

LETTER FROM PARIS.

The Rev. E. de Pressense, L. L. D., in a letter from Paris to the Watchman & Reformer, gives under date June 24th, 1871, the following sad reflections on the recent changes and present condition of that city:—

As to the socialist idea, they have had but one, and that of the most rudimentary character. It consists in making themselves masters of the goods of others. They were at first only a little band, intent upon enjoying, ready to strike; they have ended like a troop of demons dancing round a hellish cauldron, whose fires have been lighted by their own hands. This representation is not too strong; for the prominent characteristic of the sedition of the 18th of March is that hatred of God which began in outraging the priests and culminated in shedding their blood. O when I think of such blasphemies as have gone up from our unhappy city, like the smoke of the bottomless pit, I am not astonished at these heaps of ruins.

Atheism is selfishness run mad, and desiring no God but the human self. Its motto is, "Every thing or nothing." To enjoy, to dominate, or to kill and destroy,—these are its only alternatives. We know its cruel rule, now we have learned its bloody malice. On our buildings in ashes we read anew the words of the psalm,— "A fool is he who has said there is no God." This fool is a demon, who would destroy this world if he cannot hold it under his feet.

Will not our cunning sophists at length open their eyes to this fearful and bloody struggle? Will they comprehend what is the upshot of all philosophy which ridicules the idea of God and morality, after having passed beyond the Scriptures into the intellectual atmosphere of the people, and thus made a complete tour of observation? You have murdered conscience. The unchaining of savage passion is the affirmative which corresponds to your negation.

If this teaching does not lead to a reaction in France, in view of so many misfortunes and crimes, then the nation must perish. Let not France deceive herself. She is herself the cause of the events which have brought us to desolation. Rather let me say, modern society, represented as it is in Paris by diverse nationalities, is receiving a terrible lesson. All who have pushed their ideas theoretically or practically, to the denial or the forgetfulness of God; who by their example have united to develop this fever of worldly pleasure; all who have joined in the grand plot of the godless philosophy of the nineteenth century against conscience and moral freedom; all who have flattered the passions of demagogues and those no less criminal persons who feel no interest in the common people, all these are, in various degrees, the creators of that moral crisis which we have just passed.

We ought to have the courage to say it, notwithstanding the odious persecutions to which the clergy have been subjected, and which fill us with grief and indignation,—even the representatives of religion must smite upon their breasts. For as Father Hyacinthe says, in the eloquent letter which he has just published at Rome,— "The church, in place of the promises and the teachings of the Gospel to those who have no inheritance in this world, has inflicted on them, in the noisy utterances of the press, sometimes even in the voices of the bishops, discussions on the pope-king, intolerant dogmatism and the prizes of the inquisition. The political and religious regime to which we have submitted for more than twenty years may be summed up in these two phrases: At Paris, skepticism; at Rome, fanaticism." "Such," says Father Hyacinthe, in speaking of Paris in ashes, "such is the work of a people who make it impossible to believe in God,—still more to love Him."

Protestantism also has had its tricks, its quarrels, and its bigotry and intolerance. Let it humble itself, likewise, and from our bruised hearts let the cry arise,— "O Christ, have pity upon us, have pity upon us and upon our people. Teach us to speak of thee to them, or rather to make thee manifest to them by separating thy glory from all that we, by our deficiencies, have exhibited to them in a distorted form." Thou alone hast compassion vast enough to meet such sorrows. Thou alone canst pronounce resurrection words over the grave into which a mighty nation is descending. Thou art our supreme and only resource. *Salva, crux, spes unica.* (Hail, sacred cross our only hope.)

These, dear readers, are the feelings which fill our hearts under our present distress. I cannot help giving them utterance.

A METHODIST SERMON IN ROME.

One of the Wesleyan evangelists in Rome writes to the Watchman:—

"A few minutes afterward I found myself facing a decorous, eager-looking audience of from forty to fifty persons, almost all of them Romans born, though here and there a tawny skin and a certain unmistakable type of feature confessed the son or daughter of Israel from the neighboring Ghetto. Compelled perforce to dispense with singing, I opened the service with the reading of the psalm: 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! Then a brief prayer, during which all reverently stood. After that, I read the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and did not my heart thrill when I came to the words, 'To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints,' and thought flow back to the day, eighteen hundred years ago, when it may be in some such humble meeting-place, some elder of the Church read to those first Roman converts this noble salutation of the great Apostle! I took my text from the same epistle and chapter: 'I am ready, as much as in me lies, to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also; for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' Nor did the audience fail for an instant in silent and serious attention while I sought to explain and justify the Apostle's vaunt, by showing the object—salvation; the efficacy—the power of God; and the universality—to every one that believeth on that glorious Gospel which it was his ambition to proclaim to the world."

