

Religious Intelligence.

(From Evangelical Christendom.) France.

Extract of a Letter, dated France, Sept., 1850. French Protestantism offers a few important facts this month. I have recently received a pamphlet announcing the establishment of an

EVANGELISATION SOCIETY IN BEARN.

Pastors Gabriel, Noyaret, Lourde, and other pious men, constitute the committee of this useful institution.

Your readers, doubtless, know the topographical position of Bearn. This province, situated in the south of France, separates our country from Spain; it forms two departments, the High Pyrenees and the Low Pyrenees. Bearn is celebrated in the annals of our Reformed churches; it constituted, in the sixteenth century, an independent State. The noble sister of Francis I., Marguerite de Valois, and her heroic daughter Jeanne d'Albret, who was poisoned by Catherine de Medicis on the eve of St. Bartholomew, introduced Protestantism into Bearn. Our illustrious reformer, Theodore de Beze, came there to preach, and his doctrines were eagerly received by the population. Nearly all the Bearnois entered into the new communion, and this country became very flourishing through its industry, its agriculture, and its laws.—Our King Henry IV. was born at Pau, the capital of this little State, and historians often call him Bearnois.

After he ascended the throne of the Valois, Bearn was annexed to France; and soon commenced horrible persecutions of the inhabitants of this province, which lasted more than a hundred and fifty years. I have not leisure to give, in this letter, a long historical sketch. It will suffice to state, that the unhappy Bearnois were deprived by Louis XIII. of most of their schools and temples; that they were driven to mass with staves and swords, and subjected to the most cruel treatment, at the instigation of the Jesuits. Louis XIV. continued the work of intolerance and iniquity; it was in Bearn that he made the first attempt at dragging. In brief, many of the Bearnois emigrated to foreign lands; some perished in dungeons and on the scaffold; others returned to popery, overcome by the barbarity of their oppressors; so that there only remains in this province from 12,000 to 15,000 Protestants. There were more than 300,000 at the close of the sixteenth century! mournful result of persecutions!

The reformers of Bearn, however, have established an Evangelisation Society, in order to proclaim the Gospel to the Protestants scattered in their province, and to the travellers who come in great numbers, every year, to the mineral waters of the Pyrenees. They also intend to send evangelists to the Basques, an interesting and singular colony in the mountains. These Basques are, properly speaking, neither French nor Spaniards; their language is entirely different from that of surrounding nations; their habits and manners are peculiar, and they are still pagans rather than Christians. It is an excellent work to preach the word of God to these half savages. Besides, there are on the frontiers of Spain and France some thousands of Bohemians (English gypsies), who have no religion at all. They are vagabonds, thieves by profession, living in the depths of the woods, and strangers to all civilised life. Some Christians of Bearn have already been among them. They were at first received with coldness and distrust; but having succeeded in making these wretched people understand that they came as friends, desirous of contributing to their religious and social relief, they were immediately surrounded by a joyful and grateful crowd, who requested them to send a pastor. The Evangelisation Society will not lose sight of the spiritual necessities of these gypsies, and it hopes to bring them by degrees to the Christian faith.

This Society has more than one precious mission to fulfil. I suppose that the English, who form a numerous colony in the city of Pau, will write to their brethren in Great Britain to recommend so interesting

an association to the prayers and liberality of the faithful; and I discharge my duty in bespeaking for it the sympathies of Christians of your country.

THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL AT LYONS.

is very remarkable. I have had occasion lately to pass through this great industrial city, and to assist at a meeting of colporteurs, presided over by the pious and zealous Pastor Fisch. The details I heard, and the information given me by M. Fisch, deserve the most lively interest.

There are at present, at Lyons, five places of worship, or independent chapels, in which the word of God is regularly and faithfully preached. The congregations are generally on the increase. Some thousands of families are periodically visited, either by the pastors themselves, or by the colporteurs, or other Christians, and the population receives almost everywhere these visitors with joy; it feels that they come not from ambitious or selfish motives, but for the good of souls, and the advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

The priests and the monks, who abound at Lyons (for it is eminently a clerical city), have done everything in their power to impede the work of the friends of the Gospel. Calumnies, lies, ignoble pamphlets, great promises, odious threats, domestic intrigues and dissensions—they have neglected nothing which would create obstacles to the preaching of the truth. I do not say that these perfidious manoeuvres have produced no effect. Alas! there are always ignorant and credulous men, who receive the lies of priests as infallible oracles, and who fear falling under the divine curse, should they abandon the errors of popery. Nevertheless, the zeal and the good faith of the Christians of Lyons, their spirit of devotedness, their perseverance, their charitable works, have surmounted many difficulties. Protestantism is at the present day honoured at Lyons, and every one knows that the reformers, instead of being infidels or atheists, as the priests represent them, are filled with zeal for the revelation of Christ.

