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G. J. Creed Esq

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVI. No. 40.

Poetry.

Reading the List.

"Is there any news of the war?" she said.
"Only a list of the wounded and dead,"
Was the man's reply,
Without lifting his eye
To the face of the woman standing by.
"Tis the very thing that I want," she said;
"Read me a list of the wounded and dead."

He read her the list—'twas a sad array
Of the wounded and killed in the fatal fray;
In the very midst was a pause to tell
Of a gallant youth, who had fought so well
That his comrades asked, "Who is he, pray?"
"The only son of the widow Gray,"
Was the proud reply
Of his captain nigh.
What ails the woman standing near?
Her face was the ashen hue of fear!

"Well, well, read on; is he wounded? quick;
O God! but my heart is sorrow-sick!"
"Is he wounded? no! he fell, they say,
Killed outright on that fatal day!"
But see! the woman has swooned away!

Sally she opened her eyes to the light!
Slowly recalled the event of the fight;
Faintly she murmured, "Killed outright;
It has cost the life of my only son;
But the battle is fought and the victory won;
The will of the Lord, let it be done!"
God pity the cheerless widow Gray,
And send from the halls of Eternal Day
The light of His peace to illumine her way!

Religious.

Religion in Italy.

LECTURE BY SIGNOR GAVAZZI.

Italy occupies a position of prominence in the present day, next to no country on the European Continent. One of its most prominent men, in a religious aspect, is Signor Gavazzi. This gentleman has for some time past been delivering lectures in Great Britain on the state of Italy. We have before us a report of two lectures given by him—one on "Victor Emmanuel and the Pope" the other on "the Progress of religion in Italy." They were delivered previous to the late attempt, and capture, of Garibaldi, and therefore, there is much in the former one with respect to the anticipations from him which now has its solution. The latter however gives a view of Italy, as seen by an Italian who professes to be a religious reformer, likely to be a pretty correct view of the state of things!

Signor Gavazzi commenced his address with the statement that, to look at the progress of religion in Italy, it would be necessary to look at its normal state. Was there any Christianity in Italy at the time the Italians received constitutional liberty from Charles Albert? Before 1848 there were only the Waldensians secretly tolerated in Turin; and after the Constitution had given emancipation in civil things, these and the Jews were the only two sects existing out of the Church of Rome, and these were the only classified in the Constitution as being free in their worship. The Evangelicals were not free, but only tolerated; and they had to endure many trials, because they were only tolerated. But the time should arrive when the Italian Parliament should sit in Rome, and the narrow-minded Piedmontese Constitution should be enlarged to a national Italian Constitution. In 1848 there was freedom in politics, but not in religion; there was no propaganda of evangelical speaking at that time. There was no Christianity in Rome then. They were at the climax of Romanism, and they almost worshipped Pius IX. They were expecting the Reformed Churches would come back to the old Mother at Rome, and they were full-bred Roman Catholics, delighted with the liberal changes which Pius IX. had made. In 1848 was the period when the Pope—whom some of the English were even in these days willing to accept as evangelical—in order to prove himself a good pastor of the flock of Christ, courageously ran away to Gaeta, and abandoned his children. It was a

happy moment, and he (Gavazzi) hoped there would be another such. It proved to Italians they could live without Popes, and without a successor to Pius. There was no religion in Rome then; there was no heart in the public worship; there was not a word of Christianity. The conduct of an ex-Capuchin monk, in acting as a Protestant minister, the signor characterized as being that of a regular Judas Iscariot. It seemed to him (he continued) that he saw many clergymen in the Church of England taking the oath of allegiance, swearing to the Thirty-nine Articles, pocketing the hundreds and the thousands of the Church of England's money, located beautifully in that Church, and then leaving it to serve the Church of Rome. In his poor opinion these clergymen were Judas Iscariots of their church.