HEAD OF CHRIST.

DEAR MARY: You will remember the visit we once had from Mr. Williams, the dear missionary from eastern lands, and his gift to us of those antique coins. Your letter just received made me think of them; and I opened the little drawer where mother keeps her precious souvenirs and took the coins in my hand. One of gold, bears the clear-cut profile of the Egyptian Arsinoe, sister of Ptolemy; the other is a Roman "denarius," just like the one which Jesus received when he said, "Bring me a penny—whose is the image and superscription?" and they said, "Caesar's." As I looked these two historic faces, I was thinking of your question: "Please write me all you can of the likeness of Jesus Christ. Since our teacher took us to see a new picture of the head of Christ by a modern painter, there has been much discussion among the girls on the subject. Is there any real, authentic picture of our Saviour as he looked when on earth?"

I was thinking to myself how could the face of Christ come down to us? and then remembered the coins. Here are two out of many likenesses which have been faithfully preserved: one from Egypt ages before the Christian era, the other may have lain in Jesus' palm. But of that one face made up of the human and divine, the face of Jesus, around which history clusters, there is no authentic copy in art, though sculptures, paintings, coins, mosaics, which last were called "paintings for eternity," were well-known and employed by Egypt, Rome, and Greece.

You ask, "Why do we instantly recognize our Master in any group?" I too, dear Mary, have often asked myself this and similar questions, and will tell you the little I have been able to learn upon the subject.

The earliest specimens of Christian art are found on the walls and ceilings of the Roman Catacombs, which were the asylum for martyrs during the bloody first centuries of the Christian era. The first recorded picture of Christ thus found, is in the figure of the good Shepherd, a character dear to the poor hunted disciples.

The most ancient picture of which a copy has come down to us, represents the face of Christ as long, oval, expression mild grave, and the long hair, parted on the brow, falling on either shoulder, the beard not thick but short and divided. Here, then, we have the general type since followed; but scholars of art tell us that the careful search for a solo and continuous type running back to the past is vain; as every nation and almost every great painter has varied in important respects the character and expression of the likeness. Christ's resemblance to his mother, his only earthly parent, was strongly insisted on by the early fathers, and followed by the painters, hence in the most ancient heads of Christ there is something peculiar-

ly refined, even feminine. Still, though we cannot account for the origin, there is a certain individuality in the heads of Jesus, and also of Peter, John, and Paul, as painted by the early Italian masters from tradition, which has become sacred to the devout, and when these tender associations are broken, and a modern artist seeks to substitute imaginations of his own, it causes pain, and a feeling of wrong in the beholder.

As I sit here in my quiet room, dear Mary, writing of these things, a great longing grows within me, to see the face of our dear Saviour, as he looked to his disciples; to the sick and sorrowing; to little children who were not afraid to stand close at his side. It is said Luke was a painter. O Luke, could you not have used your colors with the skillful touch of devotion, and left some trace? John, the loving and beloved disciple, laid his head upon the Saviour's breast in the freedom of closest intimacy, but has penned no word in his epistle to describe his Master's personal appearance. We search in vain for Christ's human semblance in the writings of those who knew him so well. It has been beautifully said, "He whom all races of men were to call brother, was not to be too closely associated with any one race or nation by national characteristics."

Two things singularly conspired to prevent any likeness of Christ. The Jews were so imbued with hatred and fear of idolatry in obedience to the strict letter of Mosaic law, that they excommunicated, as leaving to Paganism, any one who made an image or a likeness; and it was not until the fourth century after the reign of Constantine that art was permitted in the service of Christianity, and by this time the church was bitterly divided on the interpretation of the prophecies referring to the appearance of their Lord. For several centuries the ablest fathers contended that he must be represented as "without form or comeliness, having no beauty, his face marred more than any man's," while the opposing minority party laid stress on the words, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." Thus were the time and opportunity lost! It probably was meant that we should not have any authentic picture of the person of Jesus either from pen or pencil.

