

## THE REFORMED CHURCH AND MISSIONS IN FRANCE.

[BY A CORRESPONDENT.]

Many considerations conspire to lead us to take a peculiar interest in the state of true religion in France. Many confessors and martyrs were found there in the beginning of the third century, when the power of Pagan Rome was put forth against the Church of Christ. And when, in the sixteenth century, a testimony was lifted up against the usurpation and tyranny of Papal Rome, no country suffered more from the persecuting rage of the Popish priesthood. In one week, beginning with St. Bartholomew's day, in 1572, seventy thousand persons were murdered. The streets of Paris ran with blood. The cruel and perfidious monarch amused himself in firing upon the fugitives, who were fleeing for shelter to the gates of the palace. Again, in 1635, the edict of Nantes, which had solemnly guaranteed important privileges to the reformed church, was revoked, and tens of thousands of its members were driven from their homes and their country, or tortured and slain. From the period of the French revolution, the members of the reformed church have possessed equal civil privileges with the rest of their fellow citizens. These were frequently invaded after the restoration of Louis XVIII.; and even now, under the more tolerant regime of Louis Philippe, the ministers and members of the reformed church sometimes suffer from the violence of mobs and the prejudices of local magistrates. Infidelity had, until lately, extensively corrupted and enervated that church. In France and Geneva, up till the period of the peace, consequent on the battle of Waterloo, the ministers were, with few exceptions, Neologists. They had entirely lost sight of their own ancient creeds and confessions. Their flocks were sunk in spiritual darkness, so that when a few ministers, enlightened in the knowledge of the gospel, through the reading of the Holy Scriptures and intercourse with British christians, began to preach evangelical doctrine, they were reproached for introducing a new religion. Through the grace of God, however, an extensive revival has taken place. The great majority of the pastors of the reformed church now preach the same truths which their own Calvins and Bezas, of a former age, taught from the pulpit and the press, to the illumination of the surrounding nations.

In France, after all the sacrifices that have been made for liberty, no ecclesiastical councils are allowed to be held. It seems that the Popish bishops cannot be trusted to have large meetings of their clergy, and to avoid any appearance of partiality, the reformed church is interdicted from holding synods. The pastors do not, however, consider themselves restrained from holding meetings for deliberation on the affairs of the church, and such meetings are not uncommon amongst them, under the name of *Conferences*. At a recent *Conference*, held at Montauban, in the South of France, the number of members, including professors, in attendance, was sixty-five, of whom forty-five were orthodox. These were gathered together from a wide extent of country, some having travelled, and that by bad roads, eighty leagues. We present our readers with a few extracts from a letter of a professor in the Montauban seminary to the editor of the *New York Observer*, the writer being a regular correspondent of that paper. The perusal of these notices of the labors and sufferings of our French brethren, will, we trust, lead some to sympathise with them, and to pray for them, and to pray also, that we, ourselves, may ere long be able to send Missionaries and *Colporteurs* to the benighted *habitans* of Lower Canada:—

"The Evangelical Society of France employs at this moment 15 ministers of the gospel, 7 evangelists, 22 instructors or instructresses and 5 colporteurs: in all, 52 agents, who announce in different ways the truths of salvation in a great many places. The committee have a vast correspondence. They hold three meetings a month, and lately one hundred letters were the order of the day at their meeting. The calls for evangelists, instructors and colporteurs increase every day; many doors are open in the provinces which it was thought would remain shut for a long time to come against the light of the reformation. The pastors of our churches also apply to the committee to obtain aid in their arduous labors.

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"Lately an interesting scene occurred at St. Denis, a small town near Paris, and which is famous for containing the tombs of our kings. The Evangelical Society has established at St. Denis, a protestant school containing fifty pupils, and on occasion of the distribution of prizes, Mr. Grand Pierre, evangelical pastor of the Taitbout chapel in Paris, delivered a discourse before a numerous audience, assembled especially to hear the doctrines of the gospel. The Mayor and other public officers were present. Mr. Grand Pierre preached faithfully, and was listened to with the most serious at-