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God's Wonderful Work
IN FRANCE.

Presented by M. W. Jacobus

God's Wonderful Work

IN FRANCE.

AN INTRODUCTION

OF THE

DEPUTATION FROM THE PROTESTANTS OF FRANCE

TO

THE AMERICAN CHURCHES.

BY REV. LEONARD W. BACON.

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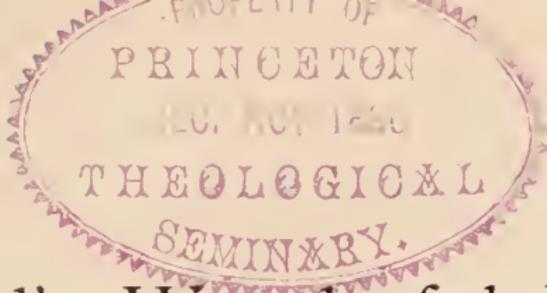
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God's Wonderful Work IN FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT WORK IN FRANCE.
PAUL BOUCHARD AND HIS LETTER TO THE
BISHOP.

ABOUT the beginning of the year 1877, there was printed in many newspapers of France a letter of very unusual tenor, addressed by Monsieur Paul Bouchard, a former Mayor of the city of Beaune, to the Bishop of Dijon, in whose diocese he lives. The letter is brief and tells its own story so plainly that we transcribe it in full :

“BEAUNE, Dec. 31, 1876

“TO THE LORD BISHOP OF DIJON.

“MY LORD: I have the honor to present the following declaration to you who are the only person qualified, as head of the diocese, to receive it.

“From day to day we are accustomed to see funeral processions attended to the last resting place by the Catholic priest, with the mortal remains of men who have held them-

selves aloof from the Catholic church, or have even been its open enemies, the greater part of their lives.

“In these circumstances, the church, to justify its taking part, claims that these men, having been born within its pale, and having been married and having had their children baptized by a priest, have continued to be Catholics, notwithstanding all their open declarations to the contrary.

“In fact, in view of acts of such grave import on their part, how can these men be released from their engagements except by another act, of a clear, decisive, unmistakable character?

“Such an act, my lord, is that of public abjuration; and it is upon this that I have resolved, in order to extricate myself from the uneasy and false position in which I have already continued quite too long. I have resolved on this step, further, in order to fulfil a duty which rests on me as a loyal and conscientious man.

“I declare, therefore, that I abjure Catholicism and transfer my adhesion to Protestantism, which I regard as the only deliverance for our country from the dangers which threaten it from every quarter.

“I am, my lord, with deep respect,

“PAUL BOUCHARD.”

This letter is notable for its contents, its author, and its consequences.

It will be observed that the main motives expressed in it are, first, consistency, and secondly, patriotism—motives altogether respectable in themselves, but not the highest that could be named for an act of so grave a religious import. But how great an advance did it imply from the position which up to that date the writer had held in common with thousands—say rather, with

hundreds of thousands—of his fellow-citizens. To consent, sometimes with the outward show of respect, sometimes with open scoffs, that one's name and influence and example shall be associated with a system of beliefs and ceremonies which is inwardly renounced and despised; to permit one's self to be officially reckoned among the adherents of a church which is the avowed enemy of the institutions and liberties of his country—such has been and is the miserably false position of the average French liberal and republican. The act of M. Bouchard, though not the utterance of a Christian faith, nor even of an intellectual conviction of religious truth, was a worthy and honorable act. He wished to renounce allegiance to the Roman church, the enemy of the republic; and the only effective way of doing this, under the existing laws and usages of France, was to declare his adhesion to the French National Protestant Church, which he could do without offence to his reason as an intelligent man, or his patriotism as a loyal citizen.

The writer of the letter is a man advanced in years, the ex-mayor of his city (Beaune) and member of the Council-General of his Department (Côte d'Or). In the terrible days of 1870, he was the trusted friend and supporter of Gambetta in the organization of the national defence. Among the little popular tracts with which he has followed up the letter to his bishop, and which are scattered by myriads among the peasant-

ry in all parts of France, is one in the form of a "Letter to Léon Gambetta," the concluding page of which clearly indicates his position. He addresses the great tribune of the people, the Mirabeau of the new republic, with the freedom warranted by superior age and long-tried friendship, and reproaches him with the demoralizing atheism which appears in his popular speeches—a teaching not less perilous to France than that of the Romish clergy; and he concludes thus:

"To bring back France into the way from which, in the sixteenth century, she was led astray by her incapable and guilty rulers—to bring her over from Catholicism to Protestantism—this is what I propose. This is the only practical course. You, our present rulers, have no other course to propose. Rather, let me say, the course you are following, far from diminishing the existing evil, only aggravates it by strengthening that church which is the public enemy.

"We are confronted by two great public evils: one is the idolatry which is cherished and developed by the church of Rome in pursuance of its principle: brutalize the people and so rule them. The other is the atheism which grows strong on the hatred of the Roman church and clergy.

"Both are alike perilous, alike fatal. We must fight them both. Our duty, unless we are to perish, is to strive against them to the utmost of our energy.

"There is no liberty in Romanism, for its principle is domination and subjection. There is none in atheism, for it denies God and the life to come; it leaves us with no faith except in ourselves, limited to earthly wants, with no motives but our passions and appetites, whose slaves we thus become. A short and easy step it is, from that point, to become the slaves of a Cæsar.

“Protestantism is our only escape from Romanism; it will be found to be our only escape from atheism. Deliver us from both, for they are our two worst enemies.”

So clearly does this experienced French politician apprehend the fact, so plainly does he set it before his countrymen, that French Romanism is the parent of French atheism, and that atheism, in return, drives the people back into Romanism.

M. Bouchard took this step alone. He could hardly have foreseen that he would be followed within a few months by thousands of his fellow-countrymen, from the peasant on the farm and the artisan in the workshop, to the highest names in statesmanship and literature. Surely he did not foresee that the movement which began, in his own mind, from motives of consistency and patriotism, would deepen as well as widen, and give every evidence, in awakened consciences, in repentance toward God, in faith and grateful love toward the Lord Jesus Christ, of the wonder-working presence of the Holy Spirit.

The brief tracts of M. Bouchard, which have had the widest currency in France of late, are these five :

1. Simple Letter of a Burgundian to the people of his own little city.
2. Voluntary Slavery.
3. God and Native Land. Addressed to women.
4. Letter to Léon Gambetta.
5. Romanism and the Republic.

CHAPTER II.

M. EUGÈNE RÉVEILLAUD AND HIS PAMPHLET.

“THIS pamphlet is not a work of faith, though it is a work of good faith.” Such is the opening sentence of a remarkable publication which is circulating to the number of many thousands in all parts of France, and which represents the new religious movement to the minds of thoughtful and studious persons, as the pungent little tracts of M. Paul Bouchard represent it to the common people, the peasants, and the artisans. If the ecclesiastical historian of a future generation, continuing into a new era the thrilling story of French Protestantism, shall have occasion to tell how in the latter part of the nineteenth century “the grand nation” passed over from the list of papal countries to that of Protestant countries, and to tell of the instrumentalities that concurred in this momentous work, he will have to ascribe no small share in it to the pamphlet of 144 pages, 12mo, the first important work of a young lawyer and journalist, Eugène Réveillaud, entitled “The Religious Question and the Protestant Solution.”

