

priests set before themselves, and almost any means by which this ascendancy can be maintained are used. The history of France, for long, has been the attempt on the part of the Church of Rome to control the political destinies of that country, and she has not shrunk from using intrigue or from winking at sins on the part of those in high places, in order to gain and wield increased influence in the councils of the Empire. When any important election is on hand, even now, at that point the well known devices in which the Church of Rome is such an adept, are freely and zealously employed. The priests care naught for the people and the latter have no love for the former. The soul of the people is sick and weary of the husks which are offered them for bread. There is no word of comfort to cheer them, no sympathy to solace their hearts, no interest manifested in their salvation. How freely and lovingly do our ministers visit the sick, and seek to brighten their hopes and increase their joys, day after day and week after week, breaking unto them the true Bread which God has given to impart life to starving souls. But there, every service of the priests, every word of help and consolation, though of the most formal kind, every visit has to be paid for. The priest cries "Give! Give!" and the famished soul dares not refuse. He gives, but alas! he gets nothing but husks in return. A peasant in the South of France on being asked why he did not better cultivate his little plot of ground answered: "What's the use of it? the more I get the more I am compelled to pay to the priest!" The spiritual desolation of France is a fact of which our Christian people have none but the faintest conception. It is awful. It is a spiritual Sahara, and in no city or country have I ever felt so sad, or seen so much to mourn over, as in the gay city of Paris, *la belle France*. I feel inclined to endorse, as representing the truth, the verdict of more than one Christian Evangelist there, where they call the worship of the Church of Rome, a *gilded Paganism*. If an old Greek, who has lain two thousand years in his grave, were to arise and find himself suddenly within the well-known church of the Madeleine of Paris he would have little, if any, difficulty in supposing himself in a temple of some one of his numerous gods.

In general, I may remark, with regard to the French people, barring Protestants and a few others, that their moral condition is deplorable.

IGNORANCE OF DIVINE THINGS. They have little or no true knowledge of the nature and character of God. They employ the plural pronoun "you" in prayer to God, when they do pray Him, which is not of

ten. God, so to speak, is hidden behind a cloud of the saints to whom they pray. If they desire any blessing from Heaven, e. g. the healing of a sick child, it is to the saints that they apply, and any one who has visited the "Pantheon" Church in Paris, has seen wreaths hung up by one of the altars bearing a title similar to the following: "Asked of St. Genevieve, 6th August, 1874, granted 10th December, 1874." As to Christ, they have no true idea of his atoning work, or its relation to their souls. If one asks them how they expect to be saved, the substance of their answer will be, that they confess their sins to the priest and go to church, and as one poor labourer once added, in reply to my question: "I am not an infidel!" They are ignorant of the nature of sin. They seem not to understand the guilt of sin. With them sin is a fault, a slight offence, which when confessed to the priest is no more to be thought of. What is the result? Conscience is so enfeebled as to be almost dead. Superstition and ignorance of divine things, especially of the nature of sin, have made them moral imbeciles. Speak to them of most flagrant offences against the divine law, they do not realize any guilt, they will shrug their shoulders and walk away. This awful sleep of the conscience has made almost a heathen city of Paris. Lot dwell in Sodom; so, many righteous people dwell in Paris, but it is full of awful wickedness notwithstanding. Immorality and crime abound. In one house in Paris were to be found twenty families, of which the parents of but *four* were married. There is little knowledge of the revealed Word of God, and the Sabbath is observed by but few. Indeed, the visitor to Paris could scarcely believe it was the Sabbath. Labourers work as usual, buying and selling are everywhere going on, all the means of conveyance are filled, the race-courses are frequented by thousands, and elections are held, all on the Sabbath day. I could enlarge, but I refrain. Such is the awful condition of the vast majority of the French people to-day. It is a darkness, which, like the darkness of Egypt, is "felt," and deeply felt and mourned by the Christian workers in France. It almost crushes the spirit of the Evangelist. It haunts him by night and by day. It is the burden of his prayers and tears that France may be won back to the gospel. Like good old Knox, whose bold spirit cried before the throne, "Give me Scotland or I die!" Christians in France are travelling in spirit for the regeneration of that nation.

In my next communication I shall attempt an outline of what is being done to evangelize France.

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