As a starting point for Christianity in Italy, the Signor took a circumstance in Florence, where two men who studied the Scripture in private were exiled for five years for joining together in reading the Bible; and the separation of Dr. de Sanctis from the Waldensian Church in 1853. Dr. de Sanctis founded Evangelical preaching, and had only twenty to follow him on his leaving the Waldensian Church, and commencing preaching in Turin.—The Signor next stated several circumstances to shew that the impression which some persons in England had, that Italians were rushing, as a man, to Protestantism, was an entire mistake. There was not a single man in Italy dreaming of becoming a Protestant. The actual feeling of nine out of ten Italians was simply anti-Nino; they said "We were born Roman Catholics, and we must die Roman Catholics, because it would be treacherous to leave our Church." They were talking about Neo-Catholicism on purpose to get rid of the Pope. The Waldensians and the Evangelists were both obliged to deny they wished to Protestantize Italy. The people were strongly prejudiced in favour of Romanism. He (Gavazzi), and those who worked with him, were using all their efforts, to Christianize Italy.—The progress of religion in Italy dated since 1859, after the victories at Solferino and other places. As a kind of compensation to the Evangelists, who had fought the battles of Italy in the field, the government gave them more liberty in preaching. The real free preaching of the Gospel of Christ had been carried on less than two years, and yet in all the large towns of Italy there were Evangelical congregations, altogether numbering forty, with nearly twenty thousand constant hearers. Taking the same ratio, in less than ten years there would be at least one hundred communities, and many thousands of hearers of Christianity in Italy.

Signor Gavazzi next explained how hopeful to himself seemed the spiritual condition of his countrymen, whom he thought, of all nations under the sky, would be the readiest to receive the Gospel, and that it would rapidly become a favourite with them. He quoted the results of his own preaching as a positive instance, and the language of the Pope recently to Cardinals Cullen and Wiseman as a negative confirmation. The Bibles sent to Rome in 1848, he said, still remained in the Custom House there. But the Bible was now sold in Italy every-where from north to south freely and without obstacle. Twelve thousand copies had been sold in Naples—the most bigotted city in the world—in a few months. Altogether there could not have been less than one hundred thousand copies in the hands of Italians, who bought them to read and study. There was no better golden way for the Evangelists than the use of the Bible by the people. The Bible Society would do well to listen to his voice and prepare a large-print family edition of the Bible. The Italians, though old in years, were young readers, and had only got to learning syllables yet. The standard of education had been very low. Previous to 1859 there had not been a single foreign religious book in circulation, but three days after Garibaldi had entered Naples, the principal street was filled with stalls for the sale of religious books and tracts.—The Signor here interposed a panegyric on Garibaldi, and said the Piedmontese had never given him (Gavazzi) one-tenth of the freedom in preaching which he had received from "My General."

The Signor next looked at the difficulties which stood in the way of the progress of religion in Italy. The difficulties were two—the first was caused by the obstruction they still laboured under, from the old Piedmontese laws, which would be altered in the unified code, to come before the Italian Parliament next year.—The second difficulty the lecturer said was in reference to places of worship. He explained at considerable length how he hoped to overcome the difficulty, and it was in connection with this object that he was now visiting England. There were not in the Italian cities any public rooms which could be hired, and the aristocracy, though willing to allow Gavazzi the use of the large halls of their palaces for secular objects, positively refused to do so for preaching Christian truth. Under these circumstances he made a last appeal to Englishmen. He made an appeal the last time he was in England for funds to enable him to educate twelve priests who had left the Romish Church; that appeal did not answer his expectations—if the present one failed, he should not make another appeal to Englishmen. In brief the Signor's plan was this: that a company of Christian men should be formed, to raise capital, as a public company (in the same way money was now being raised in England, for forming canals and other works in Italy), to purchase vacant palaces, and while the lower part was appropriated for preaching Evangelical doctrines (a fair rent being paid for the same), the upper portions should be let as residences. He quoted an instance of what had been done in this way by four Scotch gentlemen, who had put down £1000 each, and purchased a palace which had been converted into a college for the use of the Waldensians. He asked for a sum of £20,000 to £30,000, which, invested in the manner he had proposed, would pay a dividend of 4 per cent., and might be made to pay 6 per cent. The advantages this plan would offer, both from a temporal and spiritual point of view, were forcibly dwelt upon by the Signor.

The address was concluded by an explanation of the ground-work on which it was hoped to build an Italian Christian Church.—It would not be Protestant: they would go back to the era of the birth of Christianity, when they found a Church at Rome, established by the Apostle Paul—a Christian Evangelical Church, and that would be the Italian Church. Such a Church would not rouse Italian prejudices, but would appeal to them as a national concern, established by the greatest of all the Apostles, in their own Rome, the greatest of all cities. Having elaborated this idea, the Signor appealed to his hearers, in fervent terms, to pray for the success of that Church, whenever they put up a petition to the Throne above, so that it might be an instrument in the hands of God for the conversion of souls. England and Italy might then march hand in hand, not only politically but religiously. They would both bless Jesus with the same voice, and love him with the same heart; and at the end of their mortal career, the members of both Churches should meet together above, to bless and glorify and love dear sweet Jesus for all Eternity. Amen.

