

FATHER GRASSI BEFORE THE ROMAN CURIA.

Our readers will be interested in the following answer which Signor Paolo Grassi gave to the authorities of the Roman Curia. That a priest can throw off the yoke of the Romish Church, in Rome itself, and that he can deliver such a defence before his ecclesiastical superiors, and escape unhurt may be regarded as the strongest proof we can have of the complete establishment of personal liberty and the consequent downfall of the Inquisition under a free Italian Parliament and the government of Victor Emanuel. It will be seen that this "answer" is more than Signor Grassi's defence of his own course in relinquishing Romanism. It is a direct attack on the Inquisition, and it exults in the overthrow of their power.

The Answer of the Rev. Chev. Paolo Grassi ex incumbent of Santa Maria Maggiore, made before the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition at Rome:—

Very Reverend Father, by my farewell letter of the 28th Sept. ult., addressed to the Cardinal Vicar, and by my public profession of faith, I having declared that I entirely abandoned the Roman Catholic Church, I had no obligation (being no longer a subject of the aforesaid church) to present myself before your quality of Commissioner of the Inquisition, with which I have no longer anything to argue (or decide). Nevertheless I have decided to come and answer before you, in person, not to appear to justify myself, because, my decision having been taken before God, it is to Him alone that I have to render any account; so that I have no obligation to justify myself in any manner whatever, and especially before a tribunal whose authority I do not recognise, and whose existence is a denial given to civilization and progress and completely destroys the purity of religion, of love and of peace, which Jesus Christ came to found on this earth.

Therefore I have presented myself before you in this place for the following reasons:

- 1st. To bear witness of my faith in Jesus Christ, who has entirely justified and saved me, and also to bear witness to the strength and consolation I have found in this faith.
2nd. To profit by the occasion, which God in His grace offers to me, to expose the truth before the Holy Office, and to expose it in all its fulness, in the hope that it may become the seed for the conversion of the whole clergy; and I pray God that he may give me the consolation (unworthy instrument that I am) of seeing hundreds of others brought to the light of truth, and who until now have been obstinate and cruel persecutors.
3rd. To remove any doubt which may yet remain on your mind, and to deliver you from all difficulties relative to the position I held in the Basilica Libreriana; the present is a formal renunciation of the aforesaid position with all rights of profit which are attached thereto; I renounce them all in favour of the person whose right it is to be appointed there, and he can freely dispose of the said position, either keeping it for himself or giving it to another person as he may see fit; I again say that I renounce it entirely, so that with St. Paul I may say: "The things from which I derived anything (a profit of any kind) are renounced by me as being injurious to Christ and it is for him that I wished to renounce them; and I consider the profit I derived from them as dross and now seek only to gain Christ." (Phil. iii. 7, 8.)

Having thus explained to you the reasons for which I now find myself before you in this place, I come to bear witness of my belief, which you call "Apostasy." [Father Grassi here argues at length that the Papal Church, has no right to the appellation "Catholic" or "Apostolic," and quotes from the Scriptures in support of all the doctrines he advances.] He then proceeds:—

Now listen to what God has promised to do here in Rome against the enemies of His Church. Here is the infallible order that God sends to the Roman believers: "The God of peace will soon grind Satan under his feet." (Rom. xvi. 20).

Do you not tremble at these words of the Lord? Is it not perhaps Satan who has imposed and directed so many judgments, so many tortures, so many butcheries, and massacres in these very rooms? Do you then wish to make these very walls cry out against you, these walls, within which so many Christians have been killed? You wish to make these vaults speak, which have so often echoed to cries of agony!—these subterranean chambers, where so many Christians have been buried alive! But already Satan begins to be conquered: The torch of the

dog of the Inquisition is for ever extinguished, the breath of God has blown upon it, and from this time forth it can never more be ignited.

In this room to-day I come to bear witness to the truth; and you no longer have the power to touch a hair of my head; you have lost all authority; the work of God has commenced; and upon these walls, these chambers, these instruments of torture and this tribunal will be ground like so much dust; under our feet: and the dust thrown to the four winds announcing to the entire world that the office of the Holy Inquisition has ceased to exist, duly dead, so that it will never again raise itself, since God will have ground it under the feet of the Roman believers. Yes, Satan will be ground, his work shall be destroyed, the doctrines, the superstitions, the errors fall each day; the truth penetrates more and more, soon there will be no more barriers which can oppose any obstacle; because the God of peace will grind Satan under our feet.

