of Church and State as purely historical or constitutional matters in which no principle was involved either way, so long as all consciences concurred in the mode

in force. We need scarcely add that Godet's objections to Broad Churchism in the government of the Church did not extend to Broad Church ministers of religion. Ministers of both churches, when once the question of Church government was constitutionally settled, accepted his leadership in works of friendly co-operation, such as furthering the observation of the Lord's Day.

In 1875 appeared the third edition of his *Etudes Bibliques*, which went through five French editions, with translations into German, English, Dutch, Spanish. This work of Godet's is the one that was most widely read by the general public. It gained access to all Protestant countries. Its chapters "On Angels" in the first volume (Old Testament), and on "The work of Jesus Christ" in the second volume (New Testament), are masterpieces.

Another work, *La Bible annotée*, caused him endless trouble. What he, with his fellow-workers, wanted to produce was a popular exegesis of Scripture for plain folk. It began to appear in 1879 in instalments and was completed in 1900, a few months before his death.

In 1877 he attended the first general Presbyterian Council in Edinburgh and spoke on the second day. Of course he was quite at home both in Scotland and in London, experiencing in himself what Continental Protestants agree in feeling of Britain, namely, that the barrier between them and the British is purely geographical, though they cannot feel in sympathy with the Romanising Englishman, who would seem, as a hybrid, to be somewhat out of place anywhere.

Godet told the Congress that the divinity of Christ, in the days when the sixteenth century confessions of faith were worded, was so obvious to the whole Christian world that it needed no peculiar emphasis in the teaching of any Church. But now it was different. While the sixteenth century believers unanimously asked of Christ, "What hast Thou done for us?" the Protestants in the nineteenth century said to Him, "We want first to know Who and What Thou art." Godet expressed his regret that the Roman Catholic Church had been allowed by the Protestants to keep a more faithful watch than the Reformed Churches over the corner-stones of the Gospel of Salvation: Incarnation and Expiation.

We have seen how Godet had a great respect for the "mystery" element in religion. He would not allow intellects to press in too closely upon the mystery of the person of Christ. He expressed clearly this point of view in a little volume

published in 1880 at Basle in a German translation, under the title, *Die göttliche Würde Christi*.

Through this translation and otherwise, he employed whatever influence he might possess over the German clergy in impressing upon them that "State money" was a poor cornerstone on which to build up a living Church, as religion could not very well thrive upon indifferent officialism. On the same subject he approached the Prince Imperial, who naturally agreed, reminding him, however, of his own doctrine: that it is useless to change institutions till the minds of men have undergone a change corresponding to the effort to be made.

Godet's admonitions to the Lutheran clergy were not quite in keeping with his usual patience. He was getting overworked and had to refuse to prepare an Old Testament commentary demanded then for publication in Scotland. Yet his physical vigour was still such that he could ascend snowy summits in the Alps, walking sixteen hours at a stretch.

In 1884 he was made Honorary D.D. by the University of Edinburgh.

His trip to Copenhagen and Norway, in the same year, was a kind of triumphant progress. Not only was he to address the Evangelical Alliance, but Danes and Norwegians, whether clergymen or laymen, greeted in him their master and spiritual adviser wherever he travelled. His books had preceded him along those coasts as far as the North Cape.

In 1885, his Imperial friend still writes to him perfectly happy letters, speaking of his domestic life and affections, of the delight he has in his eldest son's military propensities and in the naval abilities of his son Henry. But, in 1887, a shadow begins to fall upon the exemplary home life of this family. Its head, who was to the Princess Royal the very breath of life, was becoming afflicted with the first symptoms of the dreadful throat disease which so abruptly ended his days, almost as soon as from the steps of the throne he ascended the throne itself. The sufferer wrote to the upbringer of his childhood, committing himself into the hands of God, while he should go through the severe trial of his faith.

