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The Principle of Christian Society

Rokuro Sahara

(1) As far as I know, Christian sociology was first systematized by J.H.W. Stuckenbergh in 1880. According to him, Christian sociology is a science of a society which is controlled by Christian principles, and deals with the nature, principles, relations and duties of a perfect Christian society. Religion has long been a powerful force in molding society and culture. The further back one goes into the history of human culture, the greater is the degree to which every aspect of human life seems incased in the magico-religious. However the power of religion seems to have gone into hiding during the recent years, especially among the intellectuals of the modern civilized world. (2) The above tendency reminds me of the title of the book, "L'irréligion de l'avenir," written by J.M. Guyau in 1887, and also the term, "non-church" Christianity, which was first advocated in this country by the late Kanzo Uchimura who followed the teachings of the Bible without belonging to any particular church. Although there are fundamental differences between these two cases, I cannot but feel that they share something in common. Do the expressions "l'irréligion" and "non-church" indicate that Christianity is going to die out? I do not believe they do. I would rather take them to predict that the day will eventually arrive when Christianity, eliminating all unessential dogmas, practices and institutions from its organism, will radiate its essential pure light, and the best elements of religious life will be propagated. For as Guyau says, he alone is religious who searches for, who thinks about, and who loves the truth. (3) The principle of Christian society may be expressed as follows: In organizing Christian society, Christ draws men unto Himself. He does not start with drawing individuals together and linking them as fellow-Christians with one another. Instead He starts with drawing each individual to Himself and bringing the individual into intimate relation with Himself. This relation of individuals to Christ is the ground of their relation to one another. Thus from Him Christian society takes its start; in Him it ever lives; and to Him it must ever tend.