And you men, hardened in your doctrines, listen for a moment to an old father of the priesthood, who said mass, who confessed, who preached with you, you who hear him speak thus, you must now weep for me as if I were dead. But on the contrary I tell you leave your tears aside, I am not dead, but I have entered amongst the living, and I come to announce to you the resurrection which is beginning, the resurrection of that Church which you have tried to stifle in blood. That Church now breaks the tombstone and advances clear and brilliant as the morning aurora, whose white light shining on the seven hills puts to flight; ignorance, superstition, heresy, tyranny, and apostasy, faithful shadows of a dark night.

Farewell, then, Church of my youth; farewell, my comrades, comrades of an usurped ministry, ministers of a work of destruction, I leave you because I will not be ground to dust with Satan; I go out from the dead, and from a dead Church, because I belong to the Resurrection; I leave you because Paul the Apostle of Rome orders me to retire from amongst such ministers. And if my word still exercises any influence on your hearts, I conjure you, I pray you to open your eyes to the light and abandon this system of darkness in which you live, and to accept the radiant splendour of Christ, who will raise you, will console you, and finally lead you into his majestic glory.

I know that these doctrines will appear impious and heretical in your eyes; but with God's aid I am ready to maintain them before you in a public discussion. And if your Church believes me to be in error, then let it come and publicly demonstrate my errors.—Believe me, Very Rev. Father your Lordship's very humble servant.

PAOLO GRASSI, Chev. The following is also taken from the London Freeman:—

"We also reprint from the Italian News the following important communication from our esteemed missionary in Rome, the Rev. James Wall:—

To the Editor of the Italian News.

Not wishing to avail myself of the right accorded by Italian law to reply in the Frusta to the insults which the editor of that paper has launched against the Apostolic Church in Via Laurina, feeling sure that any one who sympathises with the usual tone of that periodical is not open to reason, I address myself to you, Mr. Editor, in the hope of seeing published in your paper, and thus submitted to the impartial judgment of respectable Catholics, this answer to those calumnies.

Chevalier Paolo Grassi came to me some months since stating that he no longer believed in the dogmas of the Papal Church, and that he had resolved to become a Protestant, and devote himself to the work of preaching the Gospel in this city. He was informed that the Church in Via Laurina is not in full communion with Protestant Churches, and that its aim is not to establish Protestantism in Rome; but to resume the work of the early Christians, interrupted by apostasy during the first centuries, and buried under the superstitions of ages, and that she returns to the old foundations, not to destroy them, but to continue the building of the Church of Christ in Rome, and that he by applying to some Protestant Church in Rome would find those who recognize his baptism and perhaps his ordination, while with us both are rejected.

Finding that, instead of being discouraged, he was yet more anxious to become a member of the Church, he was desired to show his documents, from which it appeared that Sig. Grassi had been for 36

years in the service of the Papal Church, in which he had successively fulfilled the duties of priest, confessor, curate, chaplain, mitred abbot, lenten preacher, and lastly incumbent of the Liberian Basilica, and that a few days before calling at my residence, on May 23rd last, he presented himself at the Vicariate and received from Cardinal Patrizii renewed faculty to perform ecclesiastical duties during the current year. From his documents it also appears that, as a citizen, he had received the commemorative medal for the battles fought in the years 1848 and 1849, and that his Majesty King Victor Emanuel had distinguished him with the honor of knighthood of the order of St. Maritus and Lazarus.

After such testimonials of honesty and morality, given by the highest ecclesiastical and civil authorities, Chev. Grassi was received as catechumen, and after four months of instruction, and public confession of his faith was baptized and recognized as a member of the Church, but not as a minister. When Chev. Grassi made known to the Cardinal Vicar his conversion, the Catholic papers of Rome (that to which I excepted) did not at all refer to the case. Respecting that silence, Chev. Grassi has imitated it, but it remains to be seen whether, in justice to himself, he will not be obliged to break it, and show in what kind of houses those reside who throw stones at him.