“ It is not a work of faith, though it is a work of good faith. The writer is not a believer, though he would fain be one. He belongs to no church. Born and educated in the Catholic church, he early abjured its pomps and its works. He is what is called a ‘free-thinker.’ He is one of the great multitude of enthusiasts for freedom of conscience, the progress of the human mind, the honor and glory of his country.

“ His testimony for Protestantism is spontaneous and disinterested. His book is not for the propagation of a creed, but for the preservation of society.”

So, frankly, in his preface, the young pamphleteer introduces the sober and weighty words, addressed simply to the patriotism of Frenchmen, in which he advises them, as the one way to deliver France from the moral debasement, the impoverishment, the endless mischievous intrigues in which it is involved by existing relations to the Church of Rome and its clergy, to renounce that church, and at the same time, since no people can exist without some religion, to transfer themselves and their families to the communion of the Protestant church.

It is honorable to the high character of French Protestantism that it gave at the outset a very hesitating and scanty welcome to converts professing no loftier reasons for their adhesion than these reasons of patriotic expediency, and, to use the French expression, “religious opportunism.” Even when it began to enrich its rolls with such names as those of M. Renouvier, and M. Bouchard, and M. Jules

Favre, the ministers of the little "persecuted remnant" of the Huguenot church bore themselves with the dignity of men put in trust with the gospel, and declared boldly in sermon and pamphlet that joining one's self to the Protestant party did not make one a Protestant; that this required the sincere conviction of the heart, and the work of the Spirit of God. And they grew more faithful in setting forth the truths of the gospel, as held by Protestant Christians, before the minds that had been awakened by the appeals of M. Réveillaud and M. Bouchard.

The work of God's Spirit, to which the pastors appealed, was not long in becoming manifest. In July, 1878, four months after the pamphlet of Réveillaud had begun to waken the thoughts of French patriots, there occurred one Sunday, in the Protestant meeting-house of the city of Troyes, a startling and thrilling incident, the story of which, as told by the pastor of the church himself, we condense from "*L'Ami Chrétien des Familles*," in which it is given without mention of name or place. The pastor had been preaching on the dying vision of Stephen, and was preparing to dismiss the congregation, when a young man rose suddenly and came toward the pulpit:

"I turned quickly, and perceived that the intelligent and educated young man who was coming towards me, and whom I well knew, desired to be heard. 'Would you suffer me,' he said, 'to bear witness to the Holy Ghost?' I gave

him leave, and standing before the communion table below the pulpit he spoke nearly as follows :

“My brethren, I desire to bear witness to the Holy Ghost, and to declare, with our pastor, that there is an invisible and supernatural world, not known by the senses, but apprehended by faith and heavenly grace. Last night it pleased the Holy Spirit to reveal himself to me and give me that baptism in which, according to the promise of the Scriptures, we become the children of the Father and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. By this baptism I have been born again, and have put off the old man, with the lusts of the flesh. I feel the grace, the power, the love of God. I have entered into the invisible church of Christ. I am converted. I am saved.

“I was the most unworthy of the children of sin and the world; and when I think of my old life, so corrupt and impure, I wonder that God should deign to make choice of my soul for a temple of the Holy Ghost. Formerly I had nothing but a wish for good, a lively feeling of my misery, with a vague, indefinite desire to make my peace with God, and enjoy his favor. I remember that some days ago I expressed in prayer the desire that God would bestow on me the grace of the Holy Spirit. I have been answered a hundred-fold more than I could have dared to hope.

“I fell asleep yesterday in an atmosphere of worldly thoughts, and I do not remember that during the whole day I had once lifted up my heart to God. In the night I had a dream. I thought that I was arguing with a Catholic lady. She said to me: ‘Yours is no religion; you believe nothing.’ ‘What!’ said I, still in my dream, ‘believe nothing? On the contrary, we have the same creed with the Catholics;’ and I went on to repeat to her the Apostles’ Creed—‘I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,’ etc. I continued thus, in my dream, making an effort, sometimes, to remember the words, and my conviction of their truth grew stronger

as I proceeded. I came to that part of the creed 'From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead,' when it seemed as if the earth quaked, and a gulf opened, and the stars fell from heaven—as if the last day had come. The impression was instantaneous, and I expected to be swallowed up in the universal convulsion, when I remembered the part of the creed I had recited the moment before, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' At this moment it seemed that I was set beyond the open gulf, and that the Holy Ghost took possession of me. 'Saved!' I thought to myself, and I repeated, as if to reassure myself of my salvation, 'I believe; yes, I believe in the Holy Ghost.'

"From that moment I had the assurance that I was no longer dreaming. What followed might have seemed an hallucination, had I not tested it thoroughly, and found it to be the conviction of a waking man whose pulse was calm, I counted it repeatedly, and who was fully conscious of his own personality—knowing himself to be in his room, and perceiving, when he opened his eyes, the light of dawn creeping through the windows.

"As I repeated, still under the influence of the dream and the vision, 'I believe—I believe in the Holy Ghost,' a tender emotion filled my whole being. I had from this moment the persuasion that the Holy Spirit had come to me. I had a perfect feeling of happiness and a most lively impression of the infinitude of the love of God. I repeated the Apostles' Creed from the beginning, and a new meaning seemed to shine out from it and make all its assertions self-evidencing. I was full of deep emotion. I was filled with a rushing flood of divine love. It is impossible to express in words my experience, and the happiness it brought . . .

"I owe to you, my brethren, members with me of this Christian church, the first expression of my new-born and living faith. Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men! Christ has come to redeem us, to save us, to

bear the burden of our sins, to be our ransom before the Father. Christ reigns and has fellowship with us by the Holy Spirit. Oh, love the Lord Jesus; love God, that God may work his work in you, that you may be filled with the grace of the Spirit, and thus may have peace and the communion of the Holy Ghost, joy of heart, and assurance of eternal life."

The utterer of this remarkable confession was none other than Eugène Réveillaud, the brilliant young advocate and journalist who four months before had said, at the opening of his book, "The writer is not a believer, though he fain would be one." With such an anointing has he been set apart to the work of a leader of his people out of darkness and confusion into the light of the gospel.

M. Réveillaud is a young man, not yet thirty years old. Born and bred a Catholic, devoted to the priesthood by a pious mother, his conscience early revolted from the teachings of the "*petit séminaire*." He pursued the course of college education with high honor, winning the prize for rhetoric in the "general competition" among the grammar schools of all France, and entered at once on the study of law, in which he took his degree, but never has practised as an advocate except in political trials and "press trials" in which he has been involved as a journalist. For he was early drawn into the career of journalism. At the age of twenty-one he was chief editor of the "The Taxpayer" (*Le Contribuable*), and after that, in succession, of sev-

eral leading provincial papers of France. But from January, 1879, he has devoted all his strength and talents, by pen and tongue, to the evangelization of France. He is one of the foremost of the men who, in every part of France, in theatres, in ballrooms, in barns, wherever a company can be gathered, are addressing eager multitudes on liberty and the gospel of Christ. And his little weekly newspaper, "Le Signal," is the organ and chronicler of this greatest movement in the religious history of our generation.

A brief abstract of the notable pamphlet of Réveillaud sounds the opening note of the march in which France is moving forward—the key-note, we were about to say; but it must be remembered that this pamphlet was written from a merely secular point of view, and that, beginning with such tones as these, the movement soon modulates into a higher and nobler key.

