

JOHN CALVIN.

CALVIN:  
HIS  
LIFE AND TIMES.

BY  
THOMAS LAWSON.

—  
ILLUSTRATED.  
—

FOURTH EDITION.

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## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

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Her Majesty Queen Victoria was graciously pleased to accept a copy of the First Edition of this work and to order the following letter of thanks to be sent:—

“Osborne,

“*January 13th, 1885.*

“SIR,—I am commanded by the Queen to thank you for the copy of your work, ‘The Illustrated Life of John Calvin,’ which you have presented to the Queen.

“I have the honour to be,

“Sir,

“Your obedient servant,

“HENRY F. PONSONBY.

“Mr. Thomas Lawson.”

The former editions of this work having found acceptance with the public, and being now out of print, it was thought that another and much cheaper edition, in an attractive form, might be found suitable as a Sunday School reward. The present edition is unabridged, excepting that a few of the long hymns have been shortened, while some of the illustrations have been enlarged.

In perpetuating the memory of the worthy dead, the writer seeks to arouse the living to action. He does not set up the creature as an object of worship, nor his bones as relics for veneration. But following the example given in Hebrews xi., he seeks by the deeds of the dead to stimulate the faithful to emulate their self-denying zeal. Next to Christ, Calvin was the greatest Reformer the world has ever known. This fact may account for the calumny heaped upon him by the Papacy. Christ will, however, vindicate the characters of His saints in that day when “the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

May the Spirit of the Lord graciously honour this feeble attempt to exalt the riches of Divine grace, and to Jehovah Triune be all the praise.

T. LAWSON.

## P R E F A C E .

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In producing the following chapters, the object of the author has been to supply, in an attractive form, as much reliable information upon the life and labours of this remarkable man as possible.

The principles and practices of the Papacy, in which the Reformer was trained, have been, in all fairness and charity, contrasted with the doctrine and grace of Christ, to which he was converted.

Many admirable works, and some much more voluminous than the present, have since John Calvin's day appeared upon his life and times. But it is to be regretted that some of his biographers have, through natural aversion to his doctrine, formed harsh judgments of his motives. This, however, is not surprising, for man's dignified notions of the freedom of his own will, are so averse to the unconditional predestination of elect sinners to everlasting life, that although this truth shines as clearly in the Bible as the sun in the firmament, he is found constantly opposing it, and yet in his blindness he thinks he is doing God service.

While giving a faithful record of this remarkable Reformer, great care has been taken in the following pages to avoid ascribing undue honour to the creature. To glorify the God of grace, who delivered John Calvin from the power of darkness, translated him into the kingdom of His dear Son, and made him an able, faithful minister of Christ, has been the sincere desire of the writer.

THOS. LAWSON.

Brighton.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
CHAP. I.—John Calvin ... ..	9
CHAP. II.—His early days, appearance and practice— The laws of nature to be regarded—His natural piety and great talents—First principles of true Reformation—A Pharisee of the Pharisees ... ..	10
CHAP. III.—James Pavanne, a youthful Martyr—The Hermit of Livry—Calvin's convictions ... ..	13
CHAP. IV.—“There are only two Religions in the world” —Human Authority or Divine Revelation?—Dead Works—Confession—The Confessional has no Scrip- tural authority, and was unknown to the early Fathers	16
CHAP. V.—Jesus the Mediator—The Keys, or objections answered—Does the Confessional produce good results?	21
CHAP. VI.—The Sorrows of Death and the Source of Religion—The Redeemed Sinner's Need—The Prisoner Released and Pardon Sealed ... ..	24
CHAP. VII.—Our Illustrations—A great struggle—Calvin the lawyer—Calvin the Gospel minister—His Father's Death ... ..	26
CHAP. VIII.—Calvin visits his native city—He returns to Paris and labours as a Missionary—Roussel preaching in the Royal Palace—Light rejected, Grace com- municated ... ..	33
CHAP. IX.—The Martyrdom of Alexander—The time for Calvin to come forward—His Oration read before the Sorbonne—The Assembly arose and the Storm burst —Calvin's Escape—Calvin on the Worship of Images	38
CHAP. X.—French Reformers before Calvin—Le Fevre and Calvin contrasted—Reasons for protesting against Popery—Calvin administers the Lord's Supper in both kinds—The Decree of the Council of Constance for withholding the Cup from the Laity—Tested by the Word of God and Reason—Calvin resigns his livings and secedes from the Church ... ..	44

CHAP. XI.—A bold Adventure in the Dark—Morning and its Revelations—Bartholomew Millon—Superstition, Pomp and Barbarity ... ..	51
CHAP. XII.—Calvin and his work—Halfway men—Interview between Erasmus and Calvin—His distinguished Scholarship—Another John Calvin—Calvin arrested in Italy by the Officers of the Inquisition ... ..	57
CHAP. XIII.—Reflection after Deliverance—Calvinism—Life's Turning Points—Geneva ... ..	63
CHAP. XIV.—Church and State—Geneva—William Farel—Froment's school ... ..	66
CHAP. XV.—A True Church—Angels of Darkness and their Weapons of Warfare—Public Disputation—Spiritual and Political Protestantism—The Nuns of St. Claire—Nuns and Nunneries—All Bibles ordered to be burnt—Sham Pilgrims—God preserved the Reformers from being Poisoned—Protestantism established in Geneva ... ..	73
CHAP. XVI.—The Decree of the Creature and the Decree of the Creator—Seeds of Internal Discord—Calvin at the Gates of Geneva—Farel's Denunciation and Calvin's Surrender ... ..	81
CHAP. XVII.—Calvin's first work in Geneva—The Theological Teacher not a Gospel Preacher—Calvin's first Sermon in Geneva—Public Disputation and a Friar Converted—The Dragon and his angels—Divine Chastening in lovingkindness—Superstitious Consecration of Bells—The immoral fruits of superstition—The Lord's Supper and the Romish Mass ... ..	83
CHAP. XVIII.—A Terrific Tempest—Reflection—The Shafts of the Almighty against Calvin's Enemies ... ..	92
CHAP. XIX.—Calvin at Strasburg—The Genevese invited by the Mother of Harlots to return to her grasp—Macaulay's reason for Men of Learning being found in the Church of Rome—Natural and Spiritual Knowledge contrasted—Geneva repenting—Calvin reluctantly returns to Geneva—Moral Laws introduced ... ..	95
CHAP. XX.—Calvin's marriage and the death of his wife—The celibacy of the Clergy—Marriage is honourable	104

CHAP. XXI.—An injustice done to Calvin—Servetus— Apprehension and examination—A Libertine con- spiracy against Calvin—The trial ... ..	107
CHAP. XXII.—Toleration—A fresh indictment against Servetus—The Council release Berthelier and deprive Calvin of the power to exclude the profane from the Lord's table—The snare and the Deliverer—September 3rd, 1553—Calvin taking farewell of his flock ...	113
CHAP. XXIII.—The field of Calvin's labour fixed by God —An Officer from Vienne demands Servetus—The Articles of Accusation—The case referred to the Churches and Magistrates of Switzerland—The Letters of Servetus—The Verdict of the Cities and Pastors of Switzerland—Now let us reflect on the whole affair ... ..	121
CHAP. XXIV.—A black spot from Rome's fires—Truth revealed and truth sealed—Calvin's letters to the Martyrs ... ..	126
CHAP. XXV.—The five young Martyrs of Lyons ...	130
CHAP. XXVI.—Calvin and Luther contrasted—The Libertines—Their utter confusion—The speedy rise and prosperity of Geneva—Cardinal Sadoleto's visit to Calvin ... ..	132
CHAP. XXVII.—His literary labours—The Reformation in England—The nobility and dignity of the Church	139
CHAP. XXVIII.—The Reformation in France—The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's day—Silver lining to a dark cloud—A College and Academy at Geneva ...	144
CHAP. XXIX.—His last interview with the Council—His farewell address to the Pastors—Calvin's will— William Farel and Calvin meet for the last time— The Reformer's last moments—His Death and Burial —Concluding Remarks ... ..	150



# Calvin : His Life and Times.

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**G**OD, who created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for His work (Isa. liv. 16), never allows His operations to stand still through lack of means to accomplish His purpose. He sent Moses to be educated in Pharaoh's court, to qualify him to return to that court with all the accomplishments of a prince, and demand the freedom of Jehovah's sons.

Young Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, yet a freeborn citizen of Rome, was sent to Jerusalem to be brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, to qualify him to deliver his eloquent address before King Agrippa, and to preach the Gospel to Cæsar's household. The sacred language of Philippians iii. 7, 8, dropped not from the lips and pen of a man who knew not the value of relationship to Abraham and the mortification of having to renounce all life's most cherished associations. But as a Hebrew of the Hebrews and touching the law a Pharisee, Paul was qualified to appeal to his brethren as no other man could, saying, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

So young Calvin, destined of God to be, without exception, the greatest of the Reformers, nay, the greatest divine and politician of the age, was trained in the bosom of that system which he afterwards so successfully opposed.

This eminent Reformer was born on the 10th of July, 1509, at Noyon, a city of France, about fifty-eight miles north-east of Paris. To the church of his childhood he was most devoutly and sincerely attached. When only twelve years of age he was made chaplain of the church La Gésine. Chaplaincies were then given in France as they are now too often given even in this country. Not here perhaps to very young persons, but they are often given as *favours* to those who are destitute of the grace of God, and not more qualified to preach the Gospel than children.

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## CHAPTER II.

**W**HEN the young Chaplain of La Gésine had enjoyed this title but two years, the pestilence broke out in Noyon, and numbers of persons fled from its ravages. The chapter was then petitioned, and in August, 1523, liberty was granted to young John "to go where he pleased without the loss of his allowance." This, in the providence of God, brought him to the College of La Marche, in Paris, and under the tuition of a most renowned scholar, whose fame reaches down even to our own day.

Between this distinguished teacher and young Calvin an attachment was formed which lasted till the end of their days. The high mental powers of the young scholar, combined with his uprightness and sincerity, drew forth the attention and affection of Mathurin Cordier, his teacher; and the profound learning of the latter could not fail to gain the admiration and esteem of the former.

Avoiding the usual sports provided for recreation between school hours, that small delicate form, with pale face, and bright penetrating eyes, might be seen accompanying the teacher; and when all others were locked in sleep, this diligent young student would be pursuing his studies.

### THE LAWS OF NATURE TO BE REGARDED.

This, indeed, is not a practice which I would recommend to any of my youthful readers. Rather would I remind them that what they obtain at the expense of one

of nature's laws, they must pay back by another. God has so wisely constituted us that, when in health, there is both pleasure and profit in satisfying all nature's **LAWFUL** demands. But if the body be habitually robbed, either of its needed rest or exercise, it must be paid back by the usual signs of old age before that season arrives: the bow that is never unstrung will lose its strength; and the lock unused will soon become rusty. Avoid, then, that excessive mental labour which causes a neglect of the body, and above all avoid idleness.

