

He briefly admonished the people to engage in prayer, and then delivered the prayer. This produced a deep impression upon the people, who had never before witnessed a prayer, except in connection with Romish ceremonies. The Romish priest of the village immediately lodged a complaint against the pastor for having, contrary to the prohibition, delivered a funeral discourse. Perhaps he did not know what a prayer was. Hereupon the pastor was called to account, first before the president of the district, and then before the overseer of the congregation, a village peasant by whom the matter was formerly investigated. Notwithstanding his justification, he received, a few weeks afterward, a letter from the president of the district, in which he was told that "he had lately, at the funeral of N. N., delivered an address in an oratorical style, in which he had spoken of the transitory nature of things earthly, and of good works" (so it is expressed); "and had by this unlawful procedure deserved severe punishment; but as the most reverend dean of the place did not desire his injury, he received only a severe admonition."

But what, meanwhile, is the state of the Romish Church in Bohemia? If possible, still more lamentable. The upper classes are indifferent, and, as the writer has himself heard, ridicule the Romish faith and ceremonies, though they are constrained to attend upon the external services of the Church, the clergy having considerable influence in appointments to civil offices, &c. The mass of the people are but little advanced, attending merely upon the externals of religion, devoted to pleasure, and shy of strangers. I prefer to say nothing of the reports which I heard relative to the lives of the priesthood.—*Translated from Hengstenberg's Kirchenzeitung.*

ITALY.

It is painful to allude to the division in the Evangelical party in Italy, and yet it is necessary to do so, that those who are interested in the Evangelical movement may be able to judge between rival claimants. Without entering into the question fully, I shall refer to one or two facts, that people may judge for themselves.

1. At the last Synod of the Waldensian Church, the preacher was Dr. De Sanctis. In his discourse he referred to the testimony which had been borne to the truth by the Waldensian Church and thanked God that he, who was not born in that church, nor educated in it, belonged to it by duty, and conviction, and choice. Signor Mazzarella was also a member of Synod as deputy for Turin, and in a most eloquent speech he bore his testimony to the church which God had planted in a corner of Italy, and thanked God that when Italy felt the need of the Gospel, she could receive it, not from strangers, but from her own sons and citizens,—not from a church that takes its name from Luther or Calvin, but from a church that reaches even to the days of the apostles. Now, strangers certainly thought that such words from such men had a meaning in them,—that they were not mere sound, signifying nothing. But a few months afterwards, no change having taken place in the meantime in the Waldensian Church, Dr. De Sanctis and Signor Mazzarella have given in their demission, and attached themselves to a new party. Now if mere talk be all that is wanted, we can get Italians by the dozen who will talk for a summer day, and some who will improvise verses on any subject whatever; but what we do need is this, that men should mean what they say, and do what they profess. Those rapid movements from one party to another can only give to others the impression of peculiar undecidedness of character. It is painful to speak in this way of friends whom I esteem, but the truth is of more importance than any personal feeling, and they themselves ought to feel that such move-

ments do not tend to inspire confidence. There is a good old rule, to which quiet, slow-thinking, and old-fashioned people are somewhat partial,—"Meddle not with them that are given to change."

I write in this way because I believe the time has come when a division of the Evangelical party in Italy cannot be avoided. It is impossible that some of the Italians, holding the opinions which they do hold, should continue to belong to a regular organised church. And it is far better that there should be a division, than that the church should be distracted by the attempt to hold together incongruous elements. As far as any party holds the truth, we wish it God speed; but when it attempts divisions, or opposes another party on erroneous principles, it is a duty to protest against such movements. And the sooner we do protest, and take our stand, the better. It is sad that several of the most active members of the Evangelical Society in Geneva should encourage these divisions in Italy in opposition to the Waldensian Church. It is a very easy matter to foment such divisions in a land, where every town and country is jealous of every other; but is it right? Will it tend to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? I do not say that the Waldensian Church is perfect, but I believe that according to its strength it is faithful to its mission, and that it is doing a great work in this land. I do not say that we ought to confine our sympathies to that church; but when a new party sets out in opposition, we are bound to inquire into its principles, that we may know how far we should help it on.