The progress of society (says the writer) revolves about three pivotal questions—the social question, the political, the religious. Of these, in the France of to-day, only the latter remains to be settled; and about this all the antagonist forces of the nation are engaged. The two parties are the party of the priesthood, on the one hand, identified with "the defeated parties," royalist and imperialist; and on the other hand *liberalism*, which, being resolved to stand by human rights and the Republic, is placed in necessary hostility to the priesthood and its allies.

We are forced to make against clericalism this indictment :

It is a peril to civil society.

It is a peril to the individual.

It is a peril to the family.

It is a peril to all the interests of France, whose backward position in the ranks of civilized nations is due solely to its subjection to the Roman clergy.

This is the substance of the *first chapter*. The point of it is the necessity of a religious reformation.

The *second chapter* opens by anticipating an objection : " Why have any religion at all ? Is it not enough to have a good, sensible philosophy ? "

No. If this had been enough, clericalism would have been driven to the wall long ago. The experiment has been thoroughly tried in France for eighty years, and has failed. The power of the priesthood tends to increase, and the superstitions of the Roman church grow worse and worse. No doubt atheism in its various forms—materialism, pantheism, positivism—has advanced and spread ; but the *bourgeoisie*—the bulk of the well-to-do citizens—have a horror and dread of atheism, and by this very fact are impelled to support the only church they know of ; and so superstition is made fashionable.

" Man cannot live by bread alone." All his higher cravings are famished when he attempts to subsist only

on what he can find in atheism. And the writer proceeds to a brief retrospect of the various experiments that have been made in France to construct a substitute for religion without the basis of a divine revelation.

France cannot live without religion. The only hope of a religion for France is in reforming her present religion, not in inventing a new one.

“Jesus planted his standard so high above all earthly horizons, that all mankind may take refuge beneath its folds. And if the shadow of his cross, extending over the earth, has caused to spring up nothing but virtues—a law of love and of human brotherhood—who would not be proud to be called by the name of Christian?”

“But, some one will say, ‘We have seen the very reverse of this—what outrages committed, what massacres ordered, in the name of Christ and for the interests of religion!’ We answer that Christ must not be confounded with the church of Rome. The excesses and crimes of every kind, the Saint Bartholomews and the Dragonnades, were not committed by Christianity, but were the result of that régime of priestcraft which has prevailed, to the misery of the ages, in the organization of the Roman church.

“No, Christianity is not to be annihilated. Nothing is destroyed unless its place is supplied by something else. Catholicism may be cast out by Christianity, but the gospel will not be suppressed until something else shall have been found to take the place of it.

“Let us then remain Christians, and snatch from the hands of our enemies the standard of Christ which they have usurped and dishonored. Let us take their motto for our own, “*HOC SIGNO VINCES!*” We shall never make a better

fight against clericalism than by borrowing from the gospel the scourge with which Jesus drove the money-changers from the temple, and the rebukes with which he stigmatized the scribes and Pharisees."

Chapter third is entitled "The Fruits of Protestantism," and exhibits, in startling figures, mainly taken from Laveleye, the Belgian publicist, the growing decadence of the Catholic nations of Europe as compared with their Protestant competitors. Two centuries ago the unquestioned supremacy of Europe was with the Catholic powers. The others were all second-class powers. Now the predominance is completely the other way. In 1700, France represented 31 per cent. of the strength of Europe; now it represents 15 per cent.

What is Protestantism? In the discussion of this question, the writer draws a clear and intelligent contrast between it and its antagonist system, and shows where is the "hiding of its power" of uplifting and invigorating nations.

He goes on to speak of the work of the Reformation in public worship, in the family, in the school, in the ministry; of the gospel and democracy; and of the reasons why the French revolution has never achieved a settled and good result.

Chapter fourth is devoted to certain popular objections to the course proposed. And *Chapter fifth* and last, to the question, "Is it absurd to expect

France to change from Catholic to Protestant?" And he recounts the forces, natural and supernatural, that are coöperating to that end, and the progress already accomplished—so remarkable even in 1878, but so little then in comparison with what was about to be.

CHAPTER III.

NOTABLE ACCESSIONS TO PROTESTANTISM. RENOUVIER AND PILLON AND THE "CRITIQUE PHILOSOPHIQUE." FRANCISQUE SARCEY. IN BELGIUM, LAVELEYE AND FRÈRE-ORBAN. JULES FAVRE, AND THE FUNERAL AT VERSAILLES.

✓ "THERE is Protestantism in the air" was the recent exclamation of a leading French journalist. How completely it is justified by the facts, will be indicated by a few names of persons who have lately renounced their connection with Romanism and enrolled themselves as Protestants.

Simultaneously with the appearance of Réveillaud's pamphlet, there sounded out from a strange quarter—from Avignon, the old residence of the popes—a like voice in the pages of one of the foremost Reviews of France. The "Critique Philosophique" is a monthly Review of politics and literature, but especially of philosophy, in which its editor, M. Renouvier, and his assistant, M. Pillon, have won deserved eminence. So earnestly did these weighty writers undertake the cause of Protestantism, that they added to their monthly Review a quarterly supplement, entitled "La Critique Religieuse," devoted to religious discussion

and to the promotion of the new Protestant movement.

Just before the Réveillaud pamphlet, appeared a notable article in the "Dix-neuvième Siècle," from the pen of Francisque Sarcey, one of the most influential liberal writers in France, in which he advises all lovers of their country, rationalists, indifferentists, skeptics, and Christians who are simply Christians and nothing else, to register themselves officially as belonging to the Protestant community.

In the "Église Libre" of May, 1877, appeared the following announcement: "M. Turquet, Republican member of the Chamber of Deputies from the department of the Aisne, has joined the Protestant church with his family. We learn that his example is to be followed by an entire village."

Simultaneously with this spontaneous movement in France arose a like movement in the neighboring and most Catholic country of Belgium. About the beginning of 1877, Count Goblet d'Alvielle published in the "Revue de Belgique" an article which made no small stir, entitled "Altar over against Altar; or Practical Means of propagating the Reformation in Belgium."

But the work which has made the deepest impression, not only in Belgium, but wherever the French language is spoken, is the pamphlet of Émile de Laveleye, whose rank as a publicist and statistician is recognized the world over, and whose arguments in

favor of the change from Catholic to Protestant are reinforced by his personal example. The title of his pamphlet is "The Future of the Catholic Nations." It is a tract of only a few pages, but of irresistible power. It might well be translated into every language of Christendom as a warning to all nations of the temporal penalties that attend upon the cherishing of the Romish superstitions. There is no wonder that the example and arguments of Laveleye should have drawn with him out of Romanism many like-minded. Such an influence reaches down as well as up; and whole villages in Belgium have been moved by it, directly or indirectly, to renounce Catholicism, and transfer themselves and their families, with the village church and school buildings, to the Protestant communion.

But the best known of the Belgians who have gone with the Protestant movement, is the highest man in the kingdom, next to the king himself. It is no less than the Prime Minister, M. Frère-Orban, whose resolute but wise and temperate resistance of the Roman power in its encroachments on Belgian independence has been the admiration of the world. Belgium will sometime acknowledge that this sturdy and successful fight in her defence was due to her having at the head of her government a convert to Protestantism.

In like manner the eminent man who in the terrible crisis after Sedan bore on his shoulders the painful responsibility of the French foreign affairs, Jules Favre,

added, in his last days, to his many civic and literary honors, the honor of openly confessing his convictions of the truth in Jesus Christ, as set forth in the worship of the Protestant church. At his own command, given in his last sickness, the religious services at his funeral were conducted by the pastor of the Protestant church at Versailles, where he had been wont to worship. And when, with words of "reasonable, religious and holy hope," the body of the departed statesman was carried forth to burial from the plain meeting-house under the shadow of the great palace, the splendid assembly of the wise, learned, and brilliant, in the new Republic, confessed how far worthier was such a ceremonial of such an occasion, than the candles, the tapestries, the incense, and the chanting files of shaven priests, to which they had been accustomed.

