

ple. Reaction was inevitable, and the laws passed in a previous decade are in danger of becoming a dead letter. The priests, who see the scepter passing out of their hands, are making desperate efforts to retain their influence and recover lost ground. But the danger is now that in this reaction the people will swing away from all religious moorings, and plunge like France in 1789 into an atheistic revolution.

As we have said, papacy in its moral form dominates Mexico and Central and South America. The religion has been nominally Roman Catholic, with a mixture of Toltec and Aztec superstitions and idolatrous relics, and utter ignorance of the Scriptures, together with most shocking immorality. Many of the people not only have no copy of the Bible but do not know how it differs from a prayer-book! The better features of Catholicism, such as may be found among the more intelligent adherents of the Romish Church in France and Austria, are not found among Mexicans, while all the worst features—abject ignorance, servile bondage to superstition, empty and meaningless forms, the despotic confessional, the tyrannical and licentious priesthood, corrupt monastic institutions, an enriched clergy and an impoverished people—these are prominent characteristics of the Mexican Church. The people are enough awake to be conscious of their religious enslavement, and sufficiently aroused to seek deliverance; but the risk is that in breaking their present bonds they will run riot in free thinking and scorn all religious obligations, becoming churchless, creedless, Christless.

Now is the time to enter Mexico with the gospel. But we are doing almost nothing. In 1887, Rev. John W. Butler reported 10 Protestant denominations in the field, with 16 missions, 105 ordained ministers, 100 unordained, 180 other workers, 85

church edifices and 265 hired halls, 350 congregations, 18,000 church members, and about twice that number of adherents, 180 Sunday-schools with 6,000 scholars, 110 day schools with 4,500 scholars, 3 theological seminaries with 50 students, and 8 evangelical presses and 8 evangelical papers. But what is a total force of less than 400 Christian workers in a population of ten and a half millions? Every worker must care on the average for 26,250 souls! And yet Bishop Hurst of the M. E. Church, after two months spent in Mexico, wrote from El Paso in March, 1887:

"As a proof of the readiness of the Indians of Mexico for Protestantism, I may say that the local authorities have given us temporary use of the Roman Catholic church, where our missionary preaches every Sunday, and in another town the authorities are arranging to give us outright another Catholic church. The bolts are all broken and the doors wide open for Protestant work among all the 32 races of Mexican Indians. President Diaz informed us in person that if any of our missionaries were threatened, we should immediately telegraph him, and troops would be furnished for their safety."

TEXTS AND THEMES.

The Gospel Preached to the Poor.—Luke vii: 22.—The last great sign of Messiahship—the grandest moral miracle. For this Christ was specially anointed, iv: 18.

This is not a class distinction, even though in favor of the poor. The poor represent here the most numerous, needy, and neglected; hence, the best representatives of humanity at large.

Society drifts toward patronage of rich, wise, great. Christ the only teacher who treated the *soul of man* as the only great thing in man.

I. The church is truly Christian only so far as she follows in His footsteps.

The great question of our day is the evangelization of the masses of the people. One-half of the community are non-church goers. Their material and moral condition only makes our duty more imperative. We must go out into alleys as well as avenues, *hew*, as well as highways, and compel them to come in. It pays, every way, to preach the gospel to the poor.

The largest harvests are gathered from such preaching. When brought into effective contact with the gospel the poor prove the more susceptible to it.

II. Conditions of effective preaching to the poor.