Incidents of Missionary life in Jessore.

BY THE REV. W. A. HOBBS.

I am working away with diligence, and striving to make the preachers do so too. The rains have partially stopped our out-door work, but I am employing them partly in efforts at self-improvement. It is surprising how ill-informed they are, except in relation to the surface truths of God's word. They must become more intelligent, or they will be no manner of use, except just among the very lowest orders of the people. Each one of them is now writing out two sermons in full monthly; some of them think the exercise exceedingly irksome. During the past month their united journals give the following figures:—Nine preachers spent in preaching, &c., 971 hours; addressed 7,029 persons; distributed gratuitously 302 tracts; sold gospels, &c., to the value of 14s. This is less than some previous months, but it is not to be expected they will go far from home during the rains, or go out when it is raining. To-mor-

row (D. V.) I baptise four out of the five candidates. The other is prevented from being baptised at present by the recent bad conduct of her husband.

Respectable Hindoos, and a few Mahomedans, continue to come for conversation and instruction. Two or three pleasing instances have occurred, which show that the Divine word preached is not all lost. Case 1:—A young Brahim from Dacca was passing through Jessore on his way to Calcutta. He heard Madhob (of Jessore) preach the doctrine of Christian substitution. He was exceedingly struck by the reasonableness of the doctrine, and being in a great measure free from that carping curiosity which demands the explanation of a hundred irrelevant questions before receiving anything as truth, he entered into a long conversation with Madhob, and finally came to me, and listened for hours with the greatest meekness whilst I endeavoured briefly but consecutively to unfold the truths of religion. Now and then he asked a question, which indicated great intelligence and breadth of view, and at last proclaimed with earnestness, "Sir, this, this, is the true religion. I cannot see any fault in it." He mingled freely with our Christians, went to the Bazaar, and declared his new-found convictions; and if I had exercised the smallest pressure upon him, I could easily have induced him to break his caste. The Papist priest here would have snapped at such a tempting bait. But I have seen too much of the evil of introducing people into Christianity before evidence of genuine conversion, that I durst not use any undue influence to sever him from his caste. He staid three days, and had many inward strugglings. His parents, he said, were hanging upon him for support, and if he became a Christian they would curse him. He wished almost he had no parents, for his own soul's sake. At last he took this leave, blessing God that he met with us, and promising to enquire more carefully and earnestly into all these matters after his arrival at Calcutta. He took with him a set of Gospels. May God bless the young man!

Case 2:—I was sitting at my table reading a chapter in the Bengali Bible, when upon looking up I saw a respectfully dressed young Hindoo standing at my side. The following conversation, as nearly as I can recollect, ensued:—*Missionary*. "Salaam, what is your wish?" *Brahmin*. "I desire to converse with you about salvation."—*M*. "What do you mean by salvation? You Hindoos attach strange notions to the word; do you mean absorption into Brahma?" *B*. "No, I mean by the word what you mean by it—deliverance from sin, and the fruit of sin. And that you may the more easily understand my motives, I will at once confess that I am in heart a Christian. I have read your New Testament, or at least parts of it. I feel myself a wicked person, deserving of hell. I love Jesus Christ better than anybody, and I desire to know more about him that I may love him more. For this reason I have come to see you. Some parts of the New Testament are very hard to understand; I cannot at all guess what the words allude to. Such phrases are not at all common among us; kindly teach me."—For more than an hour he listened with rivetted attention, his eyes occasionally sparkling with joy as some new light dawned upon his mind. He was very retiring in his manner, and I could see that it had cost him a terrible effort to pay me this enquiring visit. At length he stopped me in my attempts to instruct him, by saying "Kindly cease, sir; I have heard now more than I can remember. I will go home and think about it, and try to do all you have told me. But I have one favour to ask you.—do grant it—I want to hear you pray. I tell God every day how I feel, and what I wish to become! but I am afraid I do not ask for the right things, or if I do, I fear I do not ask in the right way." We retired to my bed-room, and I prayed. When I ceased, he began; but after a time his feelings overcame him, and he could pray no more. He went away, telling me he hoped to come again soon. A few days ago he paid me another visit, in company with another Brahim, who professed to be anxious about his soul. We conversed pleasantly for a long time, but as they neither of them made any signs of retiring, I asked them if they had anything else to say to me. Whereupon the first-men-