

but I shall look to what has passed there for ever. I will remember our meeting there, and the 16th day of April, 1874; and rejoice to say 'I was there.' But shall any of us stand before the throne with 'Nothing but leaves?' It is hard to draw to a close to friends from Newcastle, and Edinburgh, and all other places. We must say, Good night; but we shall meet in the morning."

BIBLE SCHOOLS IN ITALY.

By Alessandro Gavazzi.

I hear that the Italian evangelical schools have been rather disparaged by some one in that highly esteemed paper *The Christian*, on account of their uselessness and unfruitfulness. As with soul and heart I have always advocated the necessity for such schools, and my efforts have been directed to obtain their realization in this country, so I am bound, in duty and conscience, to stand up now to defend them.

True, under our new régime we have Governmental schools everywhere; it is true also that they are generally good enough for the purposes of a popular education; but this is no reason why our own Bible-schools are unnecessary. Although the Italian Parliament has left our municipalities free as to religious instruction, yet in all of these schools the Popish Catechism is still retained; and, as a consequence, there is the interference and influence of the clerical element. It was chiefly to keep our youngsters from such influence that our schools were established, and also to afford the same opportunity to the many Roman Catholics who disliked such an intrusion. And even in this respect the benefit has been felt a very great one, as is proved by the number of Roman Catholic children frequenting our schools.

But whilst our schools are thus not at all unnecessary or useless, they are, on the other side, very fruitful. How many in Italy are now communicants in

some of our congregations, who, years ago, learned the first lesson of Christian truth in our own schools! How many have been fitted to become teachers of the same truth in other schools! Are not these visible fruits, well rewarding the money and the care spent for their training?

Had we an evangelical school in every place where we have a missionary-station, I would promise our friends, with the blessing of God, a double portion of proselytism even amongst the adults.

For my own part, I cannot see any surer way of Christianizing Italy than through a system of evangelical schools. At any rate, we shall obtain from them some sincere Christians, who, from an early age, have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus; and not imbued with the prejudice and superstition of which it is difficult to divest the mind in more advanced years. A Christian crop must be the fruit of Christian seed. Sooner or later, I feel sure, that the good seed sown will spring forth in a Christian life.

The question, therefore, with me is reduced to its simplest terms—either schools without God, or schools with Popish teaching, or schools with the Bible. You can easily imagine where my preference lies. Give me Bible schools, and I will give you in return a Christian Italy in its rising generation.

For these reasons more than ever I patronize the evangelical schools in my country, and I earnestly entreat my Christian friends in England and America, not to forsake us in this mighty undertaking.

When I feel dejected in my labours and my hopes, I have only to pay a short visit to our schools here in Rome to relieve my mind and to comfort my heart about a better future.

May God bless all our friends who have contributed (and who are still doing so) to give us the evangelical