"How decent and how wise,
How glorious to behold,
Beyond the pomp that charms the eyes,
Or rites adorned with gold."

The names that have thus been cited are from the number of the adhesions to the new movement that took place within a few months of its beginning. If we were to add the names of more recent converts in high positions, the list would grow too long. But the chief progress of the work is not among "the wise, mighty, and noble," but among the peasantry of the fields, and the artisans of the great towns.

CHAPTER IV.

THE "ŒUVRE DES CONFÉRENCES." THE MARKS OF A DIVINE WORK. THE DAWN OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. PROTESTANTISM IN THE GOVERNMENT. PROTESTANT WORSHIP IN THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES. A WEEK'S WORK OF THE "CONFÉRENCES." A LETTER TO REPUBLICAN PEASANTS. A TWO HUNDRED YEARS' RETROSPECT.

GIBBON, greatest of modern historians, climbed, like Balaam, to a height from which he could behold the whole history of the church, and essayed to curse the people of God; but lo! he blessed them all together. That great chapter in which he seeks to explain, by visible and proximate causes, the successful progress of the gospel and the church until they had pervaded the Roman Empire, will stand to all time as a chapter of "the Evidences of Christianity," showing how the work of God's fatherly providence conspires with the work of his Son and the work of his Holy Spirit. It was only the madness of the undevout historian that could hide from him—what is so plain to his readers—the hand of God in history, making its lines of influence to converge upon that point of time when "He bringeth his Only-begotten into the world."

It is a briefer and less momentous, but still a parallel chapter of history, which will recount how, while men's minds, unknown to each other, were ripening these thoughts, in France and Belgium there were preparing, in the course of political changes, the facilities for diffusing them throughout French-speaking Europe, and the soil in which they might freely fructify.

How great is the change that has come over the face of France since 1873, cannot be conceived by an American without an effort. It is hardly a hundred years since Protestants in France were tortured and murdered in public for their religion. The extreme forms of religious persecution were brought to an end by the furious invective, the acrid and corrosive sarcasm of Voltaire. And in the next generation "God's slaughtered saints" were terribly avenged when the atheism that had been gendered by corrupt religion turned fiercely upon its own parent, and made it the victim instead of the persecutor. Down to these last few years France has known changes in the direction of persecution, and mitigations in the bitterness of it, but has never known religious liberty. From the accession of Napoleon I. to the descent from power of President MacMahon, France has had no government whose policy was not that of concession to the Roman clergy, that it might rule through their influence.

A vivid picture of what France was in this respect, as lately as under the MacMahon presidency, is given

in the Report of the Secretary of one of the Protestant Evangelization Societies of France, presented April 6, 1880. Said M. Lorriaux :

"While there is a growing movement of tolerance and sympathy on the part of the press and of public opinion, there is a no less important progress in our legislation.

"I recall to myself how, so late as the 7th of June, 1873, I was expelled by the mayor and the gendarmes from a hall where I was peaceably presiding at a religious service. I glance through the Society's annals, and find a meeting-house closed for twenty years without even being dedicated. I find a pastor dragged to prison with part of his congregation. I find hindrances, suspicions, prosecutions, persecutions. Ah, what thanks we owe to those who within these last few years have been struggling for religious liberty! At last they have introduced into our legislation the emancipating provision that PUBLIC MEETINGS MAY BE HELD WITHOUT PERMISSION PREVIOUSLY OBTAINED. This law, which has passed the House, and will surely pass the Senate, will be accompanied, we cannot doubt, by two great measures that shall crown the structure of our religious liberties. First, the burying-grounds will become public property; henceforth, no more burying of Protestants in shameful places, no more leaving of their bodies (as we have known it to be done) for twenty days unburied, while waiting for justice from the authorities. Secondly, a general law concerning associations will permit the establishment of regular worship wherever the need of it is felt.

"A new era is dawning upon us. Now for the first time we have in our hands this great instrument of evangelization, religious liberty—liberty, let us add, which we claim, not for ourselves alone, but for every one. We reprobate and repudiate the least infringement on the legitimate rights of any citizen whatever."

It is easy and instructive to trace the course of events by which this era of religious liberty has been brought in coincidentally with the general waking up of mind and conscience among the leaders of French thought. It was natural that, under the "Third Empire," the priesthood, in return for imperial favors, should lend itself to the support of imperial tyrannies and corruptions. But it must have been under some infliction of judicial blindness that, after the Republic had come, and "come to stay," the priesthood should boldly reassert the "alliance of the throne and the altar," so identifying its cause with the restoration of abuses and oppressions, the mere fading tradition of which is enough to madden the grandchildren of their victims. It is by its own folly that the priesthood has compelled the whole liberal party to declare open war upon it, and has justified the bold challenge of Gambetta when he declared, "The foe of France is *clericalism*."

A singular fact presented itself to the observer when the government of President MacMahon had gone down on this issue, whether France would tolerate a government of priestcraft. With that sobriety of conduct which has wonderfully distinguished the Third Republic from its two predecessors, they proceeded to install in the offices of administration men whose moderation and capacity for affairs had been well proved in public life. And when, by-and-by, it occurred to

some one to make the inquiry, it appeared that of the nine ministers of the Waddington Cabinet, *five* were Protestants—the remaining four were Catholics or free-thinkers. A marvellous thing, that the little persecuted remnant of the Huguenot church, being only one in twenty of the population, should give more than one-half of its chiefs of state! The Freycinet cabinet showed a like proportion of Protestants; and if this has now been supplanted by a ministry in which no Protestant is found, their leaving power is not less honorable to them than their entering on it; for they are supplanted for lack of zeal in pressing the laws to the disadvantage of their immemorial enemies, who have never spared in executing oppressive laws against them. A nobler testimony to religious liberty was never borne than this which the Protestants of France are bearing to-day. "God's slaughtered saints" begin to be avenged indeed when the persecutor is looking to the children of his victims for defence and help.

A most dramatic illustration of the changed relation of Protestantism to the government was that given on Sunday, November 2, 1879, when, the meetinghouse at Versailles being under repairs, Protestant worship was held, by permission of the authorities, in a hall of the Palace of Louis XIV., at Versailles. The place chosen was under the hall of the Oeil-de-Bœuf, not far from the chamber where, in 1715, the *Grand Monarque* expired. It is the vast room decorated by Cotelle with

paintings of the royal residences. Before a great canvas representing the palace and park of St. Cloud, had been set up a temporary pulpit; and through the crowded congregation passed the President of the Consistory of Paris, and the pastor of Versailles, each bearing a copy of the Holy Scriptures, and with them the officers of the congregation. A young French poet, who was among the worshippers, utters the sentiments which the occasion could not but inspire :

“Not without a glow of honest pride we passed before the colossal bronze statue of Louis, stretching out its hand as if to defend his palace against the intrusion of modern and heretical ideas. And when we heard the Bible and the Huguenot liturgy read in that building in which, just overhead, Madame de Maintenon had induced Louis XIV. to sign the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, well nigh two hundred years ago, we were thrilled with emotion, and blessed God from our inmost heart. At that solemn moment our thoughts seemed to bring back the dead. On the one side, Bossuet, acclaiming, in his mighty voice, the new Theodosius and the new Constantine, under the very roof in which we were singing forth the old 138th Psalm :