These divisions sad as they are, may be overruled for good. But the Reformation in Italy failed before, in great part because of such divisions. The sixteenth century has left a solemn warning to the nineteenth. The work failed before,—shall it fail again? I do not anticipate such failure; but every man who is concerned in this movement has his own solemn account to give regarding it. Private jealousies, personal ambition, the wish to rule, the desire to have the pre-eminence, should have no place here; the work is the Lord's. I believe Dr. De Sanctis and Signor Mazzarella to be sincere and excellent men. The former has done much by his admirable tracts on "Confession," "Tradition," "The Papacy," &c., to rouse the mind of Italy to a consideration of the errors of the Romish Church. The latter has been unwearied in his labours since he himself received the truth. It is greatly to be regretted that two such men should set an example of undecidedness, and changeableness, at a time when firmness of purpose is peculiarly necessary.

I have thought it right to enter into this matter more at length, that the position of affairs in Piedmont may be better known. It is painful to the Waldensian Table to deal with such cases, but the church cannot give way to the crude notions of some of its new members, and must maintain its position alike against enemies without and misguided friends within.—*News of the Churches.*

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

The solemn farce at St. Peter's in Rome has been enacted. The Pope, as already stated, has pronounced his Bull that Mary, the mother of our Lord, was free from the taint of sin, and hence was not indebted to Christ for redemption. This is now declared to be a doctrine which can only be denied by heretics. The Scriptures have not revealed it; the Church, for eighteen centuries, has not acknowledged it; and now it is to be received as the revelation, because a miserable old driveller, taking counsel of a set of Jesuits, has pronounced it to be true! Surely, human credulity is taxed too severely by such a demand.

The ceremonial at Rome was of the most

gorgeous description, on the occasion when this Bull was promulgated. It is too nauseous to copy. Suffice it to say that more than two hundred Bishops were present, among whom was John Hughes of New York, to grace the pitiful mummerly. A paragraph or two, respecting the proceedings, may satisfy our readers.

"His holiness gave utterance to the all-important Bull during high mass, after the reading of the gospel. It took him about a quarter of an hour to get through, but he was so much affected in various parts of the document, that he was obliged to interrupt the reading of it, to dry his tears with a pocket handkerchief. With the exception of this, and an occasional shriek from some one squeezed or fainting in the crowd, no particular emotion was observable. The decoration of the church were most gorgeous, and the bronze statue of St. Peter rejoiced in the possession of two new and sumptuous candlesticks, presented by Pio Nono expressly for the occasion.

"The next ceremony was that of crowning the Madonna, which seemed to interest the mass of spectators more than the previous dogmatical declaration. The procession of Bishops once more led the way to the Cardinal's chapel, where a crimson platform had been prepared before the altar-piece, so as to allow of the Pope's ascending to the figure of the Virgin, as depicted in the clouds in the upper part of the picture. The cannon of St. Angelo thundered out applause as his holiness attached the precious diadem to the painting, and the crowd, kept at bay by a battalion of Chasseurs, reeked and panted in vain endeavours to catch a sight of the proceeding. It is not for me to hazard an opinion whether curiosity or devotion urged the thousands of spectators on this occasion; but certainly the numbers collected together far exceeded anything I ever beheld before in St. Peter's."

As a just view of the whole transaction, as it strikes a Protestant mind, we quote the following from the *Edinburgh Witness*.

"We do not say that this decree formally enacts that 'there is no God,' but we maintain that its effect is to obliterate God from the minds and beliefs of the people of the Roman Church. The decree bids them not to pray to God, nor look for any blessing from God, nor cherish any love to God, nor even think of God. It is, we strongly suspect, the filling up of the cup, for it is the last truth of the Bible left standing now blotted out. It is not the manner of that church to deny truth in the way of leaving its place a blank, but to deny it in the way of displacing it by the antipodal error. In this way has gone the whole round of revelation, extinguishing one light after another, and now all is darkness that may be felt. She denied the atonement by substituting the sacrifice of the mass; she denied the existence and agency of the Spirit by substituting the sacrament; she denied holy Scripture by substituting tradition. There remained only the belief in a God; and now the Church of Rome has blotted out that last truth by a decree which is tantamount to proclaiming the deity of Mary, and which fixes her, in the feelings and beliefs of the members of that Church, as the supreme and only God. However divergent their courses, and diverse their forms, all error has a common point of meeting; and thus the infidelity of Voltaire, and the supposition of the Popes, have found at length their common culminating point in *Atheism*. 'There is no God,' said the French Convention, when they celebrated the apotheosis of a female in Notre Dame; and Pius IX. and his bishops re-echo the cry from beyond the Alps, in the apotheosis of Mary in St. Peter's. 'There is no God.'—*Presbyterian.*

Those who are afraid of sin and act cautiously, if they ask direction of God, may expect to be led in the right way.