The pastor, who had used his wife's hand in replying to this letter, being himself now shaken in health, realised he must withdraw from his responsibilities as a professor of divinity, having lost the power to discharge them satisfactorily. He thought he would henceforth devote himself to desk work alone. He did actually, six years later, publish the first volume of his Introduction to the New Testament. All he needed was rest.

Practically he had never been ill, and now that his work was cut down to the measure of his strength, a vista of many years of useful labour opened out again before him.

Not so for his Imperial disciple. In October and November, 1887, we find the prince at San Remo. Once he ends a long letter with these words: "Farewell, my dear friend, and let me assure you once more that my humility before the Lord and my submission to His will are still exactly the same as you knew them in me, when I was the child entrusted to you."

The prince, after undergoing the operation of tracheotomy, left for Berlin in March, 1888, on the death of Emperor William the First, then 91 years old.

Here is a translation of Godet's last letter to his disciple, at a time when the new Emperor had but a few weeks to live before parting with all his earthly hopes, and when he had just written to the Court Preacher: "Pray no longer for my recovery, pray for my deliverance."

"My dear Emperor—I ever have you before my eyes, and see you with all those hopes on one side with which you grew into an ever wider life, and, on another side, I behold all the sacrifices which are now so unexpectedly demanded of you: having to renounce this earthly life which we always hold so dear; having to part from all your beloved ones; having to yield that power the prospect of which you held dear for the sake of all the good you hoped to do; having to lose voice itself, the means of pouring one's heart in the heart of those who understand you.

"If only you knew how this accumulation of griefs, pouring down upon him whom I once saw in his childlike mirth and trustfulness, weighs my heart down! If only you knew how much I feel I must probe with you all this bitterness to the depths, that I may the more ardently beseech Him Who may sweeten it for you.

"In your woeful progress, you know at least that you are accompanied by universal feelings of sympathy and respectful affection. Thus was not favoured He to Whose sufferings you are now associated. He had for His share on the way to the cross mockery and every outrage, on the cross itself He felt forsaken by the One on high, and from men He got naught but . . . vinegar.

“I have lately re-read your account of your visit to the Mount of Olives. He ascended from that spot. Join Him to ascend with Him.

Your  
Godet.”

We would add nothing to this letter in the way of comment. A fortnight later, the Emperor sent a telegram of thanks to Godet, with the announcement of his second son's impending marriage. On the 15th of June the news that all was over reached Neuchâtel, and on the 16th came a heartbroken message from the bereaved Empress Victoria, shortly followed by a letter from the Emperor's mother.

The bereaved ladies clung reverently to Godet for affection and comfort. When his turn came to lay himself down on his death-bed, the Empress Victoria enquired almost daily.

Nothing darkened so much the declining years of Godet as the loss of the prince whom he loved and cherished so well. He could not have loved better his own son. For our part, we know that we should in vain search the annals of history for a relation matching this for simplicity and truth between prince, set over men, and servant of God.

In 1889 we find Godet in the Waldensian valleys, celebrating there, with divines and ministers from all parts, the 200th anniversary of the return of the Waldensians to their native valleys. His age, added to his immense life-work, made him patriarch and supreme authority at any such gatherings.

The stream of so-called modern biblical criticism continued to flow past him, and he, from his solid evangelical rock, found in the new ideas brought into circulation opportunity for speaking another decisive word.

To some he said: “Why insist on separating theology from religion? What religion is free from theology? He who would repudiate the latter has in his heart given up the spirit of the former. Was there ever a faith without some kind of historic framework?”

Or else: “What hurts me is not exactly that such and such a correction should be the outcome of criticism; it is rather that they should not see how the whole drift of the Old Testament is towards holy living. There is not a man in the holy Book, be he king, prophet or priest; there are no nations or peoples that do not emerge from it confounded and convicted of sin. God alone is glorified in Scripture. That is why that Book is holy and true. No historical criticism can touch the sacred

elements of that story which aim at establishing the glory of God. Our conscience suffices to recognise the sincerity of the Bible and to vindicate its moral truthfulness. As a dogmatic speculation the unity of God and Christ has no particular virtue. Apply it to conduct it becomes an incentive, a power, a decisive element in life. There is but one word: righteousness."