#### HIS NATURAL PIETY AND GREAT TALENTS.

Calvin was religious from his childhood as far as natural religion goes. "No one at Noyon was so rigid as he in the observance of ecclesiastical regulations."

"When very young he was accustomed to pray in the open air under the vault of heaven." And as his adversaries assure us, he "was seen when a child joining in the religious processions, and carrying a sword with a *cross-shaped hilt, by way of a crucifix*," as persons now unwittingly carry crosses on their umbrellas, etc.

"Filled with horror at sin, he would often reprimand the disorders of his school-fellows with severity and even bitterness. Hence, as a canon of Noyon informs us, his fellow-students nicknamed him the *accusative case*. Among them he was the representative of conscience and of duty, so far was he from being what some of his calumniators have depicted him. The pale face and piercing eyes of the scholar of sixteen had already inspired his comrades with more respect than the black gowns of their masters; and this Picard youth, of timid air, was even then, by the seriousness of his conversation and life, an unconscious minister and reformer.

"It was not in these particulars alone that the youth of Noyon was already far above his school-fellows. He comprehended everything with inconceivable facility; he ran in his studies while his companions were lazily creeping along, and he impressed deeply on his profound genius what others spend much time in learning superficially. Accordingly, his master was compelled to take him out of the classes, and introduce him singly to fresh studies."\*

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\* D'Aubigné His. Ref. vol. iii. 476.

These are some of the gifts with which Calvin was *naturally* endowed: the time for God the Spirit to grant him true wisdom by regenerating grace had not yet arrived.

#### THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF TRUE REFORMATION.

A reformer without the grace of God in his heart is a reformer without any ruling principle save his own fluctuating fancy.

But for the enlightening, sustaining grace of God, the great leaders of the changes which took place in the 16th century would have fallen back horror-stricken and terrified at the persecution and death which threatened on every hand.

But enlightened by the light of God, and sustained by faith in Christ, they plodded forward determined never to sheathe their swords (their Bibles) until they had wrested from the Mother of Harlots the rights of men and the honour of God.

The first principles of true reformation in personal, national, or church government, were sung by the heavenly host when the greatest Reformer, King, and Priest lay a babe in Bethlehem's manger.

"*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men*" (Luke ii. 14). These are the first principles of sound government and true reformation, and principles to which all the children of God, by grace, are favourable.

#### A PHARISEE OF THE PHARISEES.


We now come to 1526, and Calvin is about seventeen years of age. He has finished his studies under his esteemed friend Cordier, and has just entered the College of Montaign: one of the two seminaries in Paris for training priests. But before calling the reader's attention to his conversion, we had better leave him for a time, a *Pharisee of the Pharisees*, while we walk about the land of his nativity and review the solemn events transpiring around him.

The true servants of Jesus are now being freely martyred, but Calvin is a rigid Papist, wrapped in the darkness of the times, and like young Saul of Tarsus, he

is ready to give his voice against them. Indeed, so far from their sufferings drawing forth his sympathy, they, in his estimation, magnify the crimes of the martyrs and increase his detestation for men who dare to question the authority of the church.

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### CHAPTER III.

HE youthful martyr, James Pavanne, could not surely have passed Calvin's notice. Pavanne had a living in the church, but being enlightened by the Spirit, whose work it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to the people, he began to preach Christ, and to oppose the worship of the Virgin. This in the Church of Rome is a great offence, for Mary is the greatest idol. James was, therefore, soon arrested and thrown into prison.

"The youth, amiability, learning and uprightness of Pavanne," says D'Aubigné, "created a general interest in his favour. Nothing was spared to bring him to retract his supposed errors, neither sophistry, promises nor threats. The unhappy youth, seduced, agitated and shaken, sunk at last under these perfidious attacks." Yes, like Peter, he was suffered to fall, to learn his own weakness, but like him when put to the test again, he found the strength of the Lord. On Christmas eve, 1525, he had to walk bare-headed and barefooted, with a rope round his neck, and a lighted taper in his hand, to the Church of Notre Dame, and there publicly beg pardon of the Virgin for having spoken lightly of her.

This act of idolatry brought no peace to poor Pavanne, but from that day horror of great darkness came over his soul. Bitterness of spirit seized him; like Peter he went out and wept bitterly. He was continually sighing, "Alas! there is nothing but bitterness for me in this life."

He felt that he had denied his Lord. From that dreadful hour he did nothing but weep and walk about with melancholy air, with his eyes fixed on the earth, and groaning inwardly. Yet the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, Who can have compassion upon the ignorant and

upon them who are out of the way, did not cast him off. Through fear he had denied the Lord with his lips; in heart and mind he never had. But he had sinned, and deeply he felt it, and he repented and abhorred himself. At Meaux, about twenty-three miles N.E. from Paris, Protestantism was taking root. Here the Gospel of the Grace of God was preached, and from this place and people the poor broken hearted youth could not keep. He now feared not the fire and the stake; he longed for them. He was seen at Meaux, immediately arrested and brought before the judges. This was all the youthful James required. He felt comforted as soon as he was in chains, and found strength to confess Jesus Christ with boldness. His trial was soon concluded; a pile was erected on the Grève, and Pavanne, strengthened by the consolations of Christ, died rejoicing. At the pile he delivered such a testimony upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper that a doctor said, "I wish Pavanne had not spoken, even if it had cost the Church a million of gold."

#### THE HERMIT OF LIVRY.

About nine miles from Paris lived a poor hermit, who, having received the truth into his heart, began

"To tell to sinners round,  
What a dear Saviour he had found;  
To point to His redeeming blood,  
And say, 'Behold the way to God.'"

He visited the poor peasants in the villages around his hut, and told them of a full and free pardon for burdened souls by the blood of Jesus, without priestly absolution.

The news reached the ears of the doctors and magistrates of Paris. The humble missionary was seized and dragged from his hermitage, cast into prison, and condemned "to suffer the exemplary punishment of the slow fire."

To render the occasion more solemn and terrifying, the martyrdom was to take place before the cathedral of Notre Dame; all the clergy were convoked, and therefore Calvin among them, and as much pomp was displayed as on the most solemn festival.

"The great bell of the church of Notre Dame was solemnly tolled to arouse the citizens, and people flocked in crowds: the workman from his toil, the scholar from his

book, the merchant from his traffic, the soldier from his idleness." But what are these accumulated thousands so eager to behold? They are anxious to see how the poor hermit's new religion will stand the fire. Well, there he



JOHN CALVIN AND HIS COUSIN IN FRIENDLY  
CONTROVERSY.

is, calm, firm and collected. The cross is presented to him with exhortations to repent. His only hope is in the pardon of God, he says, and he is resolved to die in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The stunning sounds of the great bell are at length silenced, and the martyr is in the midst of the flames. The doctors, enraged at his calmness, declare he is going to hell, but the consolations of Christ sustain him until his spirit takes its flight.

#### CALVIN'S CONVICTIONS.

The difference between the old and the *new doctrine*\* now form the subject of conversations everywhere, but nowhere of such importance as in the apartment where Calvin and his cousin Olivetan hold their friendly dissensions. Calvin is now about eighteen years of age, and

“Th’ appointed time rolls on apace,  
Not to propose, but call by grace.”

“The contest,” says Dr. Wylie, “between the two cousins is renewed day by day.

“There are two religions in the world,’ we hear Olivetan saying. ‘In the one class invented by men, man saves himself by ceremonies and good works; the other is that one religion which is revealed in the Bible, and which teaches men to look for salvation solely from the free grace of God.’

“‘I will have none of your new doctrine,’ Calvin sharply rejoins; ‘think you that I have lived in error all my days?’” But Calvin is not so sure of the matter even as he looks. The words of his cousin have gone deeper into his heart than he is willing to admit, even to himself, and when Olivetan has taken farewell for the day, Calvin, bursting into tears, falls upon his knees, and gives vent in prayer to the doubts and anxieties that agitate him.

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## CHAPTER IV.

**W**HAT is that great sentence uttered by the young man, Olivetan, near the close of our last chapter?

“THERE ARE ONLY TWO RELIGIONS IN THE WORLD,” he says. “In the one class invented by men, *man saves himself* (or supposes he can) *by ceremonies and good works*; the other is that one religion which is revealed in

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\* Men had been so long accustomed to the doctrine of human merit that the doctrines of the Bible were counted new.



the Bible, and which teaches men to look for *salvation arising solely from the free grace of God.*"

Many and various shades of doctrine have appeared since Calvia and Olivetan discussed the points of difference between *human merit* and *God's sovereign favour*, and many schools of thought, of course, existed long before their day, but stripped of their respective set forms and phrases, the great fact remains that *there are only two religions in the world.*

These two great principles have run side by side from the beginning of the world. Cain and Abel, when they appeared before God with their sacrifices, were the first representatives of them. Abel was a man of *faith*; by *faith* he offered his more excellent sacrifice. He therefore represented *salvation by grace*, and God had respect unto him, and from God he obtained witness that he was righteous.

Cain was not a man of faith. He did not believe in the favour of God. He represented all such as trust to their ceremonies and good works. He was wroth with his brother; he counted him a heretic, and slew him. Abel was, therefore, the first martyr for the Word of God and the testimony which he held. From the death of Abel we pass over about 5406 years, and two other representatives of these *two religions* appear before us. Calvin and Olivetan are thoughtfully and prayerfully attending to the Divine admonition, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

#### HUMAN AUTHORITY OR DIVINE REVELATION ?

Olivetan, like a wise builder, digs deep. He sees the sandy foundation upon which his cousin is building. He points to the sacred page, and says, "It is written."

Calvin, mistaking *compulsory uniformity* in the Church of Rome, for the unity of the Spirit in the true Church of God, points to the greatness, universality, and authority of the Church. He has been trained within her pale, he loves her, he adores all that belongs to her. He has never ventured to question authority so universally received and admired as the Church. All the great doctors of the universities support her. For Calvin even to admit that there is any force in his cousin's reasonings is to admit that the Church with her millions of followers has for hundreds of years

been in delusion, and what to him is perhaps even more solemn, is to admit that the foundation upon which his soul is resting for eternal salvation may after all be a sandy one.

#### DEAD WORKS.

But we must not rest satisfied with simply tracing the outlines of the life of this remarkable Reformer. To understand his conversion we must look into his very soul, and inquire into the nature of his confidence in Romish ceremonials.

There he stands before his cousin, employing all the powers of his capacious mind to defend the unscriptural doctrine of *salvation by works*. The Bible, it should be remembered, although admitted as an important authority by Papists, is never put forward, and is allowed only to be believed according to the interpretation of the Church.

Calvin is therefore at this time, although well acquainted with the great authors, quite ignorant of the truths of the Word of God.

Among the numerous ceremonies upon which his hope rests may be named *Invocation of Saints, Prayers for the Dead, Worship of the Cross, Images and Relics, Sacrifice of the Mass, and Confession*.

The last of these carefully examined from a Romish point of view will show us how easily even an intelligent person, trained in the Church of Rome, may place confidence therein.

#### CONFESSION

Was first formally adopted and enforced by the Papacy in the year 1215. And although the Council of Trent did not commence until 1545, when John Calvin was about thirty-six years of age, its Catechism will, nevertheless, most clearly show us what he did believe, and what Roman Catholics still believe in regard to *auricular confession*,—that is, confession by whispering into the ear of a priest all the sinful thoughts, words, and deeds, the penitent has been guilty of.

In the Catechism of the Council of Trent,\* p. 278, we read—

“Confession, then, is defined to be a *sacramental accusation of one's self made with a view of obtaining pardon by virtue of the keys*.

\* Theodore Alois Buckley's Translation.

"We know from experience, that to those who have led an immoral life nothing is so useful towards reformation of morals as sometimes to disclose their secret thoughts, their whole words and deeds to a prudent and faithful friend. . . . to lay open the diseases and wounds of their souls to the *priest* as the vice-gerent of Christ the Lord.

"Take away sacramental confession from Christian discipline, and it is evident that all things will be replete with *secret and unutterable crimes*.

"When any one has arrived at an age to consider the work of salvation, he is then *bound to confess his sins to the priest*, without which act no one who is weighed down with the consciousness of guilt *can hope for salvation*.

"All sins should individually be detailed in confession (283).

"The circumstances of sins are to be mentioned in confession (284).

"But above all, the faithful should be careful to *cleanse their consciences from sin* by frequent confession (286).

"Of this ministry an illustrious testimony is furnished in the words of our Lord, in St. John : *Whose sins ye shall remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose ye shall retain, they are retained*; words evidently addressed not to all, but to the Apostles only, to whom, in this function, priests succeed" (287).

After what we have thus heard the Church of Rome witness about confession, we may safely conclude that we have the mind of young Calvin open before us, and that he sincerely believed that to be saved he must—

1st. Accuse himself before a priest with the view of obtaining pardon.

2nd. That nothing was so useful towards a reformation of morals as to lay open the diseases and wounds of his soul before a fellow creature.

3rd. That the priest in the confessional was vice-gerent of Christ the Lord.

4th. That without it the church would abound with unutterable crimes.

5th. That without confessing his sins he could have no hope of salvation.

6th. That all sins were to be individually detailed.

7th. That by frequent confession he was to *cleanse his conscience*.

8th. That the words spoken to the Apostles, namely, "*Whose sins ye shall remit*," etc., were spoken to the priests who possessed power, when the sins were confessed, to grant complete absolution.

This must be taken as a sample of the numerous

ceremonies which formed the false hope of the future Reformer of these subtle pretensions.

THE CONFESSIONAL HAS NO SCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY AND  
WAS UNKNOWN TO THE EARLY FATHERS.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," said the Psalmist (Ps. cxix. 105), and the prophet Isaiah added, "If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. viii. 20). Let us then examine the foregoing by the light of truth.

It is easy to perceive that the whole fabric of *confessional, priest and absolution*, rests upon the *right of the priest* to assume such a position. If he has no Scriptural authority, either for the title of *priest*, or for the office of *mediator*, then, being without *Divine right*, the whole institution must be an imposture, and the so-called priest, even though sincere; a deceiver of deceivers.

Now, strange as it may appear to those who have learned to kneel reverently at the feet of a fellow mortal and hear him say, "*God hears you, hears you through me; through me, God will answer you,*" there is not the slightest foundation in the Word of God for any mortal man to assume such a position.

The term "priest" is indeed found and applied to *all believers* in 1 Peter ii. 9 and Revelation i. 6; but the title in these cases is entirely repugnant to the idea of a consecrated priesthood vested with sacerdotal functions.

Under the Gospel no such thing is known, and no such thing was heard of for centuries after apostolic times. Even *Ambrose, the Latin father*, born about the year 340, to whom the *Te Deum* is ascribed, says, "*All the children of the Church are priests. The heathen,*" he says, "*accuse us, because we have neither temples, altars nor victims.*"

And *Tertullian*, another father of the Church, born about the year 160, who became a Christian from witnessing the heroic firmness of the martyrs, says, "We are the true worshippers and the true *priests*, who, by *praying in the spirit*, sacrifice personal and *acceptable prayer* to God, which is addressed to Himself."

The idea of a human being as a priest-mediator was unknown until the Church declined from the simplicity

and purity of her first principles. None of the Apostles ever claimed such a title, and among the gifts granted by Jesus for the perfecting of the saints are found apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, but no *priests*, no *mediators*.

Paul, it is true, entreats the members of the Church to pray for him, but never to come between his soul and God.

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## CHAPTER V.

**T**RULY the sinner, who is brought to feel something of his unworthiness in the sight of a holy God, and can say with the Apostle, "The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin"—feels the necessity for a mediator. But Jesus Christ is the only mediator, the only priest over the house of God, the only atoning sacrifice known in the Church of God, and made known by Divine revelation.

By Him the Spirit-taught people of God offer the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to His name, and therefore they *all* are said to be a spiritual house, a *holy priesthood* to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; and again, "a chosen generation, a *royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter ii. 5, 9).

Nothing can possibly be required in a mediator or in a priest for a poor sinner that Jesus Christ is not. He is still a man, and better than any other man to confess to and to plead our cause; He is God as well as man. How precious and complete is the declaration of the Spirit by the Apostle, in Hebrews ii. 17: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made *like* unto His brethren, that He might be a *merciful and faithful* High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make *reconciliation* for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, *He is able to succour them that are tempted.*"

"Wherefore He is able also to *save them to the uttermost* that come unto God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25). What more can a needy sinner require than this?

## THE KEYS, OR OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

But does not James say, "Confess your faults one to another?"

Yes; but does this any more mean that the people should confess to the priest than the priest to the people?

Surely the Apostle meant that we were to confess our faults to those against whom we had committed any offence.

But how can priests pardon sins unless they know what and how many there are?

We answer that *priest, confessional, and absolution* are altogether a human invention, without Divine right, and therefore a great fraud.

But did not Jesus say to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," etc.? And did He not breathe on His Apostles, and say, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them?" (John xx. 22, 23).

Yes, certainly; but what were the keys? and how did Peter and the rest of the Apostles use them?

We must not overlook the fact that Jesus first said, "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost,*" and then follows, "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted," and turning to Acts x. 43, we find Peter preaching Jesus, and saying, "Through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive *remission* of sins, and while he spake these words the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word." It is therefore by the Holy Ghost blessing the preached or written Word that the believer receives the *remission of sins from his conscience*, and is loosed from his burden. The whole of the sins of God's chosen people were atoned for by the death of Christ, but the removal of guilt from the conscience is by the Spirit bearing witness with their spirits.

## DOES THE CONFESSIONAL PRODUCE GOOD RESULTS?

Let those who have had experience of it speak for themselves. The Catechism, as we have heard, says, "Nothing is so useful towards reformation of morals."

The confessional is of pagan origin, but perhaps at the first adopted by the papacy with the hope that the shame of opening the secret thoughts and actions to a professedly religious minister, would check the abounding iniquity

that everywhere prevailed soon after the Church of Rome usurped the authority over other churches. If this were so, time certainly proved it to be a mistake. It, however, gave immense power to the clergy which they have never been willing to relinquish.

Pastor Chiniquy, the "Canadian Luther," addressing the Popish vicar, says:—"With a blush on my face and regret in my heart, I confess before God and man, that I have been plunged *twenty-three years in that bottomless sea of iniquity*, through which the poor blind priests of Rome have to swim day and night. I was bound in conscience, *as you are bound to-day*, to put into the ears, the mind, the imagination, the heart, and the soul of females, questions of such a nature, the immediate and direct tendency of which—*you know it*—is to fill the mind, the memory, and the hearts of both priests and females with thoughts, phantoms, and temptations of such a degrading nature, that I do not know any words adequate to express them. Pagan antiquity has never seen any institution more *polluting to both soul and body*. *The confessional is a school of perdition.*"

Miss Eliza Smith, who was for five years a convert to Rome, says, "Every delicate and better feeling prevents full delineation here. Nor am I blaming individuals; it is the *system* which is at fault. A system which teaches that things, at which degraded humanity must blush even at the remembrance of, should be laid open, dwelt upon and exposed in detail, to the sullied ears of a corrupt and fallen fellow mortal, who of like passions with the penitent at his feet, is thereby exposed to temptations both dark and dangerous.

"But what shall we say of woman! Draw a veil, oh! purity, modesty, and every feminine feeling,—a veil dark as oblivion over the sad outrages too often committed against thee.


"I appeal to converts, to converts of the gentler sex, and ask them, fearlessly ask them, what was the *first* impression on their minds when some of the truths of the confessional struck home? Was not your *first* impression one of dread and bewilderment almost stunning, to be followed by a sense of humiliation and degradation, not easily to be defined or supported?"

Let us hear the poet, and return to the more definite history of John Calvin.

“ Here sits the priest ; and faint and low,  
 Like the sighing of an evening breeze,  
 Comes through those painted lattices  
 The ceaseless sound of human woe.  
 Here, while her bosom aches and throbs  
 With deep and agonizing sobs,  
 That half are passion, half contrition,  
 The luckless daughter of perdition  
 Slowly confesses her secret shame—  
 The time, the place, the lover's name !  
 Here the grim murderer, with a groan,  
 From his bruised conscience roll the stone,  
 Thinking that thus he can atone  
 For ravages of sword and flame.  
 Indeed I marvel, and marvel greatly,  
 How a priest can sit here so sedately,  
 Reading the whole year out and in,  
 Naught but the catalogue of sin,  
 And still keep any faith whatever  
 In human virtue ! Never ! never ! ”

LONGFELLOW'S *Golden Legend*.

## CHAPTER VI.

 HE absurd ceremonies in which our Reformer was trained to believe we have already noticed. The arrow of conviction had, however, entered, and when sent by the Spirit to the heart, human hands can neither withdraw it nor heal the wound. It sunk deeper, and Calvin's trouble of soul increased. The sorrows of death compassed him, and the pains of hell got hold upon him ; he found trouble and sorrow.

But Robert Olivetan persuaded him to study religion in its *source*, for which he was obliged to come to the Bible. From the history of the Church he could find when the various ceremonies were adopted ; he knew that, compared with the Bible, they were of modern date. But to be seen studying the Scriptures was to incur suspicion ; to turn to them to see if the Church were right would be to commit a mortal sin.

What could he do ? God was convincing him of his need of a Saviour and of the insufficiency of all human inventions.



With agitated mind he opened the old Book wherein hundreds of thousands have read their justification by the eye of faith.

#### THE REDEEMED SINNER'S NEED.

He opened it and he read; he read to discover, like Paul, that God required spiritual service, that His law was spiritual, but that he was carnal, sold under sin. To his ceremonies he returned again with double energy, but found no more relief than did the prophets of Baal by calling upon their god.

No, relief was not here; dead forms may satisfy a dead sinner, but a new born soul thirsts for the living God. Urged by the doctors, who saw his distress, Calvin went to confession. But what could a poor sinful mortal, man-mediator do? Alas, nothing!

Calvin had discovered that his secret sins were set in the light of God's countenance; that there was an infinite *distance* and an infinite *difference* between God and himself. The law had entered; sin had revived and *death* was working within him. He needed a Mediator that could make an *atonement* for sin; span the *infinite distance* between God and his soul; reconcile the *difference*; abolish *death* and bring life and immortality to light.

#### THE PRISONER RELEASED AND PARDON SEALED.

In this state he went on reading till light began to dawn upon his mind, and the sacred healing balm from Jesus' wounds began to flow into his soul through Isaiah liii, 5: "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed.*"

At length he found the relief his soul needed, not in Rome's dead ceremonies, but by faith in a crucified and risen Christ, his burden rolled off. Now as a reconciled sinner John Calvin could look up to God as his Father. The Spirit of adoption had entered his heart. "O Father," he exclaimed, "*O Father, His sacrifice has appeased Thy wrath; His blood has washed away my iniquities; His cross has borne my curse; His death has atoned for me!*"

Thus tried and thus liberated, John Calvin was being fitted for a Reformer. No longer could this enlightened, liberated believer in Jesus worship the *material cross*, nor

any of those instruments of torture employed by the crucifiers of Jesus. Ignorant and deluded indeed must that poor sinner be who thinks he is pleasing the Lord by honouring the instruments of His torture. Yet man, left to himself, will worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen.

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## CHAPTER VII.

**S**ELDOM do artists, who sketch illustrations for books, so strikingly depict in the countenance the change of the mind as is seen in our two representations of Calvin on pages 15 and 31. The beardless youth of eighteen with shaven crown, haggard features, and despairing soul, appears ten years older than when he, near two years later having found the way of Life, is visiting the cottage of the peasant and castle of the baron in Bourges, saying, "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul."

Delivered from the entanglements of the man of sin, and made free by faith in the blood of Jesus, his countenance soon indicated the joy of his soul. He could now walk in communion with the Psalmist, and find the very secrets of his soul expressed in words like these, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord" (Ps. xl. 2, 3).

### A GREAT STRUGGLE.

But Calvin had yet a great battle to fight before he could disentangle his mind from the idea of the church of Rome being the church of God.

That there were numerous evils within her, calling for a reformation, he could not doubt, but the greatness, the learning, the wide-spread influence, the wealth and splendour, and the outward *uniformity* of that church in many lands; together with her arrogant claims, lying

legends of saints, pretended miracles, and flattering lips, things by which millions of her devotees have been



A PROTESTANT LABOURER OF BOURGES READING THE SCRIPTURES.

enchanted, held, and fatally deceived, were brought to bear upon the mind of the young convert with all the bewildering, fascinating power of the arch-fiend.

Where could he find the true church of God if not in this mighty organization?

Could it be possible that a few strangers scattered abroad, hated, and counted the scum of the earth and the off-scouring of all things, were really the Church of the Bible, "the body of Christ," "the pillar and ground of the truth?"

These were staggering considerations, and when presented to the mind by the great enemy, were too much for human nature to stand against. But Calvin was helped; helped by One who had endured the same temptation—One whom the same adversary had shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, saying, "All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. iv. 9).

He was brought to the Bible and there led by the Spirit to see the *true Church*, as the whole body of true believers with Jesus Christ as their only Head and Mediator.

When the great body of Jewish priests professed to be the children of God, Jesus, rejoicing in spirit, said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight." So in the days of John Calvin, and in every other age, the true Church has been composed of a few spiritual worshippers who have been hated by the world, whether professedly religious or profane.

#### CALVIN THE LAWYER.

"O Lord," said Jeremiab, "I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," and this is especially noticeable in the way God prepared Calvin for the high position he had to fill.

Designed of God to be as a prince of princes and the centre of the Reformation in Europe; to give influence to the destinies of nations and light to the churches of the saints throughout the world, his wonderfully capacious powers needed stores of knowledge of various kinds. Let us trace a few of the steps which, in the order of a Divine Providence, fitted him to be the Great Reformer.

“The design of making him a priest was interrupted,” says Beza, “by a change in the views of both father and son, in the former because he saw that the Law was a surer road to wealth and honour; and in the latter, because having been made acquainted with the reformed faith he had begun to devote himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures; and from an abhorrence of all kinds of superstition, to discontinue his attendance on the public services of the Church.

“Having set out for Orleans to study Law, which was there taught by Peter de l’Etoile, by far the first French Lawyer of that period, Calvin, in a short time, made such astonishing progress that he very often officiated for the professors, and was considered rather a teacher than a pupil.

“On his departure, he was presented with a Doctor’s Degree, free of expense, and with the unanimous consent of the professors, as a return for the services which he had rendered to the Academy.

“Meanwhile, however, he diligently cultivated the study of sacred literature, and made such progress, that all in that city who had any desire to become acquainted with a purer religion often called to consult him, and were greatly struck both with his learning and his zeal.”

His custom at this time was after a very light supper to study till midnight, and in the morning to spend some time digesting what he had read in bed over night. By this close application he acquired much learning, but no doubt undermined his constitution.

About this time a lawyer of great repute from Italy was flourishing in the Academy of Bourges. Thither, therefore, our Reformer bent his steps to study under Andrew Alciat, the Italian celebrity.

At Bourges he formed a friendship with Melchior Wolmar, a Professor of Greek, from whom Calvin obtained great assistance in studying that language.

#### CALVIN THE GOSPEL MINISTER.

Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, of whom we hope yet to speak, was at this time the defender of the Protestants; and Bourges, being a province of Berry, was under her immediate jurisdiction. “Under Margaret,” says Dr. Wylie, “it became a centre of evangelization. For some

time previous no little religious fermentation had been going on among its population. The *new doctrines* (as they were called, although as old as the everlasting hills) had found their way thither; they were talked of in its social gatherings; they had begun even to be heard in the pulpit; certain priests, who had come to a knowledge of the truth, were preaching them with tolerable clearness to congregations composed of lawyers, students, and citizens. It was at this crisis that Calvin arrived at Bourges.

“His fame had preceded him. The Protestants gathered round him, and entreated him to become their teacher. Calvin was averse to assume the office of the ministry. Not that he shrunk either from the labours or the perils of the work, but because he cherished a deep sense of the greatness of the function and of his own unworthiness to fill it. ‘I have hardly learned the Gospel myself,’ he would say, ‘and, lo! I am called to teach it to others.’

“Not for some time did Calvin comply with these solicitations. At last he consented. ‘Wonderful it is,’ he said, ‘that one of so lowly an origin should be exalted to so great a dignity.’

“But how unostentatious the opening of his career! The harvests of the earth spring not in deeper silence than does this great evangelical harvest, which beginning in the ministry of Calvin is destined to cover the world.

“Gliding along the street might be seen a youth of slender figure and sallow features. He enters a door; he gathers round him the family, and opening the Bible, he explains to them its message. His words distil as the dew and as the tender rain on the grass. By-and-bye the city becomes too narrow a sphere of labour, and the young evangelist extends his efforts to the hamlets and towns around Bourges. One tells another of the sweetness of the water, and every day the numbers increase of those who wish to drink it.

“The castle of the baron is opened as well as the cottage of the peasant, and a cordial welcome is accorded the missionary in both. His doctrine is clear and beautiful, and as refreshing to the soul as light to the eye after long darkness. And then the preacher is so modest withal, so sweet in his address, and altogether so unlike any other preacher the people had ever known! ‘Upon my word,’



YOUNG CALVIN EXPOUNDING THE BIBLE TO A FAMILY AT BOURGES.

said the Lord Leginères to his wife, 'Master John Calvin seems to me to preach better than the monks, and he goes heartily to work too.'"

#### HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

Bourges, however, was not designed long to be the sphere of his labours. While thus happily engaged in his new calling, tidings were brought of the death of his father.

Quitting this fruitful field of toil he therefore repaired to his native city. The journey from Bourges to Noyon was fraught with singular trials; yet it may be that one trial was sent to take the edge from another, or that multiplied trials might drive him in greater need to his only refuge.

Those tender and sacred associations, formed between the young ambassador of Christ and the newly regenerated spirits who found joy and peace in believing under the Word, had to be severed. But the man who had so many hard battles to fight by naked faith in God, nestling too long under the royal patronage of the Queen, might lean unduly upon an arm of flesh. He had therefore to depart from that Elim, and carrying with him that inexpressible feeling of void which death occasions, helped perhaps to turn his thoughts from the many severing threads of friendship at Bourges.

Passing through Paris on his way he found the city full of commotion. One of the greatest nobles of France had to yield up his life at the stake that day (April 22nd, 1529). Berquin, a much admired and devout son of the church, had referred to the Scriptures to enlighten his mind upon a certain subject of dispute, and to his astonishment found that the doctrines of the Protestants were the really old and Bible doctrines, and that the doctrines of the Papacy were but novel, human inventions.

What more suitable sight could the young Reformer witness than the martyrdom of this valiant servant of Christ?

He had witnessed the reforming power of the truth among his hearers at Bourges: he had tasted the sweetness of it in his own soul, and now to witness the sustaining power of it in the martyr, contrasted with the persecuting spirit of Popery, was the very best thing to bring him to a determination to forsake everything else for the work of the ministry and the reformation of the church.



## CHAPTER VIII.

**F**ROM the time that the young scholar and chaplain of La Gésine left his home, till his return to the scenes of his childhood, only six years had passed away, but what a remarkable change had taken place in him!

We know of no Scriptural narrative so forcibly illustrating the change as the account of the Gadarene, who was found at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind.

Far be it from us to speak one uncharitable word of any, Roman Catholics or others, who are left in their darkness. God has divided the light from the darkness; and God only can translate a sinner from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. Yet we think every candid reader acquainted with the histories of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, must readily admit that no greater, although more perceptible, change took place in the Gadarene than that which took place in John Calvin.

It is true that he was never, like the possessed, so fierce that no one could pass by where he was. He was neither fierce nor frolicsome. He was not even like other boys: in fact, in mind and manner he never was a boy. Yet blinded by the god of this world, and taking the commandments of men for the doctrines of God, he was as ignorant of the right way as the man among the tombs; and had not Divine grace prevented, he no doubt would have grown up as decided, and as sincere a persecutor of the saints of God as the Church of Rome ever possessed.

Such indeed was the state of young Calvin when he left Noyon and the stately mansions of the Mommors, the lords of the neighbourhood, with whose sons he was educated. But he now returned to his native city to publish how great things Jesus had done for him. The Church of Pont l'Evêque was opened for him, and crowded with persons anxious to see and hear the cooper's grandson. The reception of the Gospel at Noyon was little better, however, than the reception of Christ at Gadara. "The light shined in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not." The Gadarenes saw the man, once possessed with devils, sitting calmly at the feet

of his Deliverer, yet desired they that Jesus might depart out of their coast (Luke viii. 35, 37). Oh, astonishing manifestation of the blindness of human nature, and the awful depths of the fall! The best gift the eternal God could bestow upon fallen man was despised by the Gadarenes; despised by the people of Noyon; and this same Christ rightly set forth is still despised and ever will be by all who are not taught of God. "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isa. liii. 3); "No man can come to Me," said Jesus, "except the Father which hath sent Me draw him; and I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY" (John vi. 44).

No yon no longer possessed the attractions of earlier days. What Calvin had in former days counted gain, he now counted loss for Christ: so after a few months he left the city.

Where should we next expect to find him? Well, considering his age, now a little over twenty, his natural timidity, the patronage and associations at Bourges, we should naturally suppose he would return thither, but it was not so ordered.

#### HE RETURNS TO PARIS AND LABOURS AS A MISSIONARY.

Paris, the seat of the Government, the centre of learning, was then the scene of theological strife, where the merits of the old and new doctrines were being freely canvassed by the students. Calvin was familiar with both systems. He had studied them, tried them, and withal he had the grace of God in his heart and was seeking the place where he could gain most knowledge and be most useful. Paris was adopted. Here he soon became acquainted with all who were seeking a more pure religion than Roman Catholicism.

The time for Calvin to come to the front as the leader of the Reformation in Europe had not yet arrived. But as we trace his onward, upward course, we see in him that peculiar characteristic discernible in most or all of earth's great worthies. *He loved labour; quiet, humble, unobtrusive labour*, in the cause of truth. Few persons, who *seek* prominence, accomplish any good for themselves or for others if they attain it. Even the greatest of all teachers washed His disciples' feet, and declared that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. "Whosoever shall

exalt himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

From about twenty to twenty-four years of age it appears that Calvin continued his studies in Paris, and at the same time worked hard with his pen, and as a humble missionary, visiting from house to house, to diffuse the light of truth.

There were other and apparently more powerful oppositions being offered to the Papacy in Paris at that time, which caused the quiet, youthful missionary to be overlooked. No doubt our Reformer took a lively interest in all around him that affected the Reformation, and was often under the royal roof to hear the tidings of salvation, and at the martyr's stake to witness the holy triumphs of departing spirits.

We may safely conclude that we have him in our company, or that we are at least tracing his footsteps while we turn aside to notice some of the great events of that day.

#### ROUSSEL PREACHING IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

Marguerite, the Queen of Navarre, under whose protection Calvin laboured so successfully at Bourges, was sister to Francis I., the reigning King of France, who was then absent in Picardy.

Francis was no friend to Protestantism ; he was sometimes its cruel persecutor. Yet, as a matter of policy, to alarm the Pope or gain favour with Protestant princes, he would at times support it.

Marguerite, holding the reins of government and occupying the royal palace during her brother's absence, resolved upon having the Gospel preached in the churches of Paris. But the opposition of the doctors of Sorbonne (one of the colleges of Paris) thwarting her purpose, she threw open the royal apartments for the reception of all, from prince to peasant, and invited Roussel, a converted doctor of the Sorbonne, to preach daily.

Here thousands of persons, with the King and Queen of Navarre, daily listened to the strange but glad tidings of salvation full and free by grace, without Romish mass, absolution, purgatory, or any other priestly intervention ; and we may rest assured that young Calvin was not often absent from those joyful gatherings. We know

that he was in Paris at the time, that he was deeply interested in and learning from such movements, and that



ROUSSET PREACHING IN THE ROYAL PALACE IN FRANCE.

the Queen had an interview with him, and freely expressed her admiration for and confidence in him.

John Calvin, however, had not such confidence in the

Queen. Not that he doubted the genuineness of her religion, but he doubted her clearness of understanding. Much good nevertheless resulted from her love and zeal for the truth. Five thousand men and women are said to have daily passed in at the gates of the Louvre to listen to Roussel, and numerous churches throughout the city were opened and filled with crowds that seemed to thirst for the water of life.

#### LIGHT REJECTED, GRACE COMMUNICATED.

Protestantism at this time seemed in full blaze, yet France did not become Protestant. She rejected the Gospel of Christ, and therefore never reaped its *national advantages*. God, in His government of the nations of the earth, does not undertake to supply them with grace to make them willing to receive the Gospel. This is reserved for His *chosen people*, according to the words of the Psalmist, "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power*" (Ps. cx. 3).

France, as a nation, therefore occupied a similar position to the Jewish nation. The light was sent among the Jews; it exposed their superstitious regard for the doctrines of men, but they loved darkness rather than light. "If I had not come and spoken unto them," said Jesus, "they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin" (John xv. 22).

Like Paul at Antioch, Roussel preached the Gospel at Paris, and as the Jews, filled with envy, spake against the things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming, so did the Romanists at Paris. Every priest, monk, and friar that could be found was employed to excite and inflame the people against the Queen and her preachers. Processions were organized in the streets, and crowds of persons were seen with sackcloth on their loins and ashes on their heads.

Yet the Word of God was not without effect. "The churches where the Gospel was preached were filled, not with formal auditors, but with men who received the glad tidings with great joy. Drunkards became sober, the idle industrious, the disorderly peaceful, and libertines had grown chaste."


"It was *necessary*," said Paul and Barnabas to the Jews, "that the Word of God should first have been

spoken to you ; but seeing *ye put it from you*, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. . . . And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord ; and AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE, BELIEVED" (Acts xiii. 45, 48). Of the preaching of Roussel and others in Paris the same thing may be said. It was *needful* that the Gospel should be preached to gather out God's chosen people ; it was *needful* that the light should shine in France that the awful depth of man's ruin should be revealed by the natural rejection of the light.

Thus, lest we should dishonour the Spirit, and limit the Holy One of Israel, let us carefully distinguish between the light of the truth being brought to shine in the midst of a nation, and the life of God being brought by the Spirit into a sinner's heart. In the former case the Gospel appeals to the *natural understanding*, and as the burglar dreads the break of day and flees from it, so men can and do reject the Gospel. "How often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" said Jesus (Matt. xxiii. 37). In the latter case God writes His law *in the heart* (Jer. xxxi. 33); the sinner is *born again* by the Spirit (John iii. 6). Faith and repentance are given (1 Cor. xii. 9; Acts v. 31), and the sinner is thus made willing in the day of Christ's power. This grace cannot be rejected.

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## CHAPTER IX.

URNING from the halls of state and those brilliant animated assemblies under the royal roof, let us visit another spot where a gathering of equal magnitude is to be witnessed; a spot where the Gospel preached by Roussel is tried by fire, and where fruit to everlasting life is gathered.

Among the thousands present to witness the martyrdom of Alexander, the Dominican friar, none surely more solemnly considered the spirit of Popery there exhibited, and the long-suffering grace in the martyr, than John Calvin. This trophy of Divine grace, Alexander, was

plucked by the Spirit from the ranks of the enemy in Paris, and brought to a knowledge of the truth. He fled to Geneva, and there being instructed in the way of God more perfectly by Farel, he returned full of holy fervour to preach the Gospel in Lyons. There he was apprehended, loaded with chains and sent to Paris, but not before a great work was accomplished by him. The Word flew from his lips by the power of the Spirit, into the hearts of men, like shafts from the bow of the mighty. Let us follow him, and carefully watch whether the Spirit of Christ is more exhibited in him or in his pursuers. After being brought before Parliament he is seated upon a chair, his legs are placed between four thick pieces of board, strongly chained together, and large wedges are driven between them with such force as to crush one of his legs. "O God," he groans, "there is neither pity nor mercy in these men! Oh, that I may find both in Thee!" "Another blow," cries the executioner; but it is enough, and the martyr is carried to the dungeon a cripple.

This amount of torture is only a foretaste of what will be administered to compel him to yield to their wishes. But he fears not them which can kill the body. His faith is firm in Jesus. Again he is brought forth to hear his doom. "To be burnt alive" is no pleasant thing for flesh and blood, yet a gleam of holy joy is seen to light up his countenance as the dread sentence falls upon his ear. Yes; the happiest person in all the vast assembly was Alexander. When the martyr's robe was put on, he said, "O God, is there any higher honour than to receive the livery which Thy Son received in the house of Herod?" Unable to walk to the place of execution he was conveyed in a cart, and although one leg was crushed, and he was going to be burned, the joy of his soul surmounted everything, as he preached Jesus to the gazing multitude through which he passed.

"He is going to be burned," said the people, "yet no one seems so happy as he." "Surely there is nothing worthy of death in this man," said they. Weeping and smiting themselves they exclaimed, "If this man is not saved, who then can be?"

At the stake the martyr showed no signs of anger towards his persecutors. He exalted the Lord Jesus with

his latest breath, and met his last enemy with a smile, whom he viewed not as "the king of terrors," but as

"A porter at the heavenly gate  
To let the pilgrim in."

#### THE TIME FOR CALVIN TO COME FORWARD.

These are samples of the things which agitated Paris, and helped to give shape to the mind of our Reformer during the four years of his quiet missionary labours there. But that richly endowed and capacious mind, sanctified by Divine grace to take the lead in the Great Reformation, could no longer be hidden.

God's time had come for setting before the nation a man, young and retiring, that should confront the great adversary of the human race, and roll back those thick clouds of error which had overspread the earth. Yes, God's time had come for giving to His church a man, who, by the power of God's Spirit, should clear away the superstitious veneration of men and material things; a man that should dig up and build up God's eternal truth higher and more lasting than the pyramids of Egypt,—truth which shall stand firm when all Rome's Babel buildings have crumbled into dust, and her deluded followers have sunk down to hell. Nothing better can we expect for them, seeing that "no idolater shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10).

#### HIS ORATION READ BEFORE THE SORBONNE.

At the head of the Sorbonne was Nicholas Cop, and on November 1st, 1533, he, as its rector, was expected to open the session by delivering an appropriate oration. Cop was the intimate friend of Calvin, and a favourer of the reformed faith. Calvin, earnestly desirous of bringing the truth more clearly before the professors and students of the university, suggested this as a grand opportunity, and it was resolved between the two friends that Calvin should prepare the oration for his friend Cop to read.

"November 1st arrived. It saw a brilliant assembly in the church of the Mathurins. On a bench apart sat Calvin, with the air of one who had dropped in by the way. Cop rose and proceeded amid deep silence to pronounce an oration in praise of 'Christian Philosophy.'



But the philosophy which it extolled was not that which had been drawn from the academies of Greece. The keynote of the discourse was the 'Grace of God,' the one sole fountain of man's renewal, pardon, and eternal life.

"Blank astonishment was portrayed on the faces of the most part of the audience at the beginning of the oration. By-and-bye a countenance here and there began to kindle with delight. Others among the listeners were becoming uneasy on their seats. The monks knit their brows, and shooting out fiery glances from beneath them, exchanged whispers with one another.

#### THE ASSEMBLY AROSE AND THE STORM BURST.

"Cop was denounced to the Parliament and summoned to appear, but he fled to Basle, and so escaped the fate already determined on for him.

"Calvin, who deemed himself safe in his obscurity, was sitting quietly in his room in the College of Fortrét, when some of his comrades came running into his chamber, and urged him to flee that instant. Scarcely had they spoken when a loud knocking was heard at the outer gate. It was the officers. Now their heavy tramp was heard in the corridor. Another moment and Calvin would be on his way to the prison to come out of it only to the stake. That would, indeed, have been a blow to the Reformation, and probably would have changed the whole future of Christendom. But God interposed at this moment of peril.

#### CALVIN'S ESCAPE.

"While some of his friends held a parley with the officers at the door, others, seizing the sheets on his bed, twisted them into a rope, and Calvin, catching hold of them, let himself down into the street of the Bernardins."\*

Thus escaping from the hands of the enemy he fled from the city to the cottage of a vine-dresser. Here he changed his clothes, and dressed as a labourer, with a garden hoe upon his shoulder, he, like Jacob when he fled from the hand of Esau, set forward to find a place where he could serve the God of the Bible without endangering his life.

This tempest the Lord dispersed by the instrumentality

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\* Wylie's "History of Protestantism."

of the Queen of Navarre. But Calvin soon after left Paris and went to Saintonge, an old province in the west of France, where, at the request of a friend, he wrote some brief Christian exhortations, which in some parishes were read during Divine service to stimulate the people to an investigation of the truth.\*

At Angoulême, the birth-place of Marguerite of Navarre, he spent six months in the mansion of his friends the Du Tillet. In this mansion a library of about 4000 volumes, a very rare thing in that age, was placed at his service. Here, night and day, with his thirst for knowledge, he drank like the hart at the water brooks.

The Apostle John was banished by the enemies of Christ to the isle of Patmos, for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. But the Lord by this means called him there to receive the substance of the Book of Revelation, which we still have for our profit ; and John Calvin was driven by his enemies to this town of France ; yet God, who

“Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill,  
Treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will,”

called our Reformer there to give him the materials for a book, which, by the blessing of God, sprang a mine under the Papacy, and which book we still have for our profit. In this library it is said he laid the plan and collected the materials for his famous “*Institutes of the Christian Religion*,” the following extracts from which must close the present chapter.

#### CALVIN ON THE WORSHIP OF IMAGES.

“The whole sum of our wisdom consisteth in two parts, in the knowledge of God and of ourselves. Again, it is evident that man doth never come to the perfect knowledge of himself, unless he hath first beheld the face of God, and so come down from beholding the same to view himself.

“Pure and true religion is faith joined with true fear of God.

“Also, we must mark, that the Scripture, to the end it may direct us to the true God, doth plainly exclude all

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\* Beza's “*Life of Calvin*.”

the gods of the Gentiles; for religion was corrupt everywhere almost in all ages.

“1. But seeing that this blockishness did possess the whole world, to desire visible figures of God, and so to make and frame to themselves gods of wood, stone, or other matter, we must hold fast this principle, that the glory of God is corrupted with wicked falsehood, so often as any shape is made to represent Him. Therefore, after that God hath in the law once challenged to Himself the glory of the Godhead, He added forthwith, ‘Thou shalt make thee no graven image, neither any similitude.’

“2. That may easily be gathered out of the reasons which He adjoineth into the prohibition: Thou heardst a voice, thou sawest nobody. Therefore take heed to thyself, lest, peradventure, being deceived, thou make thee any similitude, etc. He setteth His voice against shapes. Therefore, those men forsake God who worship visible forms.

“3. *Obj.* God hath sometimes given a presence of His Godhead, so that He was said to have been seen face to face.

“*A.* Those things did plainly teach men concerning the incomprehensible essence of God. Not that He offered Himself to be known in them as He is. Because it was said to Moses, ‘That no man can see God and live.’

“*Obj.* The Holy Ghost appeared in the likeness of a dove.

“*A.* When He vanished away forthwith, the faithful were admonished, by that token of short continuance, that they must believe that He is invisible, that being satisfied with His power and grace they might not invent to themselves any visible shape.

“*Obj.* God did sometimes appear in the shape of a man.

“*A.* That was a foreshowing of the revelation which was to come in Christ. Therefore it was unlawful for the Jews so to abuse this pretence, that they might erect themselves any token of the Godhead under the shape of man.

“*Obj.* The cherubims, which with their outstretched wings did cover the mercy seat, were made in honour of God, and why may not we make images of God and of saints?

“A. Those small images did import nothing else but that images cannot fitly represent the mysteries of God : forasmuch as they were made to this end, that they might shadow with their wings the mercy seat, and so keep back not only the eyes of men, but all their senses from beholding God, that by this means they might correct their boldness. Moreover it were an absurd thing to bring in shadows, seeing we have the truth itself.”

To this we may add that the cherubims were typical representations made by the direct command of God. What God commands it is lawful to do ; what He forbids it is unlawful to do. And the cherubims were not made to be worshipped or bowed down to. He has distinctly said, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything *that is in heaven above*, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them ” (Exod. xx. 4, 5). Therefore it must be unlawful to make images of Christ, or Mary, or any other images for this purpose.

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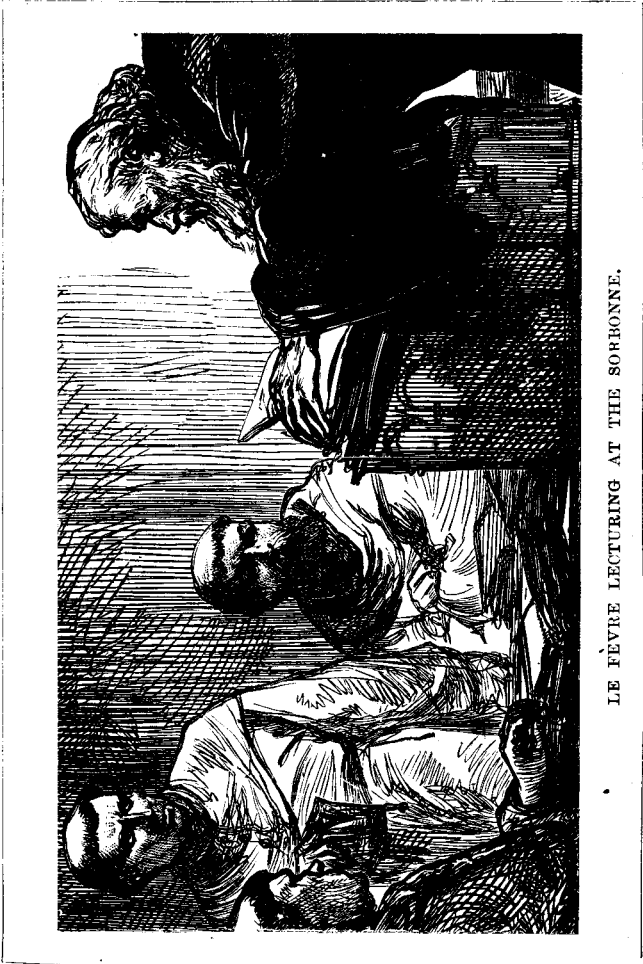
## CHAPTER X.

**S**OME years before the career of John Calvin, other reformers appeared in Paris, and although advocates of more moderate measures, they pioneered the road for something better than they had conceived.

Le Fèvre, a professor of philosophy in Paris, and a truly learned man, was the first to introduce measures of reform. The instincts of self-preservation, however, were sufficient to stimulate the monks and the bigoted doctors of the Sorbonne, with childish prejudice, to resist the slightest improvement.

Although our illustration, “Le Fèvre lecturing at the Sorbonne,” is but a rough sketch, it is sufficient to mark the scorn with which some heard his eloquent orations. He introduced the doctrine of ubiquitarianism, that is, the doctrine which teaches that the body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, by virtue of His Divine omnipresence, even as He is present everywhere. This enraged the priests, who blasphemously arrogated to themselves the power to change the bread and wine into the divinity and humanity of Christ.

Le Fèvre also translated the New Testament, which was published in 1524. His learning did not escape the



LE FÈVRE LECTURING AT THE SORBONNE.

notice of Francis I., who wished to bestow some ecclesiastical dignities upon him. He was entrusted with

the education of Charles, Duke of Angoulême. But in 1515, he was banished from France, and some few years after retired to Queen Marguerite's court at Nérac.

#### LE FÈVRE AND CALVIN CONTRASTED.

While Calvin was at Angoulême he visited Le Fèvre. Thus, while the veteran of eighty-eight, in his retirement meditated upon the oppressed state of the people, the corruption of the priesthood, and the failure of his very limited measures of reform, our young Reformer of twenty-four stood before him, with a capacious, cultivated mind, such as the aged philosopher could well admire. His measures of reform, however, were enough to make the old man tremble.

The reformation of John Calvin and the reformation of Le Fèvre differed as widely as their ages.

To reform the abuses and patch up the Romish system was Le Fèvre's plan. Calvin, in a matter of such infinite importance as the soul's eternal destiny, regarded no human considerations, but tested the whole fabric by the Word of God, as by the plumbline of truth, and found it no better than a bowing wall and a tottering fence. He discovered the Papacy to be then, what she still is, a huge system of superstitious doings built upon supposed traditions and human inventions; a system which had full well rejected the commandment of God for human traditions. Calvin's plan was to thoroughly cast away the old building with all its rotten materials, and erect a new one according to the Divine plan, with Jesus Christ, the stone which the builders refused, for a foundation, and the Bible alone for its rule of faith. Le Fèvre was charmed with the interview, and grasping the young Reformer by the hand he said: "Young man, you will one day be a powerful instrument in the Lord's hand. God will make use of you to restore the kingdom of heaven in France." France was, however, too limited a sphere for the Reformer; the boundary of Europe could not limit the vibrations of his voice. His usefulness and influence have gone on increasing until now, and where there is an assembly of saints, loving the truth as it is in Jesus, there the name of Calvin is known and his doctrine loved.

This meeting of the two Reformers, it seems, was

commemorated by the naming of a vineyard, which bore the name of Calvin 150 years afterwards.

#### REASONS FOR PROTESTING AGAINST POPERY.

After about six months' stay at Angoulême, Calvin left it for Poitiers, a town of France on the river Clain. Here he gathered around him many lovers of the truth and formed a mission for the evangelization of France. In a large cave called "Calvin's Grotto," about an hour's walk from this town, the followers of Christ assembled in secret, as in days of old, when men "of whom the world was not worthy, wandered in deserts and in dens and *caves of the earth.*" They met here not to contrive some diabolical gunpowder plot, nor secret means of assassination, but to worship the living and the true God in the *simplicity of faith, as in apostolic times.*

Protestants should ever remember that it is not on account of the general *denial of the truth* by the Church of Rome, that we are called upon to protest against her: there is scarcely a doctrine of the Bible which she denies. But she has *nullified the truth* by surrounding it with human inventions. Truth, in the midst of her carnal pretensions, is as good seed among thorns, *i.e.*, unfruitful. "Making the Word of God of none effect through her traditions" (Mark vii. 13).

Error is most dangerous when it comes, not as an axe in the hand of the woodman to fell the tree, but when, like the little creeper rata, of New Zealand, it grows up by its side and twines around it until by its might it destroys the life of the tree. Failing to observe this fact, many sincere persons have, by *the show of truth*, been entangled in the meshes of Popery.

#### CALVIN ADMINISTERS THE LORD'S SUPPER IN BOTH KINDS.

The Lord of life and glory, who condescended to come out of little Bethlehem Ephratah; He who, without the modern millinery and trumpery, styled ecclesiastical vestments, proclaimed the Word of life with holy fervour from a fisherman's boat, did not disdain to meet His humble, ardent, persecuted followers in Calvin's Grotto. Here, hidden from the strife of tongues, our young Reformer preached what he had tasted, and handled, and felt of the Word of life. And here, for the first time in France, as far as

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CALVIN ADMINISTERING THE LORD'S SUPPER AT NIGHTTIME IN HIS CAVE.

is known, the Lord's supper was administered, after the Protestant order, in TWO KINDS : *bread and wine*.

THE DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE FOR  
WITHHOLDING THE CUP FROM THE LAITY.

In the *Council of Constance*, which was called at the end of the year 1414, it was decreed in the thirteenth session, that no priest, under pain of excommunication, shall communicate unto the people under BOTH KINDS, that is, of bread and wine. From that time, therefore, it has been the custom for the priest to drink the wine, and to give the bread to the laity. The reasons given in the "Catechism of the Council of Trent" (page 248, Buckley's translation) for this remarkable dividing of the Lord's ordinance are as follows :

"In the first place, the greatest caution was necessary to avoid *spilling the blood* of the Lord on the ground. . . . In the next place. . . .that it might *turn acid*. Besides, there are many who *cannot at all bear the taste or even smell of wine*. . . .that in many countries, wine is extremely scarce. . . .incurring heavy expenses and very tedious difficult journeys.

"Finally, a circumstance of the utmost importance, means were to be taken to uproot the heresy of those who denied that Christ, whole and entire, is contained under either species."

These five reasons are given by the Church of Rome herself for thus laying aside the commandment of God for her tradition.

LET US EXAMINE THEM BY THE WORD OF GOD AND  
REASON.

First, there is the dread of *spilling the wine, or blood, as they call it, upon the ground*. May we not reasonably ask why there is such a horror of this wine being spilled upon the ground seeing that the *real blood of Jesus Christ fell in great drops to the ground!* (Luke xxii. 44). Next there is the possibility of this *wine turning acid*. But may not this and all the other reasons given for thus withholding the cup from the laity, apply with equal force to the clergy? May they not leave the wine till it turns acid? Then there are many who *cannot at all bear the taste or even the smell of wine*. Does this apply only to the laity? Are there no priests who cannot bear the taste and smell of it? The difficulty of obtaining it and the expense attached to it will apply as much to the clergy as to the laity. It is generally found in countries the most remote from wine growing districts that that article can be too easily obtained and is too freely used.

The fifth reason assigned for thus setting aside the commandment of God is supposed to be of the "utmost importance." It was to uproot the idea of "*Christ whole and entire*" not being "contained under either species." By Christ "whole and entire," the Church of Rome means the *body and blood, the soul and Divinity of Christ* after consecration, and that nothing but Christ remains, although He has the appearance of bread and wine.

Here let us pause and ask, Is this Christ, which is supposed to be offered in the sacrament, dead or alive? If the answer be "He is dead," we ask, "Can *Divinity* die?" If the answer be that "He is a living Sacrifice," we again ask, Can this living Christ, whole and entire, Divinity and humanity, by being left in the cup, turn acid? Thus by Calvin administering the Lord's supper in *both kinds* he laid himself open to excommunication with those fearful curses in which Rome so freely deals. Yet it was his satisfaction to know that he was in company with Paul and Jesus, for they both administered the Lord's supper in two kinds, and therefore are both under the curse of the Church of Rome.

Paul said to the church at Corinth, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread : and when He had given thanks He brake it, and said : Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying : This cup is the New Testament in My blood : this do ye as oft as ye *drink* it in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and *drink* this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" ( 1 Cor. xi. 23-26).

Thus the apostate church lightly sets aside the commandment of God, and curses, and when she has the power, burns those who do not follow her. What if the curses should fall upon her own head, and the fire return to her own bosom !

#### CALVIN RESIGNS HIS LIVINGS AND SECEDES FROM THE CHURCH.

Calvin had not yet openly broken from the church of Rome, but still held the two livings which were conferred upon him in youth. But, unlike our modern ritualistic

dissemblers, he, having separated in heart from the church, could no longer remain in her communion or receive her pay. On May 4th, 1534, he returned to Noyon, and formally resigned his livings, and sold his paternal inheritance. He next visited Paris. Here the fires of persecution were scarcely out and errors of various kinds were fast spreading. The latter was not to be wondered at considering that by the mighty spread of Lutheranism men were roused to think, many of whom took not the Bible as their rule of thought. Without the Bible as the rule of religious thought, the opinions of men would be as numerous and various as their countenances.

Servetus, of whom we have yet to speak, was then in Paris warring against the Divinity of Christ. Others were reviving the old Arabian error that the soul on leaving the body falls into a state of sleep; against these Calvin published a valuable work, and then retired to Basle, a canton of Switzerland.

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## CHAPTER XI.

♦ N October, 1534, soon after Calvin had left Paris, a tragic scene was witnessed, presenting alike the folly of imprudent zeal, the horrible fruits of blind superstition, and the constraining influence of the grace of Jesus.

The favourers of the Reformation in Paris, encouraged by the good news from Switzerland, sent one of their number, Petre Ferét, to inquire of the Swiss pastors whether they thought it wise for them to continue to meet in private, or whether it would be more to the honour of God to make some bold stand for the truth. The messenger arrived, and a conference was held at which it was decided to prepare a stirring placard, to have vast numbers of them printed, and to post them up in Paris and in all the towns and cities of France in one night.

The printers were set to work; arrangements were made, and in the night of the 18th or the 24th October, 1534, hundreds of faithful men, after solemn prayer, sallied forth with their bundles of bills. The walls of France were everywhere thoroughly posted and ready as soon as the sun should rise to bear witness against the unscriptural

errors of Popery. Farel, in preparing the placard, had allowed his zeal to exceed his judgment, but certainly not to exceed the truth. His warm expressions might inspire the enlightened Genevese with good feeling, but were more calculated to inflame the anger of the bigoted Papists of France than convince them of their wrong.



PETER VIRET.

#### THE MORNING AND ITS REVELATION.

The morning soon came, and the sleeping populace arose with a cry and intense confusion something akin to that which prevailed in Egypt when the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on the throne unto the firstborn of the captives that were in the dungeon. The land had been visited in the night,

the streets were strewn with handbills, and every wall was calling heaven and earth to witness against the Popish Mass and transubstantiation. The testimony of the Holy Scripture and the Fathers was cited, and common sense was appealed to against the absurdity of playing with a god of dough, like a cat with a mouse, of breaking it in pieces and calling it the Lamb of God.

“By it,” said the placard, “the preaching of the Gospel is prevented. The time is occupied with bell ringing, howling, chanting, empty ceremonies, candles, incense, disguises, and all manner of conjurations. And the poor world, looked upon as a lamb or as a sheep, is miserably deceived, cajoled, led astray—what do I say?—bitten, gnawed, and devoured as if by ravening wolves.”

When Paul preached at Ephesus the whole city was filled with confusion. The makers of shrines saw their craft in danger and they therefore stirred up the people to cry, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.” The priests of Rome acted in like manner. They seized the opportunity for spreading numerous false reports, of alarming the people and stirring their indignation to its very depths. Francis, the king, was agitated and enraged, for the dreaded placard had, like the frogs of Egypt, reached even to his bed-chamber. “Let all be seized,” he exclaimed, “and let Lutheranism be totally exterminated.”

No time was lost in putting this order into execution. Under *pretence* of making atonement for the offence offered to the wafer god, but really to atone for the wound inflicted upon the pride of the priesthood, many of the sincere followers of Christ were dragged from their homes to the flames.

#### BARTHOLOMEW MILLON

was one of these poor sufferers, and the interesting account of him given by Dr. Wylie we must not overlook. “Millon was a dwarfed, deformed, miserable looking hunchback. His limbs were withered and their power gone. But Bartholomew had not always been the pitifully mis-shapen object we now behold him. He was formerly one of the most handsome men in all Paris, and with the gifts of person he possessed also those of the mind. But he had led a youth of boisterous dissipation. No gratification which his senses craved did he deny himself. Gay in disposition and

impetuous in temper, he was the ringleader of his companions, and was at all times equally ready to deal a blow with his powerful arm, or let fly a sarcasm with his sharp tongue.

“But a beneficent Hand, in the guise of disaster, arrested Bartholomew in the midst of his mad career. Falling one day, he broke his ribs, and neglecting the needful remedies, his body shrunk into itself and shrivelled up. The stately form was now bent, the legs became paralyzed, and on the face of the cripple grim peevishness took the place of manly beauty. He could no longer mingle with the holiday sport or the street brawl. He sat enchained, day after day, in his shop, presenting to all who visited it the rueful spectacle of a poor deformed paralytic. His powers of mind, however, had escaped the blight which fell upon his body. His wit was as strong as ever, and it may be a little sharper, misfortune having soured his temper. The Protestants were especially the butt of his ridicule.

“One day a Lutheran happening to pass before his shop, the bile of Millon was excited, and he forthwith let fly at him a volley of insults and scoffs. Turning round to see whence the abuse proceeded, the eye of the passer-by lighted on the pitiful object who had assailed him. Touched with compassion, he went up to him and said, ‘Poor man, don’t you see that God has bent your body in this way in order to straighten your soul?’ and giving him a New Testament he bade him read it, and tell him at an after day what he thought of it. The words of the stranger touched the heart of the paralytic.

“Millon opened the book and began to read. Arrested by its beauty and majesty, ‘he continued at it,’ says Crespin, ‘night and day.’ He now saw that his soul was even more deformed than his body. But the Bible had revealed to him a great Physician, and believing in His power to heal, the man whose limbs were withered, but whose heart was now smitten, cast himself down before that gracious One.

“The Saviour had pity on him. His soul was ‘straightened.’ The malignity and spite which had blackened and deformed it were cast out. ‘The wolf had become a lamb.’ He turned his shop into a conventicle, and was never weary of commending to others that Saviour who



had pardoned sins so great and healed diseases so inveterate as his. The gibe and the scoff were forgotten ; only words of lovingkindness now fell from him. Still chained to his seat he gathered around him the young and taught them to read. He exerted his skill in art to minister to the poor ; and his powers of persuasion he employed day after day to the reclaiming of those whom his former conduct had corrupted, and the edification of such as he had scoffed at aforetime. He had a fine voice, and many came from all parts of Paris to hear him sing Marot's Psalms. 'In short,' says Crespin, 'his room was a true school of piety, day and night re-echoing with the glory of the Lord.'

Such was the change effected by the Spirit of God in Bartholomew Millon by means of the New Testament. His martyrdom took place on November 10th. Words of peace and kindness only escaped his lips in the flames. Deformed in body he was straight in soul, and now he walks in the uprightness of Jesus.