But there is one description, Mary, over which I often linger; it comes like a gleam from the western sky just as the day is done. John the revelator, saw in the New Jerusalem, "one like unto the Son of man"—"and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." Who can look at such glory? John could not, for he said, "I fell at his feet as dead, and he laid his right hand upon me [that wounded hand] and said unto me, Fear not."

Dear Mary, may you and I one day see that face, feel that same hand and hear the voice of encouragement. Well may our longing hearts say, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Your loving sister,

VERONICA.

—Christian Weekly.

DR. STEANE AND PRINCE GOTTSCHAKOFF.

The Rev. Canon Battersby, who was one of the late deputation to the Emperor of Russia, on behalf of the Protestants of the Baltic provinces, publishes in a letter the following interesting details:—

You are aware that the object of the expedition was to plead with the Emperor of Russia, on behalf of those of his subjects in the Baltic provinces who having been, by fraud and worldly inducements, induced to join the Russian or Greek Orthodox Church, have since, to the number of some hundred thousand, repented of that act, and desired to return to the Lutheran Church. By the law of the Russian Empire they are unable to do this. Once in the Russian Church, they must always remain in it. No matter how urgent their convictions of the erroneous character of the belief or practice of that confession, leave it they cannot, without rendering themselves liable to the most cruel sufferings. No wonder that, under these trying circumstances, those poor people should have lifted up their voice to God, and that their cry should have reached his ear. The late mission of the Evangelical Alliance Deputation was the fruit, we believe, of their prayers, which had fast ascended to God, before the hearts of Christians in other lands, who were sufficiently moved to take up their cause.

The Deputation consisted of thirty-six members, of whom nine were from the United States of America, four from Sweden,

one from Denmark, two from Holland, one from Belgium, four from Germany, one from Hungary, five from Switzerland, ten from Great Britain.

On the 14th, at 10 a. m., we waited on the Prince, at the villa where Prince Gortschakoff was residing, near the Palace, and had an interview with him, which lasted for an hour and a half.

The subject was opened on our side by Dr. Schaff, the eminent American divine and scholar, whose knowledge of the German and French, as well as English languages, peculiarly fitted him in our opinion for the task. The English language, through the kindness of the Prince, was the principal medium of communication. Dr. Schaff gave an admirable summary of the grievances complained of from our point of view, yet in such a way as could not fail to produce a favorable impression on the mind of the great statesman.

In his reply, the Prince gave us his views, first, on the general principle of religious liberty, and then on the special cases of alleged intolerance of which we complained. He asserted that religious tolerance had always been the peculiar attribute of the Russian empire, and appealed in proof of it to the churches and chapels of different creeds which were to be found side by side in the streets of St. Petersburg. He admitted, however, that in the cases of those who were already or might become members of the "Orthodox Church," it was an essential law of the empire that they should continue so. He seemed to think, however, that this was no infringement in any way of religious liberty, and asserted again and again that no charge of intolerance could be maintained against the Russian Government. If, however, any alteration was necessary in the law, this, he pointed out with much emphasis, must be left to the judgment and discretion of the Emperor, who would choose his own time and method of doing it.

Dr. Coulin, the eminent Genevan preacher, followed in French, and in a most impressive manner, with much feeling, continued in the track so ably opened by the first speaker.

Prince Gortschakoff replied in French, and in the same strain.

Mr. Dodge, of New York, then addressed a few words to the Prince, after which there was a general call on the part of the English members of the deputation for Dr. Steane to speak. The Rev. Doctor, it is well known, is a veteran in the cause of religious liberty, having, in connexion with the Evangelical Alliance, of which he has been from its foundation an hon. secretary, devoted a large part of his time and strength during that time to its maintenance, and, on the present occasion, it was mainly owing to his able pamphlet on this subject that the members of the Evangelical Alliance in England and America were made acquainted with the sufferings of their fellow Christians in the Baltic Provinces.

Dr. Steane went straight to the point at issue, viz.—the difference between the views of Prince Gortschakoff and the Russian Government on the subject of religious liberty, and those which were held by the members of the Evangelical Alliance. He insisted that the right of propagating the creed which we profess, and publicly maintaining it by voice and pen, by preaching, by the circulation of the Scriptures, and by tracts, was an integral part of religious liberty, and that this was what it had been his privilege and that of the Evangelical Alliance to promote for years back, in various countries of Europe where it had not before existed, as it was this which was enjoyed with the happiest results in England and America.