Another adversary, equally formidable, exists in this manufacturing city, viz., Socialism or Communism, which numbers a multitude of disciples among the working classes. The colporteurs of the Bible have sad proof of this. They frequently meet with artisans and labourers who, enslaved by a stupid and fatal materialism, obstinately repel all the declarations of the Gospel. These unfortunates see nothing above or beyond this perishable world; their whole concern is to promote their physical well-being, and, like the impious of the time of St. Paul, they say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" It is very difficult to reach the hearts of such people; their mind is blinded by miserable sophisms; their conscience is seared, and their soul is enslaved by carnal lusts. Some, however, have been brought to better sentiments; they have made their faith honourable by their good conduct, and proved, in times of political trouble, that the new disciples of Christ are also the most peaceful citizens. X. X. X.

Belgium.

Extract of a letter from L. C. Anet, dated Brussels, Sept. 18, 1850.

For my part, I confess, I did not venture to hope, at the commencement of the year, for the blessings the Lord is pleased to grant us. There are, it is true, some small congregations that do not appear to add to their numbers, but each of the principal stations is yet the seat of an awakening. Labouverie, which for some years was stationary, now progresses in a delightful manner. The room for worship is too small, it is necessary to find some means of enlarging it. At Charleroy, a remarkable degree of Christian life is manifested, and the audience is more numerous than it has ever been. Juncet goes on well. At Lacres le Fosteau, the Marquis d'Aoust has erected a place of worship, which comprises a school-room and master's residence, and is, moreover, the most beautiful temple the Protestants possess in Belgium. You have a description and lithographed view of it in the Christian Belge. We were present at the opening of it on the 19th August last; and, although the rain fell in torrents, we

had a numerous auditory; the church was too small to contain the attentive multitude.

The Marquis d'Aoust has taken legal measures to ensure the perpetual enjoyment of it for evangelical worship, together with a residence for the pastor, with garden and orchard, and an annual income to provide for preaching the Gospel, and cover the expense of a school. Here is one of our young churches endowed, and provided with the material means of support. May the Lord be pleased to continue his blessing, without which this endowment will be of little worth.

At Lige we were visited, two months ago with a sore trial. God has taken to himself our beloved brother, Pastor Girod; it is an unspeakable loss to us and to the work, for Mr. Girod was one of the most useful men we had. We felt some uneasiness for the congregation, when God took away our friend; but it is remarkable that a spirit of union, life, and fervour, with much more of faith, is manifested in this congregation since the death of its beloved pastor than before: and the audience has sensibly increased. Messrs. Cornesouqueir, pastor at Nessonvaux; Cacheur, pastor at Lize et Seraing; and Mr. Leduue, pastor of Verviers, will each conduct the service once a week.

At Lize le Seraing we have settled a pastor about seven weeks ago. For the past two years, Mr. Girod went to preach there every alternate Monday evening, and for the last seven or eight months, Mr. Leduue has been there likewise once a fortnight.—The congregation consisted of about 200 persons; of late it is increased; and since there has been a pastor, it exceeds 300.—Many souls there are seriously impressed; and many have already exhibited the holy fruits of faith. Those who have decidedly broken with Rome, appear to show more zeal and devotedness than others, considering the short time that they have heard the preaching of the Gospel. They have decided to build a church (at present they are obliged to assemble in a large hall-room); for this purpose they have opened a subscription, which has hitherto been confined to the workmen, and which already amounts to about 400 francs. A widow has presented them with the needful ground, in a very convenient situation. They are also about to open a school. It will be confided to the care of an intelligent workman, who ardently seeks instruction for himself, and who has already acquired the knowledge which ranks him with good teachers. Everything leads us to hope that the Lord will raise for himself, in that place, one of the best and most numerous congregations in this country.

