



Evangelical Christendom.

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MONTHLY NOTES.

As it is hoped that this, our first number for the New Year, will be in the hands of our readers a few days before the commencement of the Week of Universal Prayer, from the 6th to 18th, it may not be amiss to call attention to some of the circumstances of the Church and of the world at the present time, which seem to call for special notice in connexion with the general programme of subjects, which has been widely circulated, as affording a guide for united prayer. We would, perhaps, do well to add to the subjects for thanksgiving suggested for Monday, one or two which occur in the Invitation to Thanksgiving issued by the President of the United States, from which we quoted in Monthly Notes for December. One is "for immunity from disease and pestilence." After the serious outbreak of cholera some time ago at Hamburg, it seemed unlikely that we should escape as we have, through God's mercy, hitherto done. Another is "for the harvests that have rewarded our industry." If not of universal application, there are many particular places where this cause for thanksgiving should not be forgotten.

The prayer for the Church Universal, which forms the subject for Tuesday, calls to remembrance the many schemes which are afloat for promoting unity amongst Christians, most of which are doomed to failure from their not being cast in the lines of God's principle of unity, which is the union of believers in Christ, and under His Headship only. This union being founded on a fact, all practical realisation of it must start from the recognition of this fact. Therefore, instead of praying that such a unity may be formed, the prayer suggested is "that the unity of believers in Christ may be more fully apprehended," or, as Scripture puts it, that we may be found "endeavouring to

The Salvation Army wished to build a chapel at Bale at the Erasmus place, but the citizen of the vicinity sent a petition to the magistrate in order to have this building stopped. They said the houses would lose their value if the Salvation Army were permitted to build a chapel there. Happily the magistrate declined to stop the building of this chapel.

Great exertions are now made in different parts of our country to counter-balance the Socialist movements, but as Christians we must ever remember that we cannot do anything without the Lord.—A. P.

ITALY.

It is reported that owing to special efforts made by the Commission of Evangelization of the Waldensian Church, and especially by means of the energetic measures taken by Dr. Prochet during his recent tour in America, the very grave deficit of 68,000 lire, has been completely extinguished. The welcome which the Doctor received at the Synod, has been repeated, if possible, more warmly at the Church in the Via Nazionale, Rome. The return to his pastoral and social duties at the Waldensian centre in the capital, has rekindled the enthusiasm which ever pervaded the hearts of his flock, and especially after so prolonged an absence, and after the risks of a long and arduous voyage. A deputation met Dr. Prochet at the railway station, anxious to give him a hearty welcome upon his return home. As all could not be present on the platform, it was determined to organise a gathering in the lecture hall connected with the church. The building, adorned with evergreens and flowers, presented a gay and festive appearance, the result of the efforts of the younger members of the congregation. At the appointed hour a very goodly number of brethren and sisters found themselves once more united together, having their pastor in their midst. Signors Giampiccoli, Arias, and Piovanelli offered him the congratulations of the Church upon his safe return, and also on the successful realisation of the various undertakings which it had fallen to his lot to initiate and carry forward. "May," said Cav. Piovanelli, "the Waldensian Church, that hardy and vigorous oak, find in the soil in which it is planted that vital nourishment which shall be adequate to its fullest development." This wish of Cav. Piovanelli met with sincere and long-continued applause. Dr. Prochet replied in words of the warmest gratitude, and added, "Although absent from you, you have been continually in my thoughts." And in reference to the loss of some members of the congregation, he said, "When you have wept, I have wept also; and when joy has filled your hearts, I have rejoiced with you." Some very kind things were said of Signor Buffa, who, having so recently left for Messina, naturally caused some anxiety lest the earthquakes might have been the cause of disaster either to himself, his family, or the church. Information since received is reassuring.

The winter season connected with the Church in the Via Nazionale promises well. The Sabbath morning services are, as usual, numerous attended; and the interest manifested by the audience shows that there is an earnest desire to give heed to the things which make for their peace. But the evening services of the Lord's Day and that of the Thursday evening afford much encouragement on account of the increase in attendance and zeal of the members.