Further, Dr. Steane went on to say that in reference to the condition of those for whom the present deputation pleaded, it was evident that whatever relaxation of the stringent and intolerant statutes under which they had suffered was enjoyed by them at the present time was owing solely to the kindness and humanity of the reigning sovereign, whilst the law itself, so long as it was unrevoked, like the sword of Damocles, was ever hanging over them, ready to fall the moment that a sovereign or a government of another character should hold the reins of power.

These faithful words brought the discussion to a point. It was clear from the movements of feature and limb in the venerable diplomatist as he listened to Dr. Steane that the latter had struck home.

He replied with some warmth that Dr. S. had indeed hit the point of disagreement between his views and those of the deputation. He, for his part could not accept the doctrine of religious liberty as now laid down, and he appealed to the

multitude of sects in America, which he said were nearly as many as there were people there, in support of his views. He maintained that the Greek was not, like the Roman, for instance, a propagandist church, and in regard to the conduct of the Russian Government towards the various sects which were to be found in that vast empire, he said that its policy had been to put down those which inculcated immoral tenets, and as for the rest (putting his hand before his eyes, and looking through his fingers), he said, "we deal thus with them."

He was reminded, in reply, that the happiest effects had resulted from the exercise of perfect religious freedom, whilst the greatest evils had resulted from a system of repression.

At this stage of the interview it was clear that the Prince was becoming somewhat impatient, and though he was addressed briefly by two other speakers, the Rev. Dr. Adams, of New York, and Rev. Professor Oosterzee, of Holland, no fresh point of any consequence was elicited.

Understanding that the memorials to the Emperor were in the room, the Prince asked to see them, and they were handed him. He immediately began to read the memorial from the European branches of the Alliance, and taking offence at the statement which occurred in it to the effect that the Lutherans of the Baltic Provinces were suffering from the attacks of the Greek Church, he said somewhat angrily that this was not the case, and that he could not undertake to present such a document to the Emperor; he next turned to the American memorial, which was somewhat differently worded, and seemed to be more satisfied with its tone; but, after some deliberation, it was agreed that it would better further the end we had in view were we on our part to withdraw the memorials, leaving it to Prince Gortschakoff to lay before his Imperial master a full statement of what had passed at the interview.

This he promised to do, and the deputation retired, feeling satisfied that if they had not gained all they had asked or desired, they had at least had the privilege of bringing before the highest authority in the Court and Church of Russia, a full and explicit statement of the views for which they contended, and with the belief strong within them, drawn from their expression used by the Prime Minister, that it was the wish and intention of the Emperor, if he could see his way to it, to establish the liberties of his subjects of different communions on a secure basis.

I have omitted to mention the case of the American Missionary labouring amongst the Nestorians, and that of the Nestorian Christians themselves sojourning in the Russian empire, was brought before Prince Gortschakoff by Dr. Schmetsan, and that Mr. S. Gurney and two other members of the Society of Friends took occasion to offer a memorial of their own on the same subject as those prepared by the Alliance. After what had passed, however, they saw it advisable to withdraw their memorial also, and to content themselves with the promise made to them by the Prince that the matter should be duly laid before the Emperor.

Thus ended this interesting mission, and before the day was out the greater part of the members of the deputation had left the scene of the interview, and dispersed on their way to their various homes, or to other countries. But the duty of those who are interested in the cause of these oppressed members of the Protestant Church has not ended. Still the throne of the Highest is open to their applications, and as much prayer has been offered in the past in connection with this enterprise, so it is to be hoped that much prayer will be offered in the future, that the effort lately made, even if for the present it may not seem to have effected any real good may in the end, result in the concession of those liberties for which it was our privilege to plead.

INDULGENCE OF FEELING.

There is great danger in ungoverned feeling. The temptation is great to indulge from mere pleasure of indulgence, and from the admiration given to feeling. It is easier to gain credit for goodness by a glistening eye, while listening to some story of self-sacrifice, than by patient usefulness. It is easier to get credit for spirituality by thrilling at some impassioned speech on the platform or sermon from the pulpit, than by living a life of justice, mercy and truth. And hence religious life degenerates into mere indulgence of feeling, the excitement of religious meetings, or the utterance of strong emotion. In this sickly strife, life wastes away, and the man or woman becomes weak instead of strong.—F. W. Robertson.