We may say, with joy and lively gratitude, that the awakening is extending, that the kingdom of God advances. We are the more rejoiced and encouraged at this, as for several weeks past we have not sought to extend our labours, owing to the pecuniary straits in which we have been continually placed. It is pleasant to be thus urged forward by the hand of the Great Shepherd. When we see the Lord give his spiritual benediction, we are constrained to believe that he will not withhold the temporal supplies.

At this moment it is indeed necessary for us to believe with all our hearts that God will give us our daily bread, for we are in want of 11,000 to 12,000 francs, to discharge our accounts on the 30th of this month.—Pray for us, then dear brother, and let those who can aid our society send to it, as speedily as possible, the fruits of their liberality.

Family Circle.

Sir Wm. Jones and his Mother.

This learned and distinguished man was born in London, on the eve of St. Michael, in the year 1746. Mr. Jones, his father, survived the birth of his son William but three years; his family was respectable, and his character excellent. The care of the education of William now devolved upon his mother, who, in many respects, was eminently qualified for the task. She had by nature a strong understanding, which was improved by his conversation and in-

struction. Under the tuition of her husband, she became a considerable proficient in Algebra, and with a view to qualify herself for the office of preceptor to her sister's son, who was destined to a maritime profession, made herself perfect in Trigonometry and the theory of Navigation. Mrs. Jones, after the death of her husband, was urgently and repeatedly solicited by the Countess of Macclesfield to remain at Sherborn Castle; but having formed a plan for the education of her son, with an unalterable determination to pursue it, and being apprehensive that her residence at Sherborn might interfere with the execution of it, she declined accepting the friendly invitation of the Countess, who never ceased to retain the most affectionate regard for her. In the plan adopted by Mrs. Jones for the education of her son, she proposed to reject the severity of discipline, and to lead his mind insensibly to knowledge and exertion, by exciting his curiosity and directing it to useful objects.

She so cultivated his mind, that at four years of age he was able to read any English book, and until his eighth or ninth year, she was his only preceptor. When in his ninth year he had the misfortune to break his thigh bone, which detained him at home more than a year; his mother was his constant companion, and amused him daily by the perusal of such English books as were adapted to his taste and capacity. To his incessant importunities for information she was in the habit of using one reply, which, from his earliest years, made a deep impression on him. This remark was, 'Read and you will know.' At a subsequent period of his life, Sir William Jones was in the habit of saying, that he owed all his intellectual improvements to his early obedience to his mother's favourite maxim, —'Read and you will know.'

With regard to religious instruction, she early taught him the creed and the ten commandments, but one effect of her daily maxims is too remarkable to be passed over in silence. One morning, as he was turning over the leaves of the Bible in his mother's closet, his attention was forcibly arrested by the sublime description of the angel, in the tenth chapter of Revelation; and the impression which his mind received was never after erased. At a period of mature judgment, he considered the passage as equal in sublimity to any of the inspired writings, and far superior to any that could be produced from mere human compositions; and he was fond of relating and mentioning the rapture which he felt when he first read it. This remarkable incident took place before he had completed his fifth year.

His spiritual attainments as a Christian were quite worthy of his learning and literary distinction. In his mature years, when he had secured enduring fame and worldly honours, he says: 'I have carefully and regularly perused the Holy Scriptures, and am of opinion, that the volume called the Bible, independent of its divine origin, contains more sublimity, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains of eloquence, than can be collected from all other books, in whatever language they may have been written.'—Dr. Burns.

Truth Stranger than Fiction.

The Paris correspondent of the St. Louis Republican relates the following:

A young man recently made his escape from the galleys at Toulouse. He was strong and vigorous, and soon made his way across the country and escaped pursuit. He arrived the next morning before a cottage in an open field, and stopped to beg something to eat and concealment while he reposed a little. But he found the inmates of the cottage in the greatest distress.—Four little children sat in a corner, their mother was weeping and tearing her hair, and the father walking the floor in agony. The galley slave asked what was the matter, and the father replied that they were that morning to be turned out of doors, because they could not pay their rent. "You see me driven to despair," said the father, "my wife and children without food or shelter, and without means to provide any for them." The convict listened to this tale with tears of sympathy, and then said: