

# PLYMOUTHISM

  

## IN ITALY.

By LÉON PILATTE,

WALDENSIAN PASTOR AT NICE.

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LONDON :  
JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

M.DCCC.LIX.



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A LETTER TO THE FOREIGNERS' EVANGELISATION  
COMMITTEE AT NICE.

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DOCUMENTS CONSULTED IN WRITING THE  
FOLLOWING LETTER.

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- I. *Report of the Foreigners' Evangelisation Committee at Nice.* Hampstead, November 1858.
- II. *Rapport de la Table Vaudoise.* November 1857.
- III. *Third Report of the Italian Evangelisation Committee at Geneva.* April 1857.
- IV. *What is the London City Mission ?*
- V. *London City Mission. Instructions to Missionaries.*
- VI. *Considerazioni sul capo II. del Profeta Daniele.* Genova.
- VII. *Delle discipline delle Chiese di Cristo.* Genova.
- VIII. *Professione di fede de' Cristiani evangelici confutata da Giulio Nazari.* Asti, 1857.
- IX. *Sulla fede dei Cristiani evangelici. Risposta a G. Nazari da B. Mazzarella.* Genova, 1857.
- X. *Condanna, ecc. contro Mazzarella, Lagomarsino e Minetti.* Torino, 1857.
- XI. *Missionary Reporter.* June 1857.
- XII. *Lithographed Letter of Mr Tron.* November 1854.
- XIII. *B. Mazzarella risponde alle accuse del Sig. T.* Genova, December 1854.
- XIV. *L'Eco di Savonarola. The Record. Les Archives.*
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# PLYMOUTHISM IN ITALY:

## A LETTER, ETC.

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GENTLEMEN,

In a Report printed in November last, and distributed by your exertions, occurrences which have taken place in Italy, and deliberations in which I took part, are represented in so incomplete and erroneous a manner, that I feel bound at least to attempt to place the truth in its proper light. It is not without feelings of regret that I have resolved upon this step. I could have wished to keep silence upon debates already too much protracted; but your perseverance in spreading among the Christian public statements which appear to me calculated to mislead, make it a duty for me to speak.

You may, perhaps, consider me guilty of indiscretion for publicly discussing a Report which was not intended for the public. Indeed, had you restricted yourselves to a confidential account of the work which you have undertaken, I should be the first to condemn such a course. But since you have thought proper to speak of other people, and of other people's works, without their consent, and by recalling deliberations at which I was present, to make me unwittingly play in them a part which I cannot accept, I feel perfectly free to make what use I think proper of the copy of your Report, which has been unconditionally lent to me by a friend.

I am quite aware that many of the things I am about to say will prove unpleasant to you; but I trust, gentlemen and honoured brethren, that the time is not far distant when you yourselves will rejoice that I dared to speak the truth, even at the risk of being displeasing to you.

Your Report contains a historical sketch of the establishment of your Committee, a summary of the principles and constitution of that Committee, and an account of the work of Evangelisation carried on by you and other parties in the Sardinian States. Under these three heads, your Report contains many serious errors—his-

torical errors, errors of appreciation and judgment, errors in matters of fact.

If I can succeed in shewing where these errors lie, I shall have accomplished the object of the present letter.

## I.

**HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE FOREIGNERS' EVANGELISATION COMMITTEE**—*in which it is shewn that this Committee was formed with a view to, and for the support of, Plymouthism.*

I am astonished, gentlemen, that your own recollections and the documents in your hands should have served to so little purpose in the sketch you give of the establishment of your Committee.

You say, "The Nice Committee had its first existence in 1850. For some years it acted independently, and, under God, was instrumental in making some of the first converts at Nice. It afterwards consented to place the direction of the work of Evangelisation in the hands of the Vaudois Table; but eventually, in 1856, recognising the elements of a larger sphere of action in the Italian Churches of Genoa and Turin which had separated from the Vaudois Church, . . . . the Committee was reconstructed upon broader principles, and undertook to aid both the Vaudois and Italian Churches in their several spheres of evangelical work."\*

This passage contains almost as many errors as lines. Your Committee does not date from 1850, it dates from 1857. It originated in a Conference composed, with few exceptions, of persons who had not been members of the Nice Committee, founded in 1850, and dissolved in 1856. It exists in virtue, not of a modification of the constitution of that Committee, but in virtue of an entirely new constitution; in fine, it was established for the support of an entirely new enterprise, with which the former Committee had had nothing whatever to do. Everything in it is new—members, constitution, object, name; it is not, therefore, a continuation of the former Committee.

Your readers would have seen this for themselves, if, instead of the enigmatical lines which I have quoted, you had related the history of the original Nice Committee. They would have perceived that that Committee laboured alone for several years; that then, becoming sensible of the fact that its members, on account of their being, all of them, strangers in this country, subject to continual changes, and absent from Nice for more than half the year, were totally unable to superintend their work in a proper manner,

\* "Report," p. 6.

it had not merely *consented* to, but judged necessary, and proposed, the placing of its work under the direction of the Vaudois Church. They would have perceived that three members of that Committee, Messrs Hull, Hutt, and Gordon, without inviting new members to join them, according to the invariable practice of former years, resolved upon the dissolution of the Committee, and declared that it had ceased to exist; thus taking upon themselves, although only three in number, to annul the union with the Vaudois Church, entered into two years before, by ten or twelve members.

By a mere comparison of dates, your readers would have seen that a Committee *established in April 1857*, could not be the same as a Committee dissolved on the *11th November 1856*; as plainly as they will now see that you have involuntarily done violence to chronological exactitude by representing your existing Committee as a modification, accomplished in 1856, of the old Committee, and leaving entirely out the complete dissolution of the latter.

It is necessary here to recall that at the time Messrs Hull, Hutt, and Gordon dissolved the Committee, in which they alone were present, they were informed by the delegates of the Vaudois Church, that the work abandoned by the Committee would not be given up. Nor was it given up; for a few weeks later, through my exertions, a Committee, composed of gentlemen resident at Nice, was formed to carry it on, and applied itself strenuously to its task. (End of January 1857.) The following is, therefore, the chronological order of the facts in question:—

1850. Establishment of Nice Committee.

1854. Union of Committee with Vaudois Church.

1856. Entire dissolution of Committee.

1857. (Jan.) Establishment of new Committee to carry on same work.

We now enter upon a new period of this history.

During the time that the Committee to which I had the honour of belonging, and the only one then existing, was engaged in carrying out and extending the work abandoned by Messrs Hull, Hutt, and Gordon, the members were informed that several persons, and among them the ex-members of the lately dissolved Committee, had called a Conference, to consider the propriety of founding a new Committee. Shortly after, they were officially and collectively invited to join the Conference, and to draw up, unitedly with it, a constitution, on the basis of which the members of the Conference, along with them, might form a single Committee. The Conference did not hide from us that they had in view a general work of evangelisation; that they desired to adopt the principles and plan of action of the *London City Mission*, and assist equally the operations begun by Messrs De Sanctis and

Mazzarella, and those of the Vaudois Church, taking no account of ecclesiastical denominations. We had nothing to object to this ; our only end had always been to lead souls to Christ, and not to any particular form of Church, and our Committee professed the most catholic spirit. We merely stipulated, as a preliminary condition, that it should be clearly understood that we wished a clause to be introduced into the proposed constitution, such as that existing in the rules of the *Evangelical Society of France*, forbidding the administration of the sacraments by agents not regularly ordained to the gospel ministry. Notwithstanding this condition, we were admitted, and the deliberations of what was termed the *Amalgamated Conference* were opened.

Since the object in view was the establishment of a merely missionary work, entirely free from any sectarian or ecclesiastical spirit, we had, of course, no difficulty in coming to an understanding. We were quickly agreed upon the fundamental principles of the constitution, and we had almost arrived at the close of our deliberations, when it was proposed to invite Count Guicciardini to a seat in the Conference, as the representative of the "Italian party." I was far from opposing the motion, both my friends and myself being ready, conformably to the principles laid down, to co-operate with any one who might be proposed. Count Guicciardini was therefore admitted. The Conference, in order to simplify its work, appointed a sub-committee to prepare a draft of a constitution and bye-laws. Count St Georges, Messrs Herbert Jones, Herbert Mayo, Count Guicciardini, as the representative of the "Italian party," and myself, as that of the Waldensian Church, formed this sub-committee. Our deliberations were fraternal and cordial. To give an idea of their result, I cannot do better than transcribe a part of the official report of the sub-committee on rendering up its charge to the Conference.

. . . . "In the work before us we were of course to be guided by your former deliberations : you desired to constitute a Committee of Evangelisation in the spirit of the *London City Mission*, with an object at once missionary and conciliatory in view ; you desired to unite in common action Christians belonging to various and even conflicting ecclesiastical denominations ; you asked us to sketch out a plan which should not touch in anything the conscientious opinions of the two fractions into which the Christians of the Sardinian States are divided. To accomplish this, you had called upon two persons to take part in the labours of your sub-committee, Count Guicciardini and Mr Pilatte, to whom you did the honour of considering them the representatives of the two religious denominations, which it was more particularly proposed to conciliate and unite for common action. In order to carry out your idea we had three things to do—

“(1.) To establish the general principles to be adopted as a basis ;

“(2.) To determine upon the internal organisation of the proposed Committee ;

“(3.) To draw up rules for guidance in the application of the general principles to the work to be undertaken, and instructions for the missionaries to be employed.

“Upon these several heads we have unanimously agreed to propose that you adopt the following articles.”

(Here follow the articles agreed to, concerning the *title, object, principles, and manner of action* of the Committee, also several special bye-laws.)

“We had now to consider an article, containing a regulation proposed by Mr Pilatte to your general meeting, before Count Guicciardini had been invited to join the Conference, and consequently anterior to our commission.

“This article, which Mr Pilatte again proposed, stood as follows—

“‘No missionary, either wholly or partially in the pay of this Committee, unless he has been formally ordained to the ministry of the gospel, will be free to administer the communion within the limits of his station, or to partake of it within the same limits when administered by laymen.’

“To this article Count Guicciardini objected that it implied,—

(1.) A special recognition of the ministry of the gospel according to the views of Mr Pilatte, which was contrary to the principles adopted, viz., that the two ecclesiastical denominations should be treated with the utmost impartiality by the Committee ; (2.) The sanction of a formal setting apart for the said ministry, which was equally rejected by those who share the views of Count G. ; (3.) lastly, That it appeared to restrict the administration of the communion to ministers alone, whereas, according to Count G., the Word of God gives that right to all. The Word of God determines different ministries, for evangelisation, for instruction, for Church government, &c. ; but it says absolutely nothing regarding a ministry for the communion and baptism, which, according to Count G. and his friends, implies, that all have the same right regarding these institutions as regarding prayer, thanksgiving, exhortation, &c.

“Mr Pilatte, acknowledging the weight of these objections, consented to modify the article so far as to remove as much as possible of the difficulty. He consented, for the sake of perfect impartiality, to suppress all mention of the *ministry* and *ordination*, and he finally submitted his article as follows :—

“‘No missionary, either wholly or partially in the pay of this Committee, will be free, *within the limits of his station*, to administer the communion himself, or to partake of it when administered by other persons.’\* ”

\* Let the reader bear in mind that Mr Pilatte's object was never to deprive the

“ Nevertheless, even thus modified, Count Guicciardini declared that he could not accept the article, and proposed that it should be purely and simply left out, claiming for all missionaries full liberty with regard to the communion.

“ Mr Pilatte could not consent to granting this liberty, as it would be equivalent to establishing a privilege in favour of certain ecclesiastical views.

“ The Committee desires to prevent its agents from propagating their private ecclesiastical tenets, and to confine them to a purely missionary work. Now, if it allowed its lay agents to administer the communion, the obvious result would be that, whereas the lay missionary sharing the views of Mr Pilatte would, by his own principles, be precluded the possibility of establishing any form of Church whatever, the lay missionary sharing the views of Count Guicciardini would, *de facto*, establish a form of Church. Consequently, in Mr Pilatte’s opinion, the universal prohibition of an act, considered by some as essentially ecclesiastic, would be the only means of preserving perfect impartiality.

“ Count Guicciardini answered, that he saw difficulties on all sides ; but that he could not do otherwise than object to the proposed article, on the ground that we ought not to limit the teaching of the Word of God, nor the privileges which the Lord grants to His children ; and he again proposed the pure and simple abandonment of the article, claimed for all missionaries full liberty with regard to the communion, and, finally, expressed the hope that the Committee would restrict itself to helping the work with its funds and advice, without taking account of ecclesiastical denominations. Such being the opinions expressed, and one of the members (Mr P.) seeing a premium of encouragement granted to a particular ecclesiastical system, in what another (Count G.) considered as the exercise of a right which no Christian could forego, your sub-committee, after having in vain attempted, by long and friendly discussions, to find the means of conciliating the different opinions which have been stated above, is compelled to declare, although with deep regret, that the union, in view of missionary work, of the persons and opinions represented in your sub-committee by Count Guicciardini and Mr Pilatte, is not, at present, possible.” . . .

Now, gentlemen, allow me to ask you, What proved the great stumbling-block in the way of the attempted union? Was it any deficiency in catholic spirit on the part of the Committee of which I was a member, or on my own part? Is it not evident

missionaries of the privilege of partaking in the Lord’s Supper. But since their being allowed it *within the limits of their station* would have immediately led, according to Count G.’s views, to the establishment of the Plymouthist forms of Church and practices, Mr P. was *driven* to propose that restriction as the only means left of maintaining that entire impartiality in Church matters laid down as a fundamental principle by the Conference.

that the Plymouthist principle regarding the *administration of the sacrament by every one alike*, carried to an excess by Count Guicciardini, was the only obstacle? Had we not made every concession in our power, even to denying to our own ordained missionaries themselves the right of administering the communion within their district? Was it possible to be less *ecclesiastical*? Were we not fully following out the spirit of the *London City Mission*, upon the principles of which it was intended to model the proposed society? In fact, my friends and myself fully expected that the Conference would say to Count G., "You wish to introduce a sectarian principle, we cannot consent to it;" and to us, "You are liberal, you want pure and simple evangelisation, without admixture of ecclesiastical proselytism, which is also what we want; let us be united." Great was our disappointment. Called upon by the Conference to yield the point insisted upon by Count G., we felt ourselves constrained to refuse. Then, to our extreme surprise, the members of the former and of the projected committee proposed unanimously, and in rather an abrupt manner, the dissolution of the Conference, and proclaimed the impossibility of forming a committee of which we should be members. The Conference, yielding to their wishes, declared its labours ended and null!

Such, gentlemen, is the history that your Report sums up in a manner so brief and incomplete, that it is impossible to discover in what you say even a shadow of the truth! "*Having failed to find a common basis of operation.*" . . . . Who could form, from this ambiguous sentence, the slightest idea of what has in reality taken place? Were we not completely agreed? Had we not worked out that common basis of operation when you thought fit to introduce Count G. into the Conference? Was not the basis of operation proposed by him, and favourably received by you, the principle and practice of Plymouthism? Is it not true that, had we agreed to grant full liberty, with regard to the administration of the sacraments, to all missionaries, whether ministers or laymen, experienced or inexperienced, the desired union would have been accomplished? Is it not true, in fine, that the only obstacle to the union of the representatives of the Waldensian Church with your Committee was Plymouthism, and your firm resolve to allow its professors free scope to spread their principles and establish their practices throughout the field of Italian evangelisation? These, although you have taken care to make no mention of them, are matters of fact. Nor is this all. At the sixth page of your Report, you appear to disclaim, although timidly, all sympathy with the views of Count G. in ecclesiastical matters; but you do not say in what these views consist. They consist simply in his Plymouthist principles. Nor does Count G. deny it; he makes no mystery of them, but with a frankness worthy of all honour,

manifests them publicly, in conversation, by his writings, and by his practice.

And yet who did you introduce into the Conference as the *only* representative of the "Italian party?"—Count G. With whom did you wish us to come to an understanding upon ecclesiastical questions?—With Count G. Whose were the principles which, being rejected by us, prevented the union from being effected?—Those of Count G.

True it is that you say (page 46) that your Committee at first endeavoured to unite with the Committee of which I was a member, provided it could also associate on the same Committee the leading members of the Italian party. But you have omitted to mention that the only representative of that party called in was Count G., the gentleman whose ecclesiastical opinions you appear now to disavow! It is, nevertheless, a fact. Count G. was called in as the representative of the "Italian party." Neither he nor you, gentlemen, nor I, nor any one else, doubted for a single instant that he faithfully represented that party.

Every one was convinced that he perfectly shared the views and opinions of the leading members of that party. He spoke in their name, and like a man who does not fear to be disowned by those he represents. Now, if Count Guicciardini was at that time a Plymouth brother—and it is clear that he was—the "Italian party" represented by him must necessarily have professed Plymouthist principles. That Count G. has not since altered his views, no one can doubt. Whether the party he then represented still continues what it then was or not, is of little consequence here, and does not alter the conclusion we arrive at, viz., that Plymouthism, both in principle and practice, favoured by you and repudiated by us, has been the grand and only obstacle in the way of the proposed union. That is what should be known.

To close the history of this Conference, which was the strange and painful preparation to the formation of your Committee, it only remains for me to mention that, before dissolving, it commissioned two of its members—Messrs Gordon and Hull—to draw up a succinct Report of its labours. It was considered proper that an authentic document, emanating from the Conference itself, should bear witness to what had taken place in it. This Report, extremely partial in its tenor, when laid before the Conference was totally rejected. Captain Gilbert and myself were appointed to draw up a second. For this purpose it was absolutely necessary that we should obtain access to the minutes of the Conference. We asked the Secretary, Mr Hull, to lend us a copy, but he refused. Completely debarred by this refusal from carrying out the work intrusted to us, I asked the President, Colonel Mayne, to call a meeting of the Conference, in order to inform them of the insur-



mountable obstacle which we had encountered in the discharge of our duty. Colonel Mayne refused to call the meeting.

A few days after this extraordinary and unheard-of termination of the long discussions of which I have given a rapid sketch, the formation of the Nice Foreigners' Evangelisation Committee was announced; and it is of it that I shall have henceforth to speak.

## II.

EXAMINATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND PRINCIPLES OF THE NICE FOREIGNERS' EVANGELISATION COMMITTEE—in which it is shewn that, contrary to its pretensions, this Committee resembles neither the London City Mission, nor the Foreign Aid Society.

If, gentlemen, following out the inclination you manifested in the Conference, the proceedings of which I have just related, you had formed a Committee for openly supporting the Plymouthist missionary work carried on in the Sardinian States by those whom you denominate *the Italian party*, I should have nothing to say. You were at liberty to give both your moral and your pecuniary support to whomsoever you pleased. In that case no mistake would have been possible. The Christians of all countries and Churches, of whom you ask assistance, would have been able, with a clear understanding of what they were doing, to give or withhold their aid. Yet, for reasons which I would not enter into, you have given yourselves out to the Christian world as a Committee founded with the intention, first, of contributing to the evangelisation of Italy, "as nearly as circumstances will permit, upon the principles of the London City Mission;" and, secondly, of being, with regard to the works carried on by others, what the *Foreign Aid Society* is to those it assists.

Are you really, gentlemen, what you profess to be? That you sincerely believe it, I do not doubt; for you are too Christian, too honourable, to deceive any one voluntarily. The best of men, however, the most averse to deceiving others, may deceive themselves; and this is what has happened to you. It is true that it must have required a rare capability of self-delusion to fall into such egregious errors. But facts are facts, and they must make it patent to every one acquainted with the subject, that while you profess to resemble the *London City Mission* and the *Foreign Aid Society*, you in reality resemble neither.

What is the grand object of the *London City Mission*? Simply to carry on a work of pure evangelisation, entirely free from all sectarian spirit or ecclesiastical partiality. To attain this, it em-

employs agents belonging to all religious denominations ; it forbids them to form Churches, and does not allow any of its lay missionaries to administer the sacraments ; thus reducing its work to a mere missionary enterprise. Is this the case with yours ? Far from it. Your agents, be they new converts or tried Christians, are perfectly free to form Churches, administer the sacraments, and establish any practices they think proper ; in a word, to plant the principles of their sect wherever they carry, on your behalf, the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have perfect liberty—and every one knows how freely they use it—to preach against all Churches, including yours, and to transform the field of Italian Evangelisation into a field of battle between their sect and the missionaries of other Churches.\*

Under pretence of not interfering with the liberty of your agents, you allow all this. Do not tell me that if this takes place it is without your wish or knowledge. As to the establishment of Plymouthism, and especially the administration of the sacraments by colporteurs and Scripture-readers, you were long ago aware that not one of the men you employ would have connected himself with you, had you denied them the disorderly liberty with which they act.

But to return. In what do you resemble the *London City Mission* ? In nothing. All missionary societies, like the *London City Mission*, cause the gospel to be preached ; others, like it, employ lay agency ; but what particularly characterises the Society in question is the strictness with which it proscribes all manifestation of sectarian spirit by its missionaries ; and what particularly characterises your Committee is the free scope it gives its agents for the manifestation of such a spirit. And although it would be difficult to find a single Plymouthist among the labourers of the *London City Mission*, it would be equally difficult to discover among the small number of your labourers a single person free from Plymouthism. You will reply that it is not your fault if

\* “ It is the complaint of the Vaudois—and I doubt not sometimes well founded—that no sooner have they planted an evangelist in any given town or village, and obtained hearers, than there appears by their side, or within their range, one or more of the Italian converts, labourers or mechanics, who begin without ceremony to teach or preach their own views. ‘ These Vaudois,’ say they, ‘ are not of us ; their Church is a national one—it is the old Church of the Valleys ; their communion, instead of being the communion of saints, is popular and open to all, like that of Rome ; their ministers will not permit Christians to “ break bread,” except under clerical authority—they are Protestant priests !’ That last word is enough ; the people are alienated at once, and the poor Vaudois teacher soon finds himself without a congregation.”—*The Gospel in Italy*, p. 8. These *Italian converts*, these slanderers of the Vaudois evangelists, are your own agents. And it is not one of their opponents, it is their advocate and your friend, who, without blaming them, and giving to understand that you do not blame them either, relates such proceedings. Whenever we have denounced these scandalous aggressions of your evangelists, we have been branded as calumniators. What will be said, now that their own friends avow them, and seem to smile on them ?

your agents are all Plymouthists ; that the Vaudois Church might have received part of your support; that you offered it, and that it was refused.

That this is true, I hasten to acknowledge. This strange occurrence has been witnessed in our day—a Church, poor, having to carry on a missionary work which actually exceeds its resources, has declined to receive funds from you. The administration of that Church has acquainted you with the motives of that refusal, and they are weighty.

But were these motives—sufficient in themselves—wanting, it would not have been hard to find others no less urgent. All the true friends of the Waldensian Church have rejoiced that by declining the assistance you offered, it prevented any confusion being made between its missionary work and that of those who, without any legitimate motives, have rent asunder the Churches which it founded, and introduced into Italy the principles and practices of the newest and most sectarian of all sects. All those who are not satisfied by mere words, and who are acquainted with the spirit and doings of the party you have espoused, rejoice at the refusal of the Vaudois Church. Had the Table accepted your offer, the missionary field of Italy would often have presented the spectacle of two missionaries, one the rival and adversary of the other ; one calling the other a *priest*, a member of a corrupt and tyrannical Church, as worthy of reprobation as Popery itself ; and yet *both* countenanced and paid by the same Committee. Thanks to the decision of the Table, such a spectacle is impossible. Such things, which would unavoidably have followed the scheme proposed by you, can never take place in the field of the *London City Mission*—another proof that your Committee has nothing in common with that Society.

As to your Committee resembling the *Foreign Aid Society*, we shall now see how completely this is an illusion. What is the object of that Society, at once the most modest and one of the most useful of the religious societies of Great Britain ? It first diligently inquires into the constitution and modes of action of foreign societies ; and when arrived at the certitude of a society's being, by the character of its directors and the nature of its work, worthy of support, the *Foreign Aid Society* grants it a subsidy. It gives its funds unconditionally, and without any stipulation, trusting entirely to the directors of the society so aided for their right employment.

Do you act thus ? Have you dealt with the Waldensian Church, especially, as the *Foreign Aid Society* deals with other societies ? By no means. And yet you had to do with an organised body, whose origin and composition rendered it worthy of all confidence ; you had to do with an executive board, elected by

a synod, and yearly called upon to render up its accounts; and moreover subjected to a far more rigorous control than most missionary societies. If there is a body to which funds might be committed, with the perfect certainty of their being rightly and wisely employed, that body is the Vaudois Table. Well—while the *Foreign Aid Society* grants subsidies to the Waldensian Church, through the Table, without any conditions, you have only offered your assistance on condition of its being employed for a stipulated work, and even for the maintenance of missionaries individually specified; at the same time requiring regular and special reports. Another difference: The *Foreign Aid Society* gives pecuniary aid to organised bodies only, absolutely interdicting to itself to give assistance to any private individual whomsoever. Your Committee, on the contrary, distributes its funds to private individuals, who are united by no other bond than a similarity of views and conduct, but who act entirely on their own personal responsibility.

Once more; I do not blame your conduct for this. You were perfectly free to adopt the course you thought best. But what I do blame, and what strikes me as most strange, is, that doing nothing which that Society does, and everything that it forbids itself to do, you should still profess to act upon its principles.

I insist upon these contrasts between your Committee and the Societies whose views and ways you profess to adopt, as most important; for I am sure that many Christians have approved of your work, and contributed to it, simply on account of the delusion into which they have fallen regarding its true character. I would even go further, and assert, without fear of contradiction, that many among you would never have consented to become members of your Committee, had they not fallen into the same illusion. All of them have in good faith believed, upon declarations made equally in good faith, that your work resembled that of the *London City Mission* and of the *Foreign Aid Society*. Sheltered under these names dear to all Christians, your Committee has been taken for what it really was not. You will be the first, I am sure, to wish that this mistake should be rectified; let us hope that what is here stated may contribute to put an end to this most extraordinary misunderstanding.

### III.

EXAMINATION OF REPORT—in which are shewn the exaggerations and the serious errors therein contained.

For any unprejudiced reader at all acquainted with the true state of things, the portion of your Report purporting to give a

faithful picture of the missionary work in the Sardinian States, must appear surprisingly partial and erroneous. What brevity, what cold laconism, when you mention, not all, but some only of the missions of the Waldensian Church! What fulness of detail, what complacency, when you relate the *Italian efforts!* Upon the former, a few lines here and there, taken from an old Report of 1857, completed by subsequent Reports, of which you say nothing, and which does not even contain an exact list of the stations. Upon the latter, detailed narratives, letters, affecting anecdotes, &c., all calculated to shew that the work in question is as interesting as it is extensive. Upon the former, barely four pages; upon the latter, upwards of twenty.

You may perhaps answer, that details were wanting with respect to the Waldensian work. Some there were, however, of which you could not be ignorant. For instance, when in November 1858, you made the Table say in their Report of 1857, that "they had till then been unable to place a permanent evangelist at Alessandria," you must have known, but forgotten, that the Rev. A. Gay had been there for more than a year as a permanent minister. What do I say? In this very Report you quote, you could and must have read a few lines further, that what had not been possible till then, *had just been effected*, viz., that a permanent evangelist *had been sent to Alessandria*, and that a coadjutor was about to be given to him.\* And besides the facts which your recollection might have furnished, you were well aware in what quarter to obtain exact and complete information; but if you did not choose to take that trouble, why speak of the Waldensian missions? Why not abstain altogether from mentioning them? The Christian public were well aware that the Waldensian Church was actively at work, and your Report has now informed them that you in no wise contributed to its funds, and that it has, for excellent reasons, refused your assistance. Utterly ignorant as you were, not only of the intimate history, the difficulties, the successes, but even of the number of the missions established by the Waldensian Church in Italy, why not leave the task of speaking of them to those who could do so pertinently? It cannot be the intense interest attaching to the details you have given, that enticed you to relate them. With what object have you mentioned them? I cannot say. But what I can say is, that your Report will lead the public to consider the Waldensian work, compared with that of the so-called Italian party, as poor, insignificant, and almost contemptible. As to those who know the real state of the case, they will find it hard to avoid the conclusion that your object has been, by thus presenting side by side the two missionary enterprises, to shew the superiority of the one you patronise at the expense of the one you do not patronise.

\* "Rapport de la Table Vaudoise." November 1857, p. 4.

If your Report—unjust on account of its incompleteness with reference to the Waldensian work—had only been faithful in regard to that of the “Italian party.” But no; you have groundlessly exaggerated the one, as much as you have detracted from the other.

Far be it from me to accuse you of voluntary errors. If you have published inexact statements, it is doubtless owing to the inexact reports of your agents; but having accepted and printed them, you have become responsible for them. Now I ask you, with all respect, upon what authority you have said, at the 23d page of your Report, that, *perhaps not less than thirty persons* have been converted in the little village of Eza. Eza is in the immediate neighbourhood of Nice; you might have mentioned that it is a station founded by the Vaudois Church several years since, and visited successively by Messrs A—, G—, R—, and T—, all agents of that Church. This station, it is true, was taken out of our hands by the evangelist now in your service; but that does not prevent our knowing its state. Now we know it to be absolutely false that thirty people have been converted there. We know for certain that the number even of those who simply attended the meetings, has scarcely ever reached thirty; that regular meetings, having been deserted, were given up long ago; that an attempt to establish a school has failed; that five or six persons only read now and then the Bible; and that it would be no easy matter to prove that even three people have been converted at Eza. So serious an error is much to be lamented in many respects. By correcting it publicly, which I have no doubt you will hasten to do, you may prevent the mischievous use that could be made of it by the enemies of Evangelisation.

But there are more errors of this kind. You say there are a few persons converted at Monaco—the fact is, there is *not one*. You say there are a few at Roccabruna—the fact is, there is *not one*. You say there are a few at Mentone—there is *one*, converted long before the existence of either the former or the present Committee. You say there are a few at Sant’ Agnese—this is mere imagination; unless, indeed, in these places, the converts you speak of have carefully concealed their conversion from those who are best able to perceive it, and made it a strict secret; unless this be the case, there are neither many nor few, there are *none*. In the absence of sufficient information, I will not speak of Vallecrosia, Dolceacqua, Castello, Borghetto, Ventimiglia, San Remo, or Oneglia, except to say that you might, and I think ought, to have said, when speaking of these and other places, that the Waldensian missionaries were the first to preach the gospel in them.

Now if you have fallen into such gross errors in speaking of

places close to Nice, easily visited, and well known to most of you, what confidence can be placed in the statements of your Report which refer to distant places that are seldom visited, as is the case with most of those of which you treat? And if the agent you employ in the *Riviera* has given you such exaggerated reports, can you be sure that those of the evangelists you employ in Piedmont contain no errors of the same kind? I could mention facts that would go far to justify this doubt; but I seem to hear you reply, As far as Piedmont is concerned we can vouch for the truth of our agents' reports. Those of us who have visited the stations have satisfied us on that point. Yes, gentlemen, members of your Committee have visited these stations, and no one will question the perfect sincerity of their reports; but it may well be asked whether your deputies were quite capable of forming a correct judgment of the state of things; whether they knew the language of the country; whether they remained long enough at the stations; and whether the circumstances under which they visited them were not calculated to produce false impressions.

In order to judge of the real state of any missionary work it is absolutely necessary to understand thoroughly the language in which it is carried on; to be present unannounced at the ordinary meetings, and after having thus observed the external aspect of the work, to make the acquaintance of the missionaries, and enter into conversation with as many of the professed converts as possible. Have your deputies proceeded thus? No, indeed. From the extracts from their letters it is clear that their visits were announced long beforehand,—that they were always attended by a person, whose eloquence draws large audiences,—and that the extreme shortness of their stay in each place was such as to render an exact examination of the state of things wholly out of the question. Even the most indifferent, and the merely curious, when informed of the arrival of strangers, and summoned to hear a renowned speaker, would naturally come, and form these large meetings which your reporters describe as ordinary congregations.

Erroneous when describing the outward appearance of the missions, your Report is not less so with regard to the spirit in which they are conducted.

In your eyes the Italian evangelists are “humble and simple-minded men, who, with the love of Christ in their hearts, the Word of God their only learning, go forth to seek for the salvation of souls.” Would to God they were all what you describe, and what I grant some of them are! Would to God they only sought for the salvation of souls! Unfortunately, the Waldensian missionaries labouring in the same field have often found them animated by a very different spirit.

What will you say, for instance, to Mr Mazzarella's conduct at

Alessandria, in one of the meetings held there by Mr Charbonnier? It was in the early days of the mission, and the meeting was composed of persons to whom the gospel was entirely new. Mr Mazzarella entered the meeting. When Mr Charbonnier saw him, he courteously stopped, and said, "Brother Mazzarella, we are reading in such a chapter, and we shall be happy to hear anything you may have to say on it." Mr Charbonnier then proceeded for a time, when Mr Mazzarella, interrupting him, exclaimed, "I see that matters are drawing lengthy; . . . . since there are at Alessandria two works of evangelisation, and in order that the public may, as you say, judge of the truth, I have come to invite you to a public discussion, in our room or in yours, to-morrow, or any other day you may name, in order that the people of Alessandria may judge of the differences between us, and choose."

Mr Charbonnier had the good sense to see that the acceptance of so scandalous a challenge would be still more scandalous; and he declined to enter into the proposed dispute. What do you think, gentlemen, of the spirit shewn on this occasion by your chief agent? I know not what professions of friendship for the Vaudois Church he may have made, what professions of tolerance and Christian liberality; but this I know, that ever since he has left that Church he has never ceased to attack it in his writings, his public addresses, and even before new congregations, as, for instance, at Asti, where the first sermon he preached before an assembly exclusively Roman Catholic, was nothing but controversy, in which the Roman Catholic and Waldensian Churches were equally assailed.

Not long after the occurrence just related, owing to circumstances unnecessary to recall, the leaders of the "Italian party," Messrs Mazzarella, Magrini, De Sanctis, Rochietti, and others, and a number of Waldensian Christians, ministers and evangelists—Messrs B. Malan, Bert, Meille, Appia, Charbonnier, myself, and others—with a mixed audience of above a hundred persons, met in conference in the school-room of the Waldensian Mission at Turin. After the meeting had been opened with prayer, the leaders of the "Italian party" proposed at once that a regular discussion should take place between them and the Waldensians on Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Ministry, and Church Organisation.

We energetically declined entering upon such a discussion. We—every one of the Waldensian ministers who spoke, Messrs Bert, Meille, Malan, Appia, Pilatte—all being of one mind, without any previous agreement, said to them in substance, "Brethren, we are divided; it is a sad fact; but discussions such as you propose will never mend matters. On the contrary, they will only, in the present state of things, make them worse. Let us rather agree to differ for a while; let us bear one with another. Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same



things. . . . . Why should we, whilst millions of souls are perishing around us, spend our time and strength in fighting one against another, instead of attacking the common enemy? The field is broad, there is room for us all. Let us go to work, each on our own way, in peace and love, and that will be a surer means of coming finally to unity than the endless and fruitless discussions you propose."

But to these proposals, made in the most affectionate manner, accompanied with all possible entreaties, the "Italian party" would not listen. They unanimously answered, in substance, "No peace is possible between us, until the questions upon which we differ are settled. They are of the highest importance, they form part of God's revelation, therefore we cannot hear of conciliation about them." We insisted for reciprocal toleration on our differences, and as the discussion seemed to take a painful turn, Mr B. Malan, the present Moderator, proposed that before proceeding further, and with a view to keeping us in a proper frame of mind, we should turn to the Word of God, and to prayer, and moved that the 133d Psalm be read. A large majority of the meeting gave their assent. But as the reading of the Psalm was about to commence, Mr Mazzarella rose, and said, "I and my friends have come here not to pray but to discuss; since discussion is denied us, we have nothing more to do here." He then, in the midst of the meeting, put his hat on his head, and walked out, imitated and tumultuously followed by all his friends, leaving us alone to read the Word of God, and lament before Him a conduct so grievously opposed to Christianity and decency.

Do you wish for a sample of Mr Mazzarella's speeches on the Vaudois Church? Read what he has written and published in places evangelised by him and his friends:—

"There is in Italy the Waldensian Church, which must not be looked upon as the same as that of the 'Italian brethren.' In the Waldensian Church, the ministry is not constituted conformably to the Word of God. It has a human constitution, a Table whose institution is not according to the gospel; it has a discipline besides, and even against the Word of God. *The Holy Spirit is set aside, and they do not believe it necessary for the whole Church to study the prophetic parts of the Bible.* The Lord's Supper must be administered by a pastor; it is not enough that the brethren should be assembled in the name of the Lord. . . . . In short, the difference consists in this—that in the Vaudois Church the Bible is not admitted in everything, for all cases, times, and places. . . . . There are, however, Christians among the Vaudois; and God grant that soon they may give themselves with simplicity to the reading of the whole Bible—with all simplicity—in meetings guided by the Spirit of the Lord. Thus will they see the truth, and abandon the

legalism of forms, &c. We pray the Christians among the Vaudois to receive these words with love, and to believe that he who writes them does so with charity, praying that the heavenly Father may grant them that light which He has granted to the 'Italian brethren.' Let them be assured that it is given to every Christian who feels his own ignorance, who abandons human teaching, and trusts to the Bible as it is written."\*

After this, no wonder if the evangelists, taught and directed by Mr Mazzarella, should go beyond their chief, if their sermons contain perpetual attacks against that Church which *sets aside the Holy Spirit*, which *does not believe it necessary to read the whole Bible*, and with which, therefore, it is most important not to confound the Italian brethren. Many of these gentlemen are for ever repeating that the Waldensian evangelists are *priests*, obliged to wear a particular dress, and bound to *shave their beards*; that they give *monkish teachings*; that they are not *Cristiani evangelici*, but *Valdesi*, the followers of *one Valdo*, &c. &c. All these accusations are notorious, and you alone, gentlemen, appear not to have heard of them. I can conceive, however, that, placed as you are between the complaints of the Vaudois evangelists and the denial of the others, your opinion has leaned towards your sympathies, and you have refused to believe your friends in the wrong. This helps me to understand why your Report complains of the accusation of Plymouthism brought by myself and others against your evangelists, and the anxious care you have taken to clear them of that charge.

"Much prejudice," says your Report, "has unfortunately been raised against these Italian Churches by some who, in their zeal for the extension of the Vaudois Church, would desire the adhesion of all Italian converts to its form and discipline; by others, who would require that these infant communions should at once adopt a complete system of Church organisation. By each of these the Italian brethren have been called Plymouthists." . . . . Gentlemen, I know many Christians who ardently wish for the extension of the kingdom of God in Italy, but I know none who care above everything for the extension of the Vaudois Church. I know many also who cannot bear spiritual anarchy; but I know none who wish to compel infant Churches to establish immediately a complete form of Church organisation. The Waldensian Church, which one may suppose to be the most zealous for its own extension, has given proof in this respect of a rare degree of liberality, when it solemnly declared, by the voice of its synod, "that in evangelising Italy, its only object was to lead souls to Christ, and not to any ecclesiastical form." It has done more; by the great latitude it gives its missionaries, it permits newly formed Churches to organise

\* Considerazioni sul capo II. del libro del Profeta Daniele, p. 11 e 12.

themselves according to their particular wants, and does not enforce, in their case, the application of any of the practices peculiar to Churches in the Valleys.

If, then, the "Italian brethren" have been charged with Plymouthism, it is not to be referred to any narrowness of mind on the part of the Vaudois Church, or of its friends. In any case, no matter whence the accusation come, the question is, whether it is grounded or not. Are the "Italian brethren" Plymouthists or not? That is the question. You say they are not.

I say, with many who know them, they are.

Who is mistaken?

You will perhaps refer me to the "Italian brethren" themselves, better able than any one to say what they are or are not.

This would prove utterly useless. Every one who has had anything to do with Plymouthists knows full well that they never accept that name, and that one of the leading characteristics of the members of that sect, is their rejection of any name except that of Christians or *brethren*.

In order to form an opinion about them, we must inquire into their principles and practices; and if these agree with what has been called Plymouthism, then must we apply the name to them, whether they accept or reject it.

As to their principles, the "Italian brethren" have as yet published no explicit and official declaration of them. I am mistaken; at the outset of their separation, at Turin and Genoa, from the Vaudois, they adopted certain confessions of faith and regulations; but these declarations, drawn up to suit the exigencies of the moment, were soon laid aside as *human productions*, unworthy of congregations that were to be governed by the Holy Spirit alone. They were afterwards replaced by the following commodious formula, which I extract from a printed letter of Mr De Sanctis:—"Its confession of faith (that of the Church of Turin) is the Bible—its ecclesiastical constitution, the Bible;"\* and by this one, more recent and no less vague:—"The creed of the Evangelical Churches of Italy consists in this one article—the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."†

In the absence of official and direct declarations, we are compelled to appeal to individual testimony. My first witness shall be Mr Mazzarella himself. His violent attack against the Vaudois Church, quoted above, is an indirect but clear profession of Plymouthism. He therein decries the ministry, as existing in the Vaudois Church, and yet it is constituted there as in all other Christian Churches. He condemns the Vaudois Church, because

\* "Third Report of the Italian Evangelisation Committee of Geneva," p. 26.

† "Eco di Savonarola," Jan. 1859.

it has a constitution and a discipline, like all other Christian Churches. He condemns it because in it *the Lord's Supper must be distributed by a minister*. And he invites those who belong to it to leave it, to form communities *guided by the Spirit of God, and to abandon human teaching*.\*

If that, gentlemen, is not Plymouthism, allow me to ask you, what is?

My second witness shall be one of yourselves. In a letter addressed by Mr Hull to the *Witness*, we read, "In the present unorganised state of their churches, they may, in *some respects*, approach Plymouthism, and that is the most that can with truth be said against them."

Now, if in the eyes of one so favourably disposed as Mr Hull, it has appeared that the "Italians" *approach* Plymouthism, others, less easily persuaded or more far-sighted, may have good reasons to believe that they not only approach Plymouthism, but that they have actually come to it.

My third witness shall be Count Guicciardini, the gentleman whom you chose in 1857 as the faithful representative of the whole "Italian party." In a pamphlet recently published by him, we find the principles of Plymouthism set forth in the most complete manner. The doctrine of the apostasy of the Church; † the rejection of the ministry such as it exists in all Churches; ‡ the condemnation of all the Christian Churches in existence. §

It was for some time believed that this pamphlet, profusely distributed in the "Italian" Churches, and under the care of the evangelists directed by Mr Mazzarella, was from his own pen. I myself had felt authorised to ascribe it to him. He has since, through the newspapers, denied having written it; but omitting to disavow the views therein expressed, he has deserved the application of the adage, *Qui tacet consentire videtur*—his silence was as good as an assent. And I feel all the more free thus to interpret his silence, for having with my own ears heard him develop and uphold the principles of that pamphlet before his own congrega-

\* Considerazioni ecc., p. 11 e 12.

† "Those who have studied these matters (of discipline) have in most instances forgotten that, having departed from its primitive constitution, *the Church has utterly apostatised*."—*Delle discipline delle Chiese di Cristo*. Genova.

‡ "In our days no one has the right of laying on of hands, or ordaining elders, since there are now no apostles, or persons authorised by them, as Timothy and Titus."—*Ibid*.

§ "If the Romish or the Anglican systems, or the diverse sects which have separated from them, were bodies united by the Spirit of God, and were drawn together by no other bond than the virtue of the name of Christ, it would be a schism to separate from them; but these systems are not the Church of God, therefore *to leave them is a duty towards the Lord Jesus Christ*, in order to maintain unity of spirit, and to avoid the sin of schism," &c.—*Ibid*.

tion at Genoa. True it is, that after the service he energetically disclaimed all leaning towards Plymouthism, but I, who had just heard him, and who was even then hearing him advocating all its distinctive doctrines, what weight could I give to his words?

It is well known that one of the leading characteristics of Plymouthism is the rejection of the gospel ministry, such as it exists in the Evangelical Churches throughout the world. Well, upon this very point Mr Mazzarella, speaking in the name of his friends, says clearly, in a printed letter addressed to a Roman Catholic, "*This affair of the ministry is a subject for controversy between us and the Vaudois and Protestants.*"\* If any one wishes to know what that means, let him read what a certain newspaper says, advocating the cause of the Italian brethren:—"The Free Italian Church is so denominated by its members, not merely because it is unconnected with the State, but because it is free from all officially appointed ministry."†

While I am writing these lines, a new witness presents himself, whose testimony you will not take exception to. He is one of your friends and correspondents—an active and devoted friend of the "Italian brethren"—their advocate and supporter—a man who accuses of impiety whoever does not see in the Italian "movement" the presence and personal action of the Holy Spirit. He appears just in time to confute your Report, and confirm all I have said as to the Plymouthism of the "Italian brethren."

"Some friends of the movement," says Mr Dunn, in his "Gospel in Italy," "have been content to rest their defence of the Italians on the ground that everything relating to them is still in its infancy; that they have yet neither the materials nor the opportunity for any kind of decided ecclesiastical order; and that therefore they should be regarded as *uncommitted* to any principle in the matter.

"This mode of treating the thing is, however, far from satisfactory; for it proceeds on the assumption that, *after a time*, when the Italian converts have multiplied, and gifts have been developed among them, they will deliberately consider, and finally adopt, that form of Church order and government which may then appear to them most consonant with Holy Scripture.

"But *this expectation can never be realised*, for in all practical undertakings forms are regulated by circumstances, rather than deduced from principles. Men first begin, under the force of a present necessity, *to act*, and then seek for a theory to justify the course they have adopted. . . .

"If by the phrase, 'the Italian converts have not adopted any

\* "Sulla fede dei Cristiani evangelici," p. 21.

† "Missionary Reporter," June 1857.

peculiar form of Church government,' is simply meant that they have not *unitedly agreed* to accept some one form in preference to others, the statement is undoubtedly true. But if it is intended to imply that they are not acting in this respect on any given principle—that, for anything in their proceedings, they may in future years as readily become Episcopal as Presbyterian or Congregational, then *nothing can be more fallacious*.

"The fact is, whether we approve it or not, that the Italians have a form of Church government, although it is not uniformly carried out in precisely the same way. In some places" (the author might and should have said, in *all*,) "*their Churches are simply what the Plymouth Brethren in England call gatherings*, and, as such, are guided and governed in general accordance with the views of that body; . . . . .

"This is as clear from their published tracts, as it is from their constant practice."\*

But what use is there in seeking for Plymouthist declarations, and avowals about theories, when facts are there, and when the constant and universal practice of the "Italian Brethren" is openly that of Plymouthism?

You yourselves admit that *no pastoral authority has been distinctly recognised among them, and that they have no stated Church government*.† In spite of what you add, that the office of *pastor* (without pastors), and *discipline* (without Church government) have been carried out among them, this is unmistakably Plymouthism.

The form of their Sunday meetings is well known. They meet to "break bread," and then, whoever believes himself to have a "gift" is free to address the meeting, and that without being controlled in any way. This again is Plymouthism.

As to the Lord's Supper, they have equally departed from the usages of all the evangelical Churches. Among them, the administration of it devolves on no one in particular; every colporteur, every evangelist, every private member of an assembly can, if he pleases, take and give the communion, and that, recollect, *by* and *amongst* new converts from Romanism. Is not this pure Plymouthism?

Like all Plymouthists, they declare upon every occasion that they wish to owe nothing to tradition and to inherit nothing from other Churches;‡ they declare that they are *not Protestants*, and profess to have nothing in common with Protestantism.§ Although

\* "The Gospel in Italy," pp. 4, 5.

† "Report," p. 17.

‡ "Report," p. 16.

§ Their repudiation of Protestantism is sometimes most strange. Thus, in the defence published by Messrs Mazzarella, Lagomarsino, and Minetti, we read, "The

their evangelists are supported by you, by the Geneva Committee, and by others,\* they vehemently disclaim receiving any salary, since, say they, if they received salaries, they would consider themselves as mercenaries.† I could adduce other evidence, but what precedes will suffice, I trust, to convince every impartial reader, and perhaps yourselves, gentlemen, that you have erred in attempting to clear the "Italian brethren" of the imputations of Plymouthism.

Just as these lines are going to press, a great piece of news is brought to me by a Scotch paper; it is contained in an extract from a letter, solemnly announcing that **THE ITALIAN CHURCH HAS THROWN OFF PLYMOUTHISM, and is advancing admirably with its three deacons in the path of order and discipline.**‡

What! Plymouthism has just been *thrown off*, and this in February 1859! They were, therefore, until then, Plymouthists, although they denied it! This avowal is precious. It is the first and the clearest drawn by the truth from the friends of the "Italian" party. The writer adds, that he heard the news of this change with tears of joy. Before I share his joy, I must hear of other facts than the Turin Conference, convinced as I am, by their own accounts of it, that the "Italian" party is as Plymouthist since, as it was before that Conference.

Thus, however strongly you may deny it, it is nevertheless a Plymouthist movement that you uphold, and Plymouthist agents that you employ in Italy.

In order to explain and justify, to a certain extent, a state of ecclesiastical anarchy which you cannot wholly deny, you have imagined an entire historical theory which is as far remote as possible from the facts of the case.

Evangelical Christians, not being Protestants, *have not for their object the refutation of the maxims of the Romish Church.*" This striving, observable throughout their defence, to persuade the judges that their teachings were not opposed to the Romish Church, is very strange, to say the least; but here is something stranger still, and to me most unaccountable. When accused of having preached against the worship of images, they acknowledged, indeed, having spoken against image-worship, but *not* against that worship in the Church of Rome, thus concluding their defence:—"What can be said when it is recollected that it is clearly proved that the Evangelical Christians did not speak of the images blessed by the priests and by the Church of Rome, BUT OF THOSE OF THE PAGANS!"—*Condanna ecc.*, p. 30.

\* Your Report mentions as spent in salaries for evangelists, £315, 2s. 9d.; that of the Geneva Committee, frcs. 7210, 95 c. There is something which does not appear honest in the professions made by your evangelists of receiving no salary, when in reality they are amply supported. The author of the "Gospel in Italy" calls the leaders of the "Italian" congregations *the unpaid servants of the Churches*; he ought to have added that although *unpaid* by the Churches, they are, however, paid by others. "Gospel in Italy," p. 2.

† "Third Report of the Geneva Committee," p. 10. After mentioning frcs. 80 as allowed monthly to two individuals, and frcs. 50 to a third, Mr De Sanctis adds: "You will observe that we do not give a salary to our evangelists, but only provide food for their families." A nice distinction that! (p. 23.)

‡ "Home and Foreign Record," February 1859.

You have represented to yourselves new converts from Romanism, disgusted with the despotic authority of their Church, shrinking from anything at all resembling it, seeking humbly, anxiously, and independently of all external help, and in the Bible alone, an ecclesiastical constitution, and sighing for the day when they should discover it, and establish it in their congregations.\* Upon this idea you have founded your appeals for support, your claims upon the patience, the sympathy, almost upon the admiration of the Christian world, in favour of the "Italian brethren" and their proceedings.

You might, however, have recollected, that Messrs De Sanctis and Mazzarella, and nearly the whole of their congregations, were formerly, and for several years, missionaries and members of the Vaudois Church; that Messrs De Sanctis and Mazzarella, when they left that Church, did not profess the views you attribute to them. The former left the service of the Vaudois Church, protesting that he would "always remain a minister of it; that he was proud of that title, which he had so much desired, and which he hoped to keep till his death."† It is well known how purely personal the motives were that led him to that determination. The latter left it entirely on account of the sale of the famous building called the *Gran Madre*, in which the Government did not allow the gospel to be preached, and which the Waldensian Church could not retain with the mere object of preventing the Roman Catholics from purchasing it, as by such a course the means of obtaining another place of worship for the Christians of Genoa would have been sacrificed.

Here again, as in the case of Mr De Sanctis, ecclesiastical principles were in no way concerned; there was no desire to escape from false traditions, nor humble and laborious searching after the true constitutive principles of the Church. The Italians who separated along with these gentlemen cared still less, if possible, for questions of principle. In fact, their only object at first, in following their favourite preachers, was merely to form charitable societies!‡ But when the separation was made, without any reasons founded on principles, without legitimate motives, the theory was not long in following. Several of those who joined Messrs De Sanctis and Mazzarella had brought Plymouthist views from England and Switzerland. Certain members of that sect came from Florence and elsewhere among the "Italian brethren;" sympathy with them was expressed, and assistance afforded by the Plymouthists and semi-Plymouthists of other countries, and all

\* "Report," pp. 16, 17.

† "Letter of Mr De Sanctis to the Vaudois Table."

‡ Lithographed "Letter of Mr Mazzarella in answer to Mr Tron," p. 11.



these causes contributed to lead them towards that sect. Count Guicciardini laboured actively in the same direction by his writings, by his presence, by collections in foreign countries; and, before long, a separation, begun without cause, led them as by an irresistible impulse into the practices and principles of Plymouthism. Will they ever leave them? You hope so. You proclaim that they will, and you appear to foresee the moment when the new Italian communities will adopt a regular ecclesiastical organisation. I sympathise with your wishes, but I cannot share your hopes. Often have we heard them talking of deacons, elders, ministers, bishops even—to be expected from the Holy Ghost, and *from the Holy Ghost alone*; but as long as they continue so grossly to misapply the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit as to deny all direct participation of the Church in the regulation of the charges established in it, I shall be unable to discover in their vague promises anything but subtle allurements and subterfuges; and even should they be realised, their realisation would be naught but a still more complete application of that capricious and irresponsible exercise of gifts, which is, in point of fact, pure Plymouthism.

Gentlemen, the task I have undertaken is now completed. It is for you, and for the Christian public along with you, to judge if I have accomplished the object proposed at the beginning of this letter. Since I have asserted nothing without proof, I can, without fear, await contradiction. I have already publicly made many of the statements contained in this letter.\* I have been violently and personally attacked for thus daring to speak the truth. A newspaper, which, while it closed its columns to me, freely opened them to my contradictors, has abused me in various ways for calling things by their right names. I have long kept silence. Since the appearance of your Report, however, silence has been no longer possible. If I have therefore spoken again, I have done so calmly, actuated by no other motive than the love of the truth, and without other fear than that of having pleaded its cause too feebly.

Should the publicity now given to this controversy prove a source of joy to the enemies, and of sorrow to the friends of Evangelisation, the responsibility rests entirely with those who have rendered it necessary; and as it is always more useful and more prudent to tell the whole truth than to sophisticate or dissemble a part of it, I have resolved, after due consideration, and without conferring with flesh and blood, to proclaim it.

I trust in God that I shall not have done so in vain; I trust, also, that more than one good result may follow the attempt,

\* Speech before the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, May 1856.

amply rewarding me for the labour it has cost, and more  
consoling me for the attacks it may bring down upon me.

Be assured, gentlemen, that the errors which it has been  
duty to point out in your Report have not diminished the feeling  
of respect and affection with which I have the honour of remain-  
ing, your obedient servant and brother in Christ,

LÉON PILATTE.

Nice, *May* 1859.

THE END.