“ ‘ Il faut, grand Dieu, que de mon cœur
 La sainte ardeur
 Te glorifie,
 Qu’ à toi, des mains et de la voix
 Devant les rois
 Je psalmodie;’

(“ ‘ Great God, to thee my heart upsprings,
 And joyful sings,
 Thy glory raising;
 Unawed by kings, with hands and voice
 I will rejoice
 In thanks and praising;’)

that court in which superstition and immorality joined hands to hold France in subjection; those courtiers, beribboned and beplumed, among whom the king moved about as a god come down to earth—these on the one side. On the other side, our proscribed forefathers of the 'pretended reformed religion,' forced to quit the ruins of their churches, hunted and tortured by the dragoons, gathering in caves or forest-clearings; those glorious CAMISARDS who harried and foiled the troops of Baille and Villars and Louvois, that had vainly dreamed of exterminating the Reformation. The day of our vindication was come! What would have been the rage of the one, what the joy of the other, could they have foreseen that in two centuries the very palace of Versailles would re-sound with the worship of a Protestant congregation!"

The Spirit of God had put it into the hearts of many Frenchmen, both of the old and of the new Protestants, to speak to the people the free gospel—the gospel of freedom; and (as will soon appear) had awakened among all the people an earnest desire to hear. Now the Providence of God, by the new enactments of religious liberty, flings wide an effectual door—rather, flings down all walls and barriers—before the feet of his messengers. They are not slow in entering upon their work—not the work of preaching to religious worshippers, but that of haranguing the general crowds of Frenchmen, in all towns and villages, concerning that Protestant Christianity of which they have heard nothing except that "it is everywhere spoken against."

A more just impression of the character and grandeur of this "*œuvre des conférences*"—lecturing work—

can hardly be given, than by transcribing from a single number of M. Réveillaud's newspaper, "Le Signal," the news of one week in the spring of 1880.

The first items come from the South—the department of Vaucluse, rich in sentimental memories of Petrarch and his Laura, in histories and monuments of the sojourn of the popes at Avignon, and in sacred traditions of Huguenot confessors and martyrs. [It is a fact to lay to heart for those immensely over-wise people like Mr. Buckle and Dr. Draper, who assure us that Protestantism will not do for southern climates and Latin races, the fact that these semi-tropical regions and this population of Italian strain are the region of all the continent of Europe where Protestant Christianity in its "baldest" form has given the strongest proofs of a tenacious hold on men's hearts and consciences.] At Cavaillon, a considerable town, fifty or sixty families have lately withdrawn from the Roman church, and connected themselves with the Reformed church. They are reported to be constant in attendance at the worship, which is held by permission in the courthouse, and as talking about securing a house of worship of their own, as the court-room has become too small. At Pertuis, another large town on the Durance, the Protestants have just secured a larger place of worship, the dedication of which was attended by a very large concourse, the major part of whom were Catholics; some of these have since become regular

attendants upon the meetings. A pastor at this town went to the neighboring village of Villelaure to minister to the four or five Protestants who live there. They told him that there would be a crowd at the meeting, and he accordingly took for his subject, "Protestantism, its origin and its doctrines." The little room was crowded with upwards of eighty people. He went again on a Sunday, and they had engaged a hall half as large again; but this also was found too small. He is to go again and speak in the ballroom—the largest room in the place. The minister thinks that the movement is one of genuine religious interest.

So much for the South—the old seat of persecution and martyrdom. Now hear from M. Fourneau, who has made a visit along the banks of the Loire, a region hitherto unvisited by Protestant speakers. "Last Tuesday I set out for Blois with high hopes, which have not been disappointed. That evening I demonstrated the superiority of the gospel to all human religions, before an audience of nearly two hundred and fifty persons. The next day they nearly all came again, and others with them, making an audience of nearly three hundred, all that the little meetinghouse would hold. The theme of my second lecture was, 'The regeneration of society cannot be effected by clericalism, nor by free-thinking, but by the gospel, known, received, and practised, first in the family, then in the community. The greater part of the audience were Catholics, but

manifested full sympathy with the speaker. An English friend, who has been living at Tours for several years, had hired for two days the *Circus* of that city, having about fourteen hundred sittings, and announced the lectures by posters. There were eight hundred persons at the first lecture, and over one thousand at the second; the subjects were the same as at Blois. The speaker is to return for a third lecture on the Person of Christ. The population of Tours is one half clerical, the other half infidel; and there was no mingling of words with either of 'these two ways of hindering the soul from seeking God,' and yet the speaker was received with such demonstrations as encourage him to go again with the simple message of salvation. At the end of the second lecture twelve hundred tracts were distributed, and the speaker lamented that he had left behind him one hundred and twenty Testaments he had meant to bring."

Turn to the map of France, and look for the famous old city of Troyes, on the upper Seine. To the southwest of it stretches a hilly region, sprinkled with numerous villages, called "the Forest of Othe." In the sixteenth century this was a Protestant region; but the reformed churches perished under persecutions and massacres and outrages, for which the French language has names untranslatable in English. The pastors were murdered or driven into exile. The meetinghouses were closed and desecrated, or burned to

the ground. No trace of the ancient Huguenot spirit remained discoverable except a marked antipathy to kings and priests. The pastor of one solitary little Protestant church of that region had the thought of passing among these villages and trying to rekindle among the people that faith which had been quenched in the blood of their fathers. And this is his report :

March 14, at Neuville, out of a population of 500, 200 persons were present at the meeting, fifty of them women, notwithstanding the efforts of the priest, who sent out personal invitations to gather the people at his own house. Hardly any one accepted his invitation, and even the parish clerk was on the platform with the Protestant pastor. The hall was lighted gratuitously, and on the platform were the dignitaries of the place—a retired army captain and others. The argument of Pastor Russier, that "clericalism is not Christianity, but only a caricature of it," was received with frequent applause, notwithstanding the request for silence. At the close were distributed 200 of M. Bouchard's tracts, and twenty copies of M. Réveillaud's little pamphlet, "The Religious Question and the Protestant Solution," were sold. The next day, March 15, at Aix-en-Othe, there were 350 present, by actual count. There was the same enthusiastic reception of the pastor, with hearty thanks for his discourse, and invitations to him to come again. On the 16th, at St. Mards, he was taken to see the house which three

centuries ago was a Protestant church, and the site of the ancient burying-ground, near which stands a cross still called "the Preacher's Cross." At the meeting in the evening there was an audience of 456 persons, by actual count, not less than 100 of whom were women. (Observe that the number of *women* present is reckoned a strong sign of success. Ordinarily the women are the last to let go the superstitions of the old church.) When the lecturer, alluding to the ancient scenes of persecution which the place had witnessed, reminded the people that in the neighboring woods a pastor had been assassinated by his own nephew at the instigation ✓ of the Jesuits, and exclaimed, "Almost every one of you has Huguenot blood in his veins!" a visible sensation ran through the assembly. After the meeting the people bought forty copies of M. Réveillaud's pamphlet. Just so on the 17th, at Maraye-en-Othe, there were 255 hearers, 100 of them women; the same attention, applause, exclamations of "Good!" "True!" and the same invitations to the pastor to return, which he means to do, and to send other lecturers to the same field.

It is observed that the Liberal newspapers in the country towns, in general, take favorable notice of this Protestant propaganda, sometimes printing full reports of the discourses. The *Réveil National* of Dreux, at the close of a full report of one of M. Réveillaud's discourses, added these words :

"We need not say that this peroration (proposing to take up anew the work of the Reformation that was broken off in the sixteenth century) was almost drowned in applause. M. Réveillaud has had a great success; every word of his has gone to the heart of his hearers. We must have another opportunity to hear the brave and ringing utterance of a man who is not afraid to put his finger on the wound."

Finally, to the summary of the news of the week is added this item—the appearance of a new tract by M. Paul Bouchard, the earliest leader in this great exodus from the house of bondage in the Roman church. This new tract, like the four that have preceded it from the same pen, is a cheap little vest-pocket affair of sixteen pages, sold for distribution at three dollars a thousand. This one is addressed to *Republican peasants*, for, strange to say, the French peasants have become clearly and firmly Republican. The tract tells the undeniable story of the constant alliance of the Catholic church in France with despotism, and winds up with this practical conclusion:

"Disgusted with religion as you have been—you who are husbands and fathers—by the abuses of that religion in which you have had the misfortune to be born, you see, nevertheless, that we need a religion. Reason tells you so, your heart confirms it. What better course, then, than to quit that Catholic religion, source of all our woes, and go over to the rival church, in which you find liberty, independence, and the satisfaction of all your religious wants?"

“There, no enforced celibacy—consequently no confessional. You have to do with good husbands and fathers, ready to render you every service and encouragement you may seek. Saints and relics they have none; to trust in God, to bow before him alone, to pray to him without intermediary, and tell him our sorrow for our sins, and ask his help, and to guide our lives according to the morality of the gospel—this is Protestant teaching; it is none other than that of the Master himself, as it has come to us through the primitive church. Accept it for your own. Become Protestants. It will be the best service you can render to our government, which knows not how to protect us from the Roman church so long as you persist in adhering to it. Free yourselves from this most odious of tyrannies, and history will declare that, liberated by themselves, the peasantry of France have saved the Republic.”

And then, by way of postscript, the little tract gives directions how to register one's self as Protestant, and recommends applying to the nearest Protestant pastor.

It is not easy to refuse ourselves the pleasure of adding here some of the inspiring reports that come from every part of France to indicate the welcome that meets, and often anticipates, the coming of the evangelist. But perhaps the adding of incidents culled from the whole course of this “lecture work” would weaken the just impression to be derived from the contemplation of the *single week's* news, of which a part has just been given. What hath God wrought! No wonder that the eloquence of Pastor Piaux, at the meeting of the “Central Protestant Evangelization Society,” in

April, 1880, was kindled by the retrospect of two hundred years. Said he,

"My thoughts have been carried back two centuries, almost to a day. It was in June, 1680, that the Jesuit Society, faithful to its plans of perfidy and treason, holding control of the mind of the king, was marching on to supreme power, seeking with a detestable ferocity the ruin of the Protestants. The king gave docile ear to them, and was induced to declare that no one of his Catholic subjects should be permitted, under any pretext, to embrace the Protestant Reformed Religion, under pain of perpetual banishment. It was the prelude of the storm which broke in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Charenton crumbles; and in my own Normandy, in a few years, the great church of Rouen, that numbered 15,000 souls, is brought to naught. From Dieppe one-half the population goes into exile, and in Havre not one Protestant remains. The iniquity is consummated, and from his banishment comes back the despairing cry of the fugitive, 'Why must they tear the Frenchman's heart out of our bosom?' What a conflict was that, and what times were those that followed it! Children torn from their mothers' arms, galley-slaves dying for the faith of Christ, pastors bleeding on the wheel or dangling from the gibbet—such is the history of the Reformation in France.

"In the eighteenth century, any one having dealings with a Protestant is accounted infamous; and when at last the hour of deliverance strikes, the old faith of the Reformation has been so far lost, that not far from this place a pastor baptizes 'into the name of the Supreme Existence.'

"The nineteenth century begins, and Paris has one pastor and one meetinghouse.

"And now behold how it fares with us to-day!

"This is no place to talk of discouragement or despair. I have no love for those prophets of evil who take pleasure in

saying that the Latin races are doomed to irremediable decay. No! this is not to be. Into this generous and genial mass of French society you have only to infuse new principles, and you shall see coming forth again from their ashes those Huguenots of the sixteenth century, of whom Bunsen said, 'They are the most glorious impersonation of manhood to be found in history.'

The history of evangelization in Saint Just and its vicinity may be given as one more illustration, and a very brief one, of the attitude of the French common people towards the gospel. Observe that this is a town of Picardy, on the railroad line from Paris to Calais, in a region that has not been reached for nearly three hundred years by any Protestant influence. Until the visit of M. Réveillaud, very early in 1880, the population had been in utter ignorance of what Protestantism was. Owing to some special occasion of dissatisfaction with the Roman-catholic clergy and their teachings, M. Réveillaud was sent for to give an address. He awakened an eager interest, which his brief visit did not suffice to satisfy; and Dr. de Pressensé was sent for on a like business. But the more they heard, the more they wished to hear. M. Dhombres, one of the most eloquent preachers in Paris, went thither and found an audience of a thousand souls assembled to hear his declaration of a pure and simple gospel. The people responded with a cordial and earnest acceptance of it. The seed thus sown was watered, from time to time,

by other preachers; and at the end of eight months from M. Réveillaud's visit, the harvest was ready to be gathered and a church to be organized. M. Réveillaud and Pastor Lorriaux, Secretary of the *Société Centrale d'Évangélisation*, went on to Saint Just to aid in the organization. Three hundred men (out of a town of two thousand) had gathered, by special invitation, to meet them. These were the leading men of the town, the men of wealth, position, and influence, animated with the earnest and devout desire to lay the foundation of a Protestant community and a gospel church. They needed instruction in all the details of Protestant church organization and worship; but they had the teachableness of children. They were promised a pastor who would "expound unto them the way of God more perfectly." They were ready to give of their substance towards the building of the new church, and on the spot made a subscription amounting to 1,300 francs.

On the way to Saint Just, M. Réveillaud took the opportunity to respond to another invitation of the same sort that had first introduced him to the people of Saint Just. He had been invited to Warloy, a town of three thousand people, near Amiens, to inaugurate a Protestant religious movement. There was no hall in the town that could hold the people who wished to hear, and so a large tent was pitched for the purpose. Two thousand people were estimated to be present.

On the platform behind the speaker were seated the mayors of six of the adjoining villages, together with several members of the Council-general of the Department. It was an impressive demonstration this meeting (such as would not have been tolerated in France for centuries before), as manifesting the deep alienation of the French people from the Roman church, and their eager desire, not to abolish religion, but to seek a better and purer Christianity. The argument of M. Réveillaud was followed with closest attention throughout his two hours' address, and with constant marks of sympathy and assent. Everything prophesied results similar to those at Saint Just; while the leading men from the different communes "besought that the same words might be preached" in their villages "on the next Sabbath."

CHAPTER V.

THE McALL MISSION. A BRIEF SURVEY BY DR.
HORATIUS BONAR.

PROBABLY many of the persons who will read the title-page of this pamphlet will say at once, "The great work in France—that means, of course, the McAll Mission," and will wonder, as they read on, to find themselves mistaken.