The following is the substance of a paragraph which appeared in the *Civiltà Evangelica* (Methodist organ), and is worthy of note: "Assisi—On Nov. 15, a distinguished honour was conferred by the city on Mons. Paul Sabatier, Protestant minister, and author of 'The Life of St. Francis d'Assisi.' Mons. Sabatier, being anxious to see the scene of St. Francis' labours, visited Assisi for a short time; and during his sojourn the inhabitants bid him welcome by providing a public banquet. The Syndic (Mayor), the members of the Quinta and the Communal Council, the officials and professors of the College, 'Principe di Napoli,' and other institutions, and the principal citizens gave a banquet to the illustrious French writer who was visiting their city at that moment. Toasts were proposed by the Mayor and others. Sabatier replied, extolling the glory of Italy, its artists, poets, philosophers, and

especially St. Francis d'Assisi, whom he called the patriarch of Christian democracy. He terminated his speech by proposing a toast to the King and Queen, and to the hospitable citizens of Assisi. It should be noted that the Pope first gave his benediction to the work and its author, but eventually withdrew it." So much for Leo the Infallible.

The new Patriarch of Venice appears to be an Ultramontane of the first order. His entry into Venice was marked by an unusual display of banners and rich hangings from the windows and balconies, and an immense concourse of people. This enthusiasm may probably be accounted for by the fact that there has been such a prolonged controversy between the Government and the Vatican regarding the appointment; and, furthermore, the financial scandals and sluggishness of trade have been seized upon by the priests to set the people against the Government, and to make them believe that the treatment of the Church is the cause of all their disasters. These things added to the wire-pulling of the sacerdotal orders, who can, by organising a Festa for a pleasure and show-loving people, always produce a demonstration, largely aided to bring about an apparent success for the newly-appointed prelate. But lovers of truth and verity, and men and women who are loyal to their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, cannot but feel sure that all this is vanity of vanities. The Patriarch's sermon preached in the Church of St. Mark to a large congregation bears the mark of arrogant pretensions of the most absolute character, which in the present day can only provoke a resolute opposition. "The Pope," he said, "is not simply the representative of Jesus Christ: On the contrary, he is Jesus Christ Himself, under the veil of the flesh, and who by means of a being common to humanity continues His ministry among men. . . . Does the Pope speak? It is Jesus Christ Who is speaking. Does he teach? It is Jesus Christ Who teaches. Does he confer grace, or pronounce an anathema? It is Jesus Christ Himself Who is pronouncing the anathema and conferring grace. Hence consequently, when anyone speaks of the Pope, it is not necessary to examine, but to obey: there must be no limiting the bounds of the command, in order to suit the purpose of the individual whose obedience is demanded: there must be no cavilling at the declared will of the Pope, and so invest it with quite another sense than that which he has put upon it: no pre-conceived opinions must be brought to bear upon it: no rights must be set up against the rights of the Holy Father to teach and to command; his decisions are not to be criticised, or his ordinances disputed. Therefore, by Divine ordination, all, no matter how august the person may be—whether he wear a crown or be invested with the purple, or be clothed in the sacred vestments: all must be subject to Him Who has had all things put under Him."

After thanking the people for the reception given him the Patriarch raised his voice, and in loud and dominant tones declared that he intended to carry out the duties of the Patriarchate and without any abatement of his claims or any kind of subterfuge. He declared that he should hold aloft the banner which had been confided to him, firmly determined to carry out the will and behests of the Pontiff at any cost.

There can be no doubt, after reading the accounts, and considering the reception given to the Ferrari at Turin that there is an active movement set on foot to restore the temporal power. That it will provoke conflict and resistance can scarcely be doubted. If in England and in the English Church there are those who are working to bring about ecclesiastical pretensions such as are set forth in the words of the Patriarch of Venice, it will be well for them to think twice. Absolutism is professed in its most audacious form. Union with the Vatican will turn out an unworkable system here as it has done everywhere else.