

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

AN EX-PRIEST IN A ROMISH CHURCH.

At the public meeting of the Paris Committee of the *Mission Interieure*, M. Fournau spoke as follows:

"My friend, M. Bertrand, has mentioned that I was formerly a priest. I am not ashamed of it; and yet all the clerical journals in France, thinking to insult me, have, in fifty-five departments, thrown it in my teeth, as if I were ignorant of the fact. Well, this is what happened to me lately in a Catholic church.

"Last Wednesday I entered the church of Paroy with the former Mayor of the Commune and my friend, M. Bouillat, who preaches to the people in the district of Clamecy. On entering this village church, the ex-Mayor said to me, 'You know this is where you are to lecture this evening.' I looked astonished; and M. Bouillat added, 'Yes, here—nowhere else.' I went round examining. It is a little church, about the size of the apse of the Oratoire; at the farther end I saw the cross for processions, St. Joachim, St. Anne, and bouquets of artificial flowers, still fresh. I said, 'This is a church still in use.' 'Certainly it is; but as the curé did not suit us, we have informed him that we intend giving it to the Protestant pastor.' [Laughter.] To that I answered, 'There has been no trouble in consequence?' 'You shall see,' said he; 'when the curé came to mass, there was not a person; now there is an audience of twenty or thirty.'

"That evening there were at least a hundred present. I noticed that, very curiously, they still kept to their old habits—the women sitting on the right, the men on the left of the altar. There were, however, more women than men. Many of them had never heard the Gospel preached. But, most singular fact of all! St. Joachim and St. Anne, like the idols in the 115th Psalm, had eyes and ears, but they saw and heard nothing of what passed that evening in the church. Suddenly, when I was about a quarter through with my lecture, we were disturbed by the sound of a violin playing a gay tune. The door opened, and a wedding-party entered—[laughter]—bride, bridegroom, bride's father and mother, etc., in all fifteen persons.

"I had begun by pointing out the nature of sin, and, taking the parable of the Prodigal Son, had shown how Jesus taught a free salvation. From this I drew the deduction that a Christian, who knows what it is to be saved through grace, and that God has drawn him out of spiritual destitution, should know how to wear his new garment without staining it—a duty ignored by too many Protestants. 'Yes, brethren,' I said, 'we must not soil the new robe Christ gives us; we no longer belong to ourselves, but to God, through Jesus Christ.'

"My audience, whom all this astonished—for to them it was all new—listened most attentively.

"I then spoke of marriage, for the wedding-party had just come in; preached a marriage sermon, in fact, to these good people, who appeared very serious. When I reminded the *nouveaux mariés* of the vows they had taken the day before, pointed out the meaning of the *yes* they had pronounced, referred to the duties incumbent on them, I saw more than one tear in the eyes of the elder ones. As for the younger people they were quite touched. I ended by telling the story of a poor lost girl, who had returned to her parents, to find in their home a refuge in which she might begin a better life, and be purified by association with the old father and mother, who had mercifully received her. I applied this illustration to any one of us who returns to God the Father, and said, in conclusion: 'My friends, as we are in church, we will pray as usual here;' and I repeated the Lord's Prayer, all the audience standing and attentive.

"As they went out, the violin was silent. The father of the bride said to his son-in-law, 'Well, my children, here is a man who has taken nothing from us, and he has preached you a better and longer sermon than the priest who made you pay nearly three pounds for his Latin this morning.' Thus I gave a nuptial blessing *à la Protestante* in a Catholic church.

"You will perhaps say that we went beyond our right. Your forefathers, the old Huguenots, had no scruple in occupying Catholic pulpits; and if certain laws disappear (as I hope), I believe that one day I shall boldly mount the pulpit to preach Jesus in those

churches which now only re-echo words not understood or teachings of which our Lord has said—'Ye make the law of none effect through your traditions.'

INDIA.

[We copy the following lines by Dr. Murray Mitchell, who is at present in Southern India, from the July number of the *Free Church Magazine*.—ED. C. P.]

I.

Of Eastern lands the fairest,
O Indian land, art thou;
With richest gifts and rarest
Kind Heaven doth thee endow.

Thy sun, rejoicing, beameth
With cloudless glory bright;
Each mighty river streameth
To spread abroad delight.

Most sweet thy bud and blossom,
And thy full harvest store
Is poured into thy bosom
Till thou canst ask no more.

And high, 'mid lands renowned,
O Indian land, wert thou;
With ancient honour crowned
Was thine all-queeny brow.

II.

And yet my heart is breaking,
O Indian land, for thee;
That thou, thy God forsaking,
Reft of true life shouldst be.

Yea, on thy soul is sorrow,
And darkness of the tomb;
O when will dawn a morrow
To chase the night of gloom?

Thy sons have toiled for ages
In mines of deepest thought;
Yet bootless all thy sages
And mightiest men have taught.

Immersed in gross delusion,
When wisest most they seem,
Their learning is confusion,
Their knowledge is a dream.

III.

But now Heaven's light is falling,
O Indian land, on thee;
And love's own voice is calling
To life and liberty.

From ages of transgression
Haste to the Father's feet!
So, penitent confession
Shall full forgiveness meet.