✓ The "great work in France" is not a mission. It has not been begun or carried on by human planning or organizing. "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." * No phrase can better describe it than that which was used twenty years ago of America by one of the most illustrious of French Protestants—our loyal friend in an hour of great darkness—"the uprising of a great people"—*un grand peuple qui se relève* ✓ But parallel with it, incidental to it, has gone forward another work, not less divine for being also more human, the McAll Mission.

It is not difficult to explain how the McAll Mission should be known and honored throughout Protestant Christendom, while the greater work, to which it stands related, should have come, as the kingdom of heaven is wont to come, "without observation." It is just be-

cause it *is* a mission. It was begun by one noble and believing man, in an alien land, drawing on the sympathies of his own countrymen for help in money and personal assistance. Naturally he did not fail of his duty in making known his work to those whose aid he sought. Furthermore, the place where his work was done was the very focus of the whole world's travel—Paris—and soon became the object of the personal attention of a multitude of Christian travellers, especially from Great Britain and America, many of whom found a delight beyond anything else the “Grand Tour” could offer them, in the humble ministries to which they were invited by the McAll Mission. The eyes of its friends have traced its progress and expansion till 10 or 12 of the great cities of France are feeling its influence. But no one has been able to trace the course of that influence which, in a thousand villages and hamlets in every part of France, has wakened a craving desire to know what is the religion of Christ's own gospel.

It is this reason, and this reason only—that the McAll Mission is already made known in books accessible to every reader—that dissuades us from dwelling proportionately on the history of this most noble and most Christian charity. The work of Dr. Horatius Bonar, entitled, “The White Fields of France,” has been republished in America in two editions, one of them at the price of ten cents. And one who reads

this story will hardly need additional details, though he will be sure to wish for them.

All that need here be said may easily be condensed from a briefer statement just prepared by the same pen, and addressed to English Christians.

“The McAll Mission is carrying the Book of God and the Gospel of Christ to all parts of Paris and France. Everywhere there is welcome entrance, and a desire to hear the new religion called ‘the Gospel’ that has been brought over from England. Men, women, and children, flock in crowds to listen. It is no labor to gather an audience. Hire a hall, advertise a meeting, and the people come. They come from the worst and wildest dens of Parisian faubourgs; they come, not to smile or to scoff or to wonder, but to receive into their hearts the divine message of life. They come, week after week, with eyes and ears all open, to drink in the unaccustomed sounds and unheard-of truths, from the Scripture read, from the hymn sung, from the words of the messenger, spoken in those tones of love to which they have been strangers. They come to join in prayers, uttered, not in Latin, but in their own dear French. They come to sing the joyful hymn, whose words and music go to their inmost souls. They come to hear the gospel or the epistle or the psalm, or the parables of the Master, or the discourses of the servants; and go away thinking they had never in their lives heard anything so sweet and beautiful, so suitable to their wants, and so unlike anything that they had ever been taught by bishop or curé. It is all so simple, so intelligible, yet so grand and new. ‘God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son!’ Eternal life the free gift of God—never had the cathedral or the parish church echoed to such a sound! No wonder that they come.

“The beginning was small. One poor but earnest request

made to Mr. McAll by an ouvrier in a Belleville café—"Oh, teach us your religion"—was the seed from which a great tree has sprung. That seed fell into the ground in August, 1871. That tree has spread its branches over Paris, and is spreading them over France. It has only had eight years to grow, and already it numbers in all thirty-seven of these goodly boughs. If the Christians of England would awake and measure the magnitude of the enterprise, pouring in of their abundance into the empty coffers of the Mission, the work might, without difficulty, widen itself out on every side. The 'open door which no man can shut' is that which we now see in France; a 'great door and effectual,' such as has never been seen in that land before. 'I have much people in that city' is the word of cheer which we get in connection with that open door.

"It was to the cry of the workingman of Belleville that Mr. McAll responded when he left his English home, broke his pastoral tie, came over to Paris, and set up his first station in the Rue Julien Lacroix, in January, 1872. Without shrinking, yet not without many misgivings, did he and Mrs. McAll stand at the door of that hall on the first evening—strangers in a strange land—to invite the wild Communists to enter and hear some English friends speak to them of the love of Christ. They had boldly gone into the very heart of Parisian Communism, with nothing in their hands but the Bible, in a district of which the Commissary of Police has said, 'The worst spot in St. Giles', London, would be more easily worked.'

"It was to like cries from other parts of the city that he responded year after year; till now there are twenty-four of these gospel-stations, like torches shedding their glad light into the dens of crime and ignorance; supplanting the wine-shop, outrivalling the political club, quieting Communism, substituting the Bible for Voltaire, teaching the holy cantique instead of the lewd or revolutionary song, pointing to the

true cross, attracting ten thousand weekly hearers to the good news of God's free love, and sending out into the obscurest homes the message of the heavenly reconciliation.

"There are now, as we have noticed, twenty-four of these mission-stations. They girdle Paris like its own Ceinture Railway; each at a suitable distance from the other, and each planted in the midst of destitution and wickedness and ignorance. In connection with these there are schools, classes, mothers' meetings, prayer-meetings; there are also evangelists, visitors, tract distributors, and helpers of various kinds, male and female, all under the superintendence of Mr. McAll, whose wisdom and caution have been as remarkable as his earnest zeal. Endowed with no common prudence and meekness, he has steered his way through many difficulties, preserved the Mission from collision with municipal law, and maintained his quiet equanimity under provocations and annoyances.

"The Mission is a thoroughly EVANGELICAL one. It is the gospel of Christ which pervades the hymns, the addresses, and the whole teaching. At the opening of the last station, in June of this year, Mr. McAll struck the keynote in the words, 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified;' and all the speakers that followed took it up, so that at the close of the meeting the remark was made by an English friend, 'I never heard more or fuller gospel truth than I have done to-night.'

"The Mission is a very LABORIOUS one. These twenty-four stations require weekly arrangements beforehand for speakers and helpers, and this is a most responsible, delicate, and difficult business. It devolves chiefly on Mr. McAll. Then the distances to be traversed by the workers, male and female, the necessarily late hours, the unceasing round of labor, the visiting, the classes, the distribution of tracts, involve great fatigue, both mental and bodily. Saturday is the only free day, and even it is not always free.

"The Mission is a very COMPLETE one. It embraces every

mode and department of missionary work that we have at home, except the open-air preaching, which law prohibits. Tracts, books, gospels, Bibles, Testaments, magazines, illustrated religious journals, placards with texts, hymn-books, are here; every appliance is made use of. Paris has been flooded with these messengers; and to do this has been no small toil to the overburdened laborers.

“The Mission is a very SIMPLE one. No grand hall has been built; no costly furniture has been purchased. Old wine-shops have been cleaned, whitewashed, adorned with texts, and well lighted; these are the halls. No attempt has been made at ornament or show. The rush-bottomed chairs and the rough boards of the platform and pulpit are witnesses of the simplicity of idea which runs through the whole, and suit, better than all grandeur, the nature of the Mission and the designs of the workers. There is nothing offensive or coarse or untidy; yet all is plain. Here ritualism would be shocked; early Christianity would find itself at home. The archbishop of Paris would not endorse such homeliness; Paul would enter that unadorned hall, and step up upon that unpolished platform with congenial alacrity.

“The Mission is a very ECONOMICAL one. There is no mission in existence so cheaply maintained. Mr. McAll manages everything himself, and he is a capital economist. The rents of the different halls are the most serious item of expense; and this cannot be lessened. But no needless cost is incurred, and every farthing of the subscribers' money is carefully laid out. Mr. McAll knows architecture as well as theology; and he looks well to the condition of his halls, avoiding unnecessary, yet not sparing necessary outlay.