In 1891, Godet spent a part of the summer at Zermatt. Known as a contributor to the *Expositor*, he was easily recognised by English visitors to Zermatt who had seen his portrait in that periodical, and were acquainted with his resemblance to Gladstone. He had, in common with the great English commoner, beauty of countenance, penetrating blue eyes, an extreme mobility of voice modulation, rapidity of physiognomic by-play, and that abounding interest in the topic of the moment, and in the act which circumstances demanded.

Godet was then more than ever bent upon producing his Introduction to the New Testament, in which so much would be finally collected that he had given before to the public in fragments, or to his students, more connectedly. The first volume appeared in 1892. The second volume began to appear in 1897, in instalments, the last of which was issued by his eldest son, in 1904, after the death of the author. One of his most original productions belongs to the same period: "The Time in the Life of Jesus that preceded His public ministry." And while we speak of originality, we should mention also: "Le Prométhée d'Eschyle," contributed in 1883 to the periodical, *Le Chrétien Evangélique*, at Lausanne.

After the model of what had taken place at Chicago, a universal Congress of Religions was to meet in 1900 at Paris, on the occasion of the International Exhibition. Such congresses Godet criticised owing to their inherent insincerity. He explained that, to his mind, religious unity should be sought in the missionary field, where it might be effected within the widest limits of Christianity, near the outer circumference, and might "regress" towards the heart of each Church at home.

Frederic Godet breathed his last peacefully in his own house in October, 1900.

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\* \* \* It will be noted that the above address was delivered three months before the sudden outbreak of the great European War, and that both author and audience were ignorant of the aims toward which Hohenzollern policy was then being directed.

## DISCUSSION.

Professor D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, Mr. M. L. ROUSE, Lt.-Col. MACKINLAY, and the SECRETARY expressed their indebtedness to Professor ROGET for his interesting address, and the CHAIRMAN, in closing the proceedings, said—

In this Institute we pronounce the name of F. Godet with emphatic and grateful reverence, first because of the *Entente Cordiale* that subsists between English and French Christians, but also because the Philosophical Society of Great Britain recognises the œcumenical bond of gratitude that binds it to a savant of European renown.

Our aim, like his, is to present the faith of Christ in a manner that can recommend it to the sincere thought of our age.

Among ourselves, scholars like Lyttelton and Westcott have recognised the merits of the great Swiss Expositor. Westcott expressed the high esteem in which he held Godet's Commentary on St. John. E. G. Selwyn, a scholar of the younger generation, told me last week that he still regarded Godet's book on the Resurrection Narratives as among the most useful and convincing on that subject.

I myself would note by a pair of illustrations the remarkable gifts which Godet possessed: the gift of speculation and the gift of scientific sympathy.

The Study on Angels in the volume of Old Testament Studies illustrates very clearly the fine quality of Godet's speculative mind. The study in the same volume on the first chapters of Genesis illustrates his vivid interest in the questions which sometimes divide, but ought really to unite, the theologian and the physical philosopher.

In this Institute, it is not our function to directly propagate religion, but to make the belief in true religion more easy and more secure. We are in this sense acting in the spirit of the old and beautiful saying that theology is the queen of the sciences, meaning that theology holds a court in which all the sciences have their welcome and an honoured place. We are inspired by that dictum of Pico della Mirandola (1463-94): "*Philosophia quaerit veritatem; Theologia invenit; Religio habet.*"

In this task we recognise that the work of a great exegete, such as was Godet, plays no mean part. He has himself finally embodied the aim of his own labours in a memorable phrase with which I will conclude my observations :

“Ce qui sauve c'est la foi seule ; ce qui satisfait c'est la foi arrivée à la connaissance d'elle-même.”

A hearty vote of thanks was passed to Professor Roget, and the Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.