According to the Frusta he who yesterday received so many proofs of esteem, from so many members of the clergy, and especially from the Cardinal Vicar; he who officiated in a cathedral, who according to them made the Holy Ghost descend in baptismal water, and Christ in the mass, who bound and unbound in heaven and earth, who assisted souls in Purgatory, who confessed the virtuous mothers and daughters of Rome, was unworthy of any respect whatever. Supposing this to be true, what a terrible condemnation of the Roman clergy! During 36 years he has been among them, educated, instructed, consecrated, blessed, and their blessings, example, sacraments, miraculous relics, wonderful working saints and infallible Popes, according to the Frusta, have been of no avail. If so, who can blame Chev. Grassi, if, finding no efficacy in Romanism, no regenerating strength in that Church, he threw himself into the arms of Christ the friend of sinners, not now the Judge but the Justifier of the ungodly? And who can wonder if the apostolic Christians, imitating the example of their Lord, have received him as a prodigal returned, or, if in future, as they hope, they will receive other ecclesiastical sinners whose consciences, terrified by the signs of coming judgment, will abandon all to take refuge in Christ.

But the efforts of the Frusta to morally assassinate the Chev. Grassi have failed, or they would also prove that his documents are false, and that the Cardinal Vicar is either unfaithful or incapable, and that whoever believes in a priest as legally authorized to administer sacraments has no security whatever for anything of the kind.

In Signor Grassi's life, as the Frusta calumniates it, there are two facts: the one, dishonorable—the condemnation of 1854,—and the other, humiliating—his actual debts. To both of these charges he himself will reply. But if he was imprisoned (in 1850, and not in 1853, as the Frusta says, for at that time he was teacher at Monte Romano, which office he discharged until 1850) he was liberated by Monsignor Bisledi himself, and immediately restored to his ministry, which for a Catholic is a sufficient proof of his innocence.

As to his enormous debts and his innumerable creditors whom the Cardinal Vicar of his natural generosity paid, the former did not amount to a thousand francs, of which the Cardinal out of his own pocket did not pay more than 200. And now, that in consequence of having given security for others, especially for a priest who did not keep his word, he is in debt, he is arranging for immediate payment.

Now that the journalism of Rome has investigated the private and public life of the Chev. Grassi impartial persons will remark—

1st. That no respectable Catholic journal has said a word against the Chev. Grassi.

2nd. Whatever Chev. Grassi's past life may have been in the Papal Church, nothing prevented him in the free exercise of his ministry up to the moment he sent his recantation to the Cardinal Vicar.

3rd. Whatever may have been the motive, whether respectable or not, it is a fact that a chevalier, a Roman, a priest, an incumbent, with a secure income, and others certain and uncertain, has left every-

thing, in order to enter as a simple brother in the Apostolic Church, where he does not receive half so much as formerly, and even this provisionally, and which would cease in case of his not giving evidence of possessing the character and ability required in a minister among us.

4th. It is also quite certain that up to this moment this ex-incumbent, calumniated, surrounded with spies, ill treated by some friends, tempted to return by offered gold, threatened with poison and stiletto, still perseveres in stating that he left the Church of his youth and riper years from patriotism, love for the primitive Church, love to Christ, and that to the Papal Church he will never more return.

I confess, Mr. Editor, that, though with millions of Italians I had supposed the Catholic priesthood hopelessly lost, in materialism, I now find it less difficult to admit that there are in that clergy some elect souls, capable of sacrificing things material to the interests of truth and the requirements of conscience, and who do not believe Catholicism to be that Tartarean pagan.

Continuo soneto accento flagello. Tisiphone quatit insultans.

which is the banner the Frusta glories in, but rather seek it in the humble Son of God and Mary who felt compassion alike for heretical Samaria and apostate Jerusalem, and who deploring the actual moral and spiritual ruins of Catholicism, would gladly hail the return of that time when the Church of Rome was not a candlestick removed from its place, thrown to the ground, and in the hands of paganism, but the base and pillar of the truth, which, like a sacred flame, nourished and guarded by the living ministry of Jesus, sent forth its rays to the ends of the earth. In the providence of God the column is re-erected; one after another the lights are re-appearing; the true Minister Christ is now officiating, and all in Rome who sympathise with him are invited to take part in the struggle of light against social and ecclesiastical darkness. Christ has promised to baptize Satan under the feet of Roman believers (Rom. xvi. 20); already many an ancient superstition has bent its brow, the whole system of error totters, and the voice of truth is heard crying amid the peril and confusion, not only to drowsy Christians but also to slumbering churches—"Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14), come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. Come all out, and, issuing from that eclipse, you shall be covered with the splendour of Christ and shine as the lights of the world.

Yours, &c. JAMES WALL. October, 16, 1873.

Correspondence.

For the Christian-Messenger.

BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear Editor,—

Perhaps a few lines from "the hub" may not be without interest to some of your readers. They have already heard of the business panic, and perhaps have felt some of its effects. Here it is deservedly claiming the attention of all classes. The heaviest stroke is felt by the laboring classes, many of whom are out of employment, and how they shall procure food during the winter is a question yet unsolved. The present state of things should teach Provincials a lesson if they will but learn, namely—to be content with well-doing at home, and not leave good opportunities for the uncertainties of Yankeeedom. No small number of the present sufferers are from the Provinces. It may induce our young people to remain at home and devote their energies in the development of the resources of our own loved land. A fair, on a large scale, is now being held in Music Hall, under the auspices of the Young Women's Christian Association. The object of which is to provide a Young Woman's Home, which would be a valuable institution at such times as the present. The success is so far encouraging.

There seems to be considerable of religious interest in our churches in this city. The new pastor at Tremont Temple is attracting large congregations, and has baptized each month since the beginning of his pastorate. Last Sabbath he welcomed twenty-three to the fellowship of the church, thirteen of whom have been baptized during the last three months. Other churches have had recent additions. Dr. Cheney, the efficient pastor of Central

Square Church has baptized each month during the year. Rev. Newman Hall has been preaching in the city and vicinity for the past few weeks, and yesterday preached his farewell sermon to Boston, in Tremont Temple. He goes from here to New York. His object is to collect funds for a memorial monument to Abraham Lincoln, to be erected in connection with his new church in London. The monument is to be 200 feet high, and to cost £1000 stg. Half this sum Mr. H. wishes to collect in the United States. During his stay in Boston he preached twenty sermons and collected \$1200. His object is to earn the money by preaching the Gospel. He states his object at the commencement of each meeting and takes a collection at the close—no allusion being made to it in the sermon. That is emphatically "Jesus Christ and him crucified." He does not fail to unveil the terrors of Sinai, but seems to delight in pointing to the glories of Calvary. There is nothing particularly startling in his manner or matter more than this, a plain statement of the way of salvation through Christ. He dwells much on the character of "God being manifested to us in the Saviour. No doubt the results of his earnest sermons will live, when even the Lincoln monument shall have passed away.

Yours &c. PROVINCIALIST. Boston, Dec. 13th.

For the Christian Messenger.

SABBATH SCHOOL WORK.

BRIDGEWATER, Dec. 1873. On Sunday afternoon, Dec. 7th, a "Juvenile Mission Band" was formed of the members of the Baptist Sabbath School in this place. The exercises in connection with its organization were interesting. The Officers are as follows, viz: Isaac Darland, President. J. B. Parker, Vice President. Samuel Freeman, Treasurer. W. J. Gates, Corresponding Secretary. All the Teachers in the Sunday School, and officers of the Society to be Collectors and act as a Committee of Management. Children. . . \$0 25 and upwards. Adults. . . 0 50 Life members. 5 00

The Sabbath School has held three interesting Sacred Concerts, two at Bridgewater, the third was held at Ham's Hall on Friday evening, Dec. 10th. The proceeds of the last one were given to aid the friends there in erecting their new meeting house. The Concert consisted of the filling of a "Scriptural Arch." Essays, Music, &c. The whole was instructive as well as pleasing, and has a tendency to awaken interest in the Sabbath School cause.

The friends propose giving several others in aid of the Mission cause, with which they are now identified. I may remark further that the object of the Mission Band is to aid our Missions in Siam, in gathering into day and Sunday Schools heathen children, thus training them up in the ways of Christianity.

Thousands of dollars could be raised by our Sunday Schools being thus formed into Mission Bands. Our little band numbers thirty three members. It is hoped that many more of our Sunday Schools will join in this good work. Children are usually ready to enter into the spirit of such undertakings—and when rightly directed by man's mature mind great good may be looked for as the result. Let our Sabbath School children, grow up with a missionary spirit, thus infused into them and the increased interest in Mission work in the future, will amply prove the utility of such training. If more pains were taken to fill the youthful mind with good there would be less room for evil and; good-meaning, but mismanaging parents would not so frequently have to mourn bitterly over the follies of their children.

Yours &c. W. J. GATES, Cor. Sec'y.

For the Christian Messenger

"SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE."

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.

DEAR SIR,—Will you permit the Christian Messenger to bear the following message?

In the article, "Ask for the old paths and walk therein," in the Messenger of the 3rd inst. treating chiefly of the Lord's Supper, I find this sentence:

"While Methodism exercises itself in this wholesale and unbridled prostitution of the rite of baptism, Episcopacy and Campbellism add the evil of evil to their doings by professing to translate men, we-