“The Mission is a very ACCURATE AND HONEST one. Every farthing given is accounted for, not in the lump, but in detail. The yearly reports show the carefulness with which each item is set down, both in receiving and in paying away the Mission money. Mr. McAll's accounts are models of mi-

nuteness and accuracy, and hence the confidence which subscribers have in the pecuniary part of the Mission, and their assurance that their money is fully and honestly accounted for.

“It is a very COMPREHENSIVE Mission. Its agents and agencies embrace all evangelical Christians of the different churches in France and Great Britain and America. For it is not any one church that is at work, but all the churches that recognize the one foundation and the one Head, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Hence the question of forming a church for the converts has never been raised. They fall in to the neighboring Protestant churches and are taken up by the different pastors.

“Though the Mission in every part is most economically conducted, yet the expenses are necessarily great; and were it not for the large amount of disinterested work, of unpaid and half-paid help, the noble enterprise could not be maintained. The rents are high, both of the halls and private dwellings. There are many expenses connected with the maintaining of these meetings. The distances to be travelled are not small, and the cost of conveyance, whether by railway, tram, boat, omnibus, or cab, is very considerable. Books, tracts, Bibles, leaflets, journals, gospels, are sent out weekly in thousands; and though many of these are generously furnished to the mission-bureau by individuals or societies, such as the Religious Tract Society of London, still for a considerable proportion of them the Mission has to pay. The tear and wear of machinery, as we may call it, in the various halls is not small, and the demands on this account are numerous and frequent.

“The cry comes from all parts of France, and this Mission would most gladly respond to it had it the means and the men. But it has not. Its resources are limited. With twenty-four stations in Paris, eight thousand of a weekly adult audience, and three thousand children, its hands are

full. The French pastors have thrown themselves nobly into the work ; a goodly number of volunteer laborers, male and female, French and English, give most efficient aid. But all this is too little. With thirteen other stations more recently opened elsewhere, in Lyons, Bordeaux, Arcachon, Boulogne-sur-mer, Rochefort, and La Rochelle, the labor and the cost are multiplying ; and though the year 1879 has not been unfavorable as to the funds, still much help is needed, especially for the establishment of branches at Lille and St. Etienne. For this help we now appeal.

“HORATIUS BONAR.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEPUTATION TO AMERICA. FRANCE THE GREAT MISSION-FIELD OF THE WORLD TO-DAY. THE THREE SOCIETIES. M. RÉVEILLAUD'S FAREWELL. THE COMMISSION.

THE most fruitful mission-field in all the world to-day is France.

It is an exacting field, wherein daily increasing success involves the need of increasing expenditure, and every new demand satisfies the giver that his past gifts have accomplished their object.

It is a field which is a manifest seed-plot for future harvests in other lands, so that every sheaf brought in from it is an inspiring prophecy and promise.

It is a field full of inspiring associations, such as kindle the passion of a Christian chivalry; it is rich with the blood of martyrs, and adorned with the monuments of high heroism.

It is a field frequented yearly by the visits of pastors and other influential Christians, each one of whom becomes a representative and advocate of the work on his return.

It is a field whose own converts, accomplished in every native gift and refinement of culture, are ready

at once for the propagation of the work in the field, or its advocacy at the base of supplies.

It is a field wherein all the achievements of the gospel in the mission are felt to be a triumphant assault upon the strongholds of a form of aggressive error that threatens us in our own homes; so that the evangelization of France is the defence of America.

And yet, in this noblest mission-field of all the world no American missionary society, whether general or denominational, has any part or lot.

It is under the impulse of a simple craving to have some hand in what seemed to them God's greatest work in our generation, that several American gentlemen, without mutual concert, have given personal assurances to the leaders of this work that if the greatness of it can be set before the American churches by fit representatives of it, it is not possible that such representatives shall fail of a generous welcome.

Moved by such assurances, the three principal societies of évangelization in France, with fraternal accord, have agreed in the choice of their common representatives to the people of America.

These societies are:

1. The "Société Centrale Protestante d'Évangélisation," the organ of the evangelical part of the Protestant church in France as by law established.

2. The "Société Évangélique," the organ of the Free, or unestablished church.

3. The "Mission Intérieure," or Home Mission Society, whose chief duty is to awaken Protestants, and to organize meetings among the Catholic population.

All these societies act, in the matter of deputation, as in other matters, with Christian comity and harmony.

The delegates whom they send to us are,

Monsieur EUGENE REVEILLAUD ;

The Reverend G. THEOPHILUS DODDS.

The former is already introduced to the reader of this pamphlet by the story of his life and work. His associate is known to the friends of the McAll Mission as the chief assistant of Mr. McAll. There can be no impropriety in mentioning a fact which will commend him to the warm personal interest of all American Christians, that he is the son-in-law of Horatius Bonar.

The farewell of M. Réveillaud to the readers of *Le Signal*, on his departure for America, may be transcribed here as his salutation to us.

"At this moment when our country is taking counsel to effect its final deliverance from the clutch of clericalism, when sympathy for Protestantism is becoming so general, when so many cities and villages are opening to the gospel, and so many Protestant communities are ready to be founded or extended, if only we could respond to all the calls that come to us—in this most propitious seed-time, when our resources are so inadequate to such great needs—it has seemed necessary to the three great societies which divide among them the field of evangelistic labor in France—the 'Société Cen-

trale,' the 'Société Évangélique,' and the 'Mission Intérieure,' to seek aid of our brethren across the Atlantic. We go, Mr. Dodds and myself, and others too, if need be, to set before the citizens of the great American Republic, before the evangelical Christians of every denomination in that vast continent, the nature and extent of the wants that are felt, that they may judge to what extent it is within their power or their duty to help us. The facts shall speak for us, more eloquent than any words of ours. We shall depict the crowds that flock together to these meetings at which the eternal Saviour is set forth as the one Redeemer that can liberate and regenerate society threatened with decadence, decomposition, and ruin. We shall tell them of the success of Mr. McAll's meetings wherever they have been founded, with what sympathy our evangelists are received in every quarter, and from how many men, brought up in the Catholic church, we hear the words, 'We have done with Romish priests; send us pastors.'

"These calls, to which, for lack of means, we are too often compelled to answer, 'By-and-by,' may, through the aid of our American brethren, be satisfied at once. If God shall bless our efforts as we hope, the three societies will, on our return, through the generosity of American Christians, be in a position to establish and maintain many new stations of evangelization that shall be outposts to secure old conquests and to prepare new ones.

"On occasion of the centennial celebration of the independence of the United States, the people of France had the idea, which a Franco-American committee is soon to realize, of a colossal statue, 'Liberty enlightening the world,' to stand aloft in the harbor of New York, and symbolize the hundred years of union between the sister nations. May we not expect, at least may we not hope, that our great-grandchildren, when the hundred years come around again, may celebrate another centennial by setting up in the public square of Paris

or some other of our great cities, the statue of France enfranchised from the yoke of Roman intolerance and superstition? And on its pedestal, built by some new Franco-American committee, shall be a bas-relief representing America and England, hand in hand, giving to France the kiss of peace, and teaching her to read that gospel from which they have learned the great lessons of their own liberty."

The Central Commission, organized at New York to welcome and aid the Deputation, and having its office at the rooms of the American and Foreign Christian Union, 45 Bible House, New York, is thus constituted:

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