

the Val d'Aosta on the southern base of Mount Blanc, in Turin, Voghera, Leghorn, Genoa, Florence, Pisa, the Waldenses have either pastors or missionaries, while other bodies, including the Plymouth Brethren, have Missionary agents in various localities. Gavazzi, too, has been in the wake of the Italian Liberator, with no uncertain sound blowing the gospel trumpet. Some time ago he was in Messina, more recently he has been in Naples itself, wearing the uniform of a volunteer, but wielding the spiritual weapons of the gospel. The Bible Society are also introducing the Scriptures, large numbers of which are bought by the Italians. There is far more hope for Italy in the introduction of the Bible and the free proclamation of the Gospel, than in the mere force of arms, even although wielded by such patriots as Garibaldi, or in the political counsels even of such men as Cavour.

While in Italy the cause of the gospel is advancing, it is pleasing to notice that in Portugal there are some glimmerings of light, giving promise of a brighter day, or at least offering encouragement, prayer and effort. The Rev. Herman Schmeitan has addressed a letter to *Evangelical Christianity*, in which he expresses very sanguine hopes in regard to the spiritual prospects of Portugal. He mentions several circumstances on which his hopes were based: (2) the disputes which arose about fourteen years ago between the Pope and the Portuguese government with reference to the ancient rights of the Portuguese crown over the Bishops in the Indian possessions; (2) the dogma of the Immaculate conception, converted by the present Pope from "a pious belief" into a doctrine of the Church; and (3) the struggle which arose about three years ago against the introduction of the French sisters of charity, and their father confessors, the Lazzarists. "These and other causes," says the writer, "have contributed to prepare the country for the reception of the Bible and other religious books; and if the efforts in behalf of poor Portugal be carried on zealously and prayerfully, cautiously and not in an aggressive spirit, I feel convinced that the truth of the gospel will soon dispel the darkness which at present covers that unhappy land. The first glimpses of the heavenly light are already breaking through the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition, and letters which I have received from Portugal, no one can read without the deepest interest, and the fervent prayer, that the Lord may in His infinite mercy pour out some of His heavenly spirit upon those in Portugal, whom, as I believe, He has destined to be the heralds of His saving grace."

Belgium is another of the Popish Co un

tries now giving promise of brighter and Letter days. There are now from 7000 to 8.00 Protestants, almost all having been brought out of Popery since 1835, when the Bible Society commenced its operations, and was soon followed by the Evangelical Society. During the time that the Bible Society has been carrying on its operations in Belgium a quarter of million copies have been circulated. In the year 1859-60, the number of copies circulated amounted to 73,000. There are sixteen Protestant Stations filled by truly excellent Evangelical Pastors, and altogether the progress of the Protestant cause is very encouraging. The Synod of the Free Church of Belgium had a meeting about the middle of August. The proceedings were interesting, and were participated in by several deputies from other churches, among whom were Rev. Dr. John Bonar from Scotland, and Rev. Dr. McKee of the Presbyterian Church, Ireland.

From another dark corner there is also a beam of light. There is a Protestant church formed among the Spanish inhabitants of Algiers, and recently a goodly number of both sexes, who formerly belonged to the Romish church, sat down for the first time as communicants, the ordinance of the supper being dispensed by the Rev. S. Coyne the French Protestant pastor. Perhaps a spark from this little fire may yet be carried back to light up the spiritual darkness of Spain.

#### CONGREGATIONAL MISSIONARY MEETINGS.

The season for the missionary meetings, which are usually held throughout the greater part of the church, is now at hand. We trust they will be more than usually satisfactory and effective. There are many advantages, we believe, connected with well arranged missionary meetings, and in most of the Presbyteries in which they have been in operation for some years, ample testimony will be borne to the beneficial results which have flowed from them. It is true they are not the only means to be employed for promoting a missionary spirit, and drawing forth missionary funds. Missionary subjects should be often brought before the people, and the obligations of Christians to aid in the extension of Christian missions frequently enforced. Missionary intelligence too should be frequently brought before congregations, either at monthly missionary prayer meetings, or on other occasions. Even missionary periodicals, extensively circulated, will not answer the purpose without frequent addresses and appeals from the living lips. The young too should be familiarised with the subject

of missions, and should be often told in the Sabbath School, or from the pulpit, of the operations and results of missionary enterprise. But in addition to these and such like means, we believe that well arranged missionary meetings have a very happy effect. The people are brought together in a less formal way, and with fewer restraints, than when they come to an ordinary religious service. Matters may be pressed upon their minds, which might be regarded as less fitted for the pulpit, or the Sabbath day. A healthy measure of fervor is excited and diffused, while in addition to other benefits, it may be said that, without the difficulties connected with the maintenance of organized associations, very much the same results and advantages are secured. From personal knowledge we can declare that, by the results of missionary meetings, embracing both collections and subscriptions, much more is frequently obtained than by many missionary collections at ordinary services.

We are aware that missionary meetings, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, may not succeed in every case. They may be more suited to the circumstances of some congregations than of others. In some quarters there may be a prejudice against such meetings, arising in some measure from the manner in which they have been sometimes conducted, and from the frivolity often indulged in by the speakers. But let them be judiciously arranged, and conducted in a lively, pleasant, but still sober and becoming manner, and we are persuaded that in most cases they will be appreciated as a most useful means of doing good.

Where missionary meetings are held, they ought to be successful this season much more so than of late years. Two or three years of depression, and of bad harvests have been succeeded by a year of prosperity and plenty. In every department of trade, the improvement is already largely felt. Let it be so too in the church. Most of the members of the church are in circumstances to give more than last year. Let them not withhold but freely give to the Lord of his own. Several townships have to be in a measure explored, many new mission stations to be organized, and many weak struggling congregations need aid and encouragement. We trust that the mission treasuries of the several Presbyteries will be replenished, that there may be means to occupy the destitute parts of the field, and many waiting, desponding congregations may, with cheerful eyes, see their teachers.

#### THE DAY OF THANKSGIVING.

It is now known, in all probability, to our readers that Thursday, 6th day of