Then, of all realms the fairest,
Rise, India! from the dust,
Strong in the grace thou sharest,
Strong in thy perfect trust!

In garments of salvation
And holy beauties clad,
Praise, O thou new-born nation,
The Christ that makes thee glad!

THE WORLD'S GREAT FORCE.

Here is Christianity. Whence came it? What is it? It is a force in the world, a prodigious force. It has revolutionized society. It has lifted man out of himself. It has changed the face of the world. There it lies imbedded in more than eighteen centuries of human history; and history of no mean sort—the best record of the race. Buddhism and Brahminism are older, and are linked with more peoples. Mohammedanism, not so old, has to do with a greater multitude. The adherents of these systems have outnumbered the adherents of Christianity. Numerically they are at the lead. But if you weigh men, or weigh nations, there are no numbers of either that can be put in the scale against Christendom without kicking the beam. Christianity has held her own, and made her conquests amidst battles of thought, with discussion at white heat. She herself has been a "beam of light shot into chaos," irradiating the darkness and restoring order. She has not thrived amid moral abominations by wearing pitch upon her garments; but her breath has been as a broken alabaster box of ointment. Because of her coming, men have been ennobled and beautified and given new moods of joy. Her truth has held the best mind of humanity—held it and possessed it, and gotten the reluctant homage of it, against all and most persistent effort of learning and science to make that truth a lie. Christianity has withstood all attacks from all foes and come off victor. There never has been an institution so fiercely and bitterly and resolutely opposed. A

giant and defiant heathenism, a corrupt and bigoted priesthood, a persecuting, world-conquering state, a proud and reasoning philosophy, a subtle and ingenious scepticism, a sneering and malignant infidelity, a plausible and self-recovering humanitarianism, impelled by the hate and the scorn and the pride and the obstinacy of men's natural hearts—these all in succession, and often conjointly, have set themselves to the task of rooting Christianity out of the world's life. "The days of this hated religion are numbered," they have shouted, as some fresh foe has entered the arena to make it bite the dust. And yet to-day millions rest on it their dearest hopes; it is flinging its forces, with an enthusiasm of energy beyond all precedent, into the very centres of heathenism; it is banding the world with lines of light; the sun never sets without new records of its conquests; "our best of uttered prayers are in its storied speech;" our grandest thoughts of God are born of its quickening touch; and the best that men know of immortality was brought them in the revelation-hour of this new gospel. . . . The prodigious force of Christianity comes from the personality of Him who rode into Jerusalem upon an ass's colt. This Christ, whoever He is, has not only originated a system, but He has put Himself in it, as its very life, and soul and power. . . . What Christianity has done, Christ has done; what Christianity professes to do, Christ professes to do. If Christianity reveals a way, Christ is the way. If Christianity teaches truth, Christ is the truth. If Christianity brings life, Christ is the life.—*Christianity's Challenge*, by Rev. Herrick Johnson, D.D.

SPEAK A CHEERING WORD.

Did you ever go out in the morning with a heart so depressed and saddened that a pall seemed spread all over the world? But on meeting some friend who spoke cheerily for a minute or two, if only upon indifferent matters, you have found yourself wonderfully lightened. Every child dropping into your house on an errand has brought in a ray of sunshine, which did not depart when he went his way again. It is a blessed thing to speak a cheerful word when you can. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness" the whole world over, and good words to such hearts are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Even strangers we meet casually by the way, in the traveller's waiting-room, are unconsciously influenced by the tone we use. It is the one with pleasant words on his lips to whom strangers in strange lands apply for advice and direction in their perplexities. Take it as a compliment if some wayfarer comes to you to direct him which street or which train to take; your manner has struck him as belonging to one he can trust. It is hard sometimes to speak a pleasant word when the shadows rest on our hearts, but nothing will tend more to lighten our own spirits than doing good to another. When you have no opportunity to speak a cheering word, you can often send a beam of sunshine into the heart of some sorrowing absent friend by sitting down and writing a good, warm-hearted letter.

THE RESTLESS FAMILY.

It is a hard lesson for some good brethren to learn, but it is a very needful one, that where God puts us we ought to stay, and what God assigns us we ought to do. His place is always the right place. I well remember that my own earliest field of labour was a most difficult and discouraging one, and I foolishly determined to quit it at the first opportunity. My forbearing Master kept me there, and presently a most abundant revival rain descended upon the little field, and made it sweet and blooming as a garden of roses. I narrowly missed losing one of the richest mercies and most profitable lessons of my whole life. Oh, how often our strength lies in *sitting still*! One object in recording the story of Jonah must have been to teach us never to run away from the post of duty. That ticket to Tarshish cost the poor prophet the loss of his money, the loss of his time, the loss of his credit, and but for God's interposition would have cost the loss of his life. There is no field of spiritual labour that does not contain its full share of stones and stumps and stubborn soil; it is not a change of place that is needed so much as a *change of heart* toward the difficult work to be done.

There is still another sort of restlessness that every child of God is tempted with, and that is the desire to shirk painful loads and to run away from the rod of discipline. Far wiser and better would it be for us to