#### SUPERSTITION, POMP, AND BARBARITY.

In order to cleanse the city from the defilement it had suffered, the king ordered a solemn purification. This of course must be of a ceremonial nature, and so arranged as to excite the admiration of the superstitious populace. A procession was arranged in which all the relics that could be brought together were borne through the streets to do honour to departed saints. Among these, as the *poor deluded creatures believed*, there were "a bit of the true cross, the real crown of thorns, one of the nails, the swaddling clothes in which Christ lay, the purple robe in which He was attired, the towel with which He girded Himself at the last supper, and the spear-head that pierced His side. Many saints of former times had sent each a *bit of himself* to grace the procession."

"The image of the patron saint of Paris was carried through the streets ; the wafer god was carried with pomp by the bishop ; the king followed on foot, bareheaded, carrying a white taper. After him came princes, the great officers of state, cardinals, bishops, and ambassadors and others, walking two abreast in profound silence with lighted flambeaux. The monks and clergy of Paris, the council, the parliament in their red robes, and public officers according to their degrees, swelled the ranks of

the procession, whose course was from the Louvre to Nôtre Dame, where solemn mass was performed."\*



A VIEW IN BASLE.

This pomp and superstitious show, with the offering of the wafer christ, shows the absurdity, idolatry, and

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\* For a fuller account see Dr. Wylie's "History of Protestantism," vol. ii., p. 214.

pride of Popery, but the solemn scene of the evening reveals its true spirit. Six poor convicted Lutherans were burnt in a slow fire. "They were suspended by a rope to a machine, by which they were several times let down into the flames and again drawn up, till at length the executioner cut the rope and precipitated them into the fire." Oh, how vastly different from this superstitious pomp and barbarity is the religion of Jesus!

Before the storm of persecution broke out, as we have said, Calvin left Paris, and in company with his friend Du Tillet, set out for Basle. When near Metz, one of their servants being mounted on the best horse, suddenly fled with all their money, and with such speed that it was not possible to overtake him. The other, however, as Providence would have it, had ten crowns which he lent to his masters, and thus with difficulty they arrived at Strasburg, and after a short stay went on to Basle.

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## CHAPTER XII.

**C**ALVIN now begins to be eyed by the Papacy as a potent foe, and the lovers of national and religious freedom, find a man, like David in Israel's camp, capable of confronting the Popish Goliath. It is wonderful what God will sometimes do by one man. And it is deeply interesting to notice the silent, certain progress of the kingdom of Christ by the simple means of God's appointment.

"What though the gates of hell withstood,  
Yet must this kingdom rise;  
'Tis Thine Own work, almighty God,  
And wondrous in our eyes."

No carnal weapons of warfare, rack, stake, nor martyr-piles are needed here. No military force nor deadly engagements on battle-fields are needed to defend or extend this kingdom, and yet it shall never be destroyed. The glory of ancient Tyre, Nineveh, Babylon and Egypt has passed away like a fading flower, yet who can tell how many lives were sacrificed to sustain the glory of these kingdoms? "In the days of these kings," said Daniel, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

The kings of this world for the most part seek their own glory, and to extend their dominions by the sword; Calvin sought the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Ages of fiery persecution have passed over his work, yet as gold tried by the fire it has shone brighter and brighter. Every succeeding effort to extinguish it has developed the work of Calvin to be the work of God, and Calvinism to be the doctrine of Christ.

#### HALF-WAY MEN.

During Calvin's short stay of a few months at Strasburg he came in contact with such men as he everywhere met,—men of half-way measures. Not a few in high places resembled the chief rulers who believed, but did not confess Christ, lest they should give offence to the Pharisees and be put out of the synagogue (John xii. 42). Others, like their prototypes of old, wished to patch up the old garment with new cloth; to retain the dead formalities of Rome, and to bring in the Gospel to give them vitality.

These yea and nay, half-way and no way, free-will and free grace, Calvinistic duty faith, something and nothing, twist about sort of men, who are zealous Protestants to-day, but feel charitable to Popery to-morrow, are pests to society, hindrances to all real progress, and stumbling blocks to the true family of God. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" These men were used to bring Calvin to a more thorough dependence upon God and Divine Revelation. Here, in the Bible, he found the apostle, who like himself was brought out of a system of human doings, saying, "If ye be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. v. 2). And again, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 20, 28). "And "As God is true, our word to you was not yea and nay."

#### INTERVIEW BETWEEN ERASMUS AND CALVIN.

One of the most remarkable of these half-way reformers was Erasmus, whom Calvin met at Basle. He is said by his biographer to have been revered as the monarch of

learning in the West, and was distinguished among his contemporaries for his classical style, refined taste, and



ERASMUS AND CALVIN.

delicate but withering sarcasm. He published a Greek New Testament in the year 1516; but wrote against Luther. He poured his satirical spleen upon the monks,

but took care to retain favour with the popes and high church authorities.

Erasmus was a reformer for the sake of reforming abuses and reviving literature; Calvin was reformed in his own soul by the Spirit of God, and the reformation which he aimed at was the liberating of the true church from the bondage of superstitious slavery, and the bringing of light and immortality to light by the Gospel. The interview between the two scholars was brief. Calvin plainly expressed his convictions, but there was no room for the truth in the soul of Erasmus. He winced under the bold statements of Calvin and said, "I see a great tempest about to arise in the church against the church."

#### CALVIN'S DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARSHIP.

At Basle Calvin applied himself to the study of Hebrew, and published the first edition of his famous "Institutes of the Christian Religion." This able production, said to be the corner stone of the Reformation, was intended to vindicate the Reformers, their followers, and their sentiments, from the base calumnies heaped upon them.

As one of the Jesuitical intrigues in our day for undoing the Reformation of the 16th century, is to vilify and degrade the Reformers, it may be as well to call in a few witnesses to testify to the scholarship of our great Reformer. "Calvin," says D'Alembert, "justly enjoyed a distinguished reputation, and was a scholar of the first order. He wrote with as much elegance in Latin as a dead language admits; and the extraordinary purity of his French style is even now admired by our skilful critics, and gives his writings a decided superiority over the greatest part of his contemporaries."

"A new world opened before the young man in the metropolis of letters. He profited by it; he became familiar with Cicero, and learned from this great master to employ the language of the Romans with a facility, purity and ease that excite the admiration even of his enemies. But at the same time, he found riches in this language which he afterwards transferred to his own. A new world opened upon society, and for a new world there must be new languages. Calvin, when called upon to discuss and to prove, enriched his mother tongue with modes of con-

nection and dependence, with shadows, transitions, and dialectic forms, that it did not as yet possess" (D'Aubigné).

"It is remarkable, surely, that the two great Reformers of Europe should have been each the creator of the language of his native tongue. Calvin was the father of the French tongue, as Luther was the father of the German. There had been a language in these countries, doubtless, since the days of their first savage inhabitants,—a "French" and a "German" before there was a Calvin and a Luther, just as there was a steam engine before James Watt. But it is not more true that Watt was the inventor of the steam engine by making it a really useful instrument, than it is true that Luther and Calvin were the creators of their respective tongues as now spoken and written. Calvin found French, as Luther found German, a coarse meagre speech—of narrow compass, of small adaptability, and the vehicle of only low ideas. He breathed into it a new life. A vastly wider compass, and an infinitely finer flexibility, did he give it. And moreover, he elevated and sanctified it by pouring into it the treasures of the Gospel, thereby enriching it with a multitude of new terms, and subliming it with the energies of a celestial fire. This transformation in the tongue of France the Reformer achieved by the new thinking and feeling he taught his countrymen; for a language is simply the outcome of the life of the people by whom it is spoken" (Dr. Wylie).

#### ANOTHER JOHN CALVIN.

Let us here remind our readers that there was another John Cauvin or Calvin, as we call him, contemporary with our author. D'Aubigné says, "We know what the Popish writers are accustomed to do. They take advantage of the misdeeds of John Cauvin at Noyon, and ascribe them to the Reformer. They tell their readers gravely that he was driven from his native town for misconduct, after having been condemned to be scourged and even branded."

But the facts of the case are thus related: "*Some years after* Calvin had quitted Noyon, another individual of the same name arrived in that city. John Cauvin was a young man of corrupt principles, but as he came from another part of France, and was a stranger in Noyon, he was received among the priests who chanted in the choir, and

in a short time a chapel was given him, as in the case of the first Calvin. As this took place when our Reformer had already 'turned to heresy' (as they call it), the good canons looked upon Cauvin's arrival as a sort of recompense and consolation; but it was not long before the disorderly life of this wretched man excited alarm among his protectors. He was reprimanded, punished, and even deprived of his stipend; but to this he paid no attention, continually lapsing again into incontinence. "Seeing then," says the canon, "his hardness of heart, which made him neglect every kind of remonstrance," the canons deprived John Cauvin of his chapel and expelled him from the choir. James Desmay, a priest and doctor of divinity who studied at Noyon, adds, that he was privately scourged and then driven from the town.

"The Dean of Noyon, however, believing John Calvin the Reformer to be a greater sinner for renouncing the Papacy than John Cauvin for all his acts of wickedness, takes pains to relate that John Cauvin, who had been expelled in 1552 for incontinency, died a *good Catholic*. 'Thanks be to God,' adds he, 'that he never turned his coat, nor changed his coat, nor changed his religion, to which his *libertine* life, and the example of his namesake Calvin seemed to incline him.' He thought it his duty to add this chapter for fear the Catholic should be taken for the heretic."

Our thanks are due to the Bishop for his kindness. We would not rob him of such an ornament to his church, his *libertine* life included. We are thankful to say John Calvin the Reformer, like Paul, changed his religion, or rather, his religion changed him, and he adorned his doctrines with a holy life.

#### CALVIN ARRESTED IN ITALY BY THE OFFICERS OF THE INQUISITION.

Having published the first edition of his Institutes, Calvin's next business was to visit the Princess Renée, daughter of Louis XII. of France, wife of Duke Hercules of Este, a town of Italy. His publications had, however, by this time brought him to the front as a leading Reformer, and rendered it prudent to travel under a feigned name. This he frequently did, as the officers of the Inquisition were in constant pursuit of him.



The Princess Renée, like her friend Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, was the favourer of the Reformers. Calvin arrived at her residence in 1535. He held meetings in her room and chapel, and expounded the way of God to all who came. While thus happily engaged in his work news came that the officers of the Inquisition were at hand, and before Calvin had time to escape he was seized and sent off to Bologna for trial. Never, under heaven, was there a more dreadful institution formed than the Inquisition. With all the determination of the Philippian jailor, who thrust Paul and Silas into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks, would these officers therefore hold their prey. But God, who delivered Paul and Silas, could deliver his servant, John Calvin, and He did. When they had got about half way on their journey a body of armed men surrounded the whole company and demanded the prisoner's release. Thus God arose and delivered His servant from the jaws of the lion that was greedy of his prey.

“ Praise Him for His grace and favour  
 To our fathers in distress !  
 Praise Him still, the same for ever,  
 Slow to chide, and swift to bless ;  
 Praise Him ! Praise Him !  
 Glorious in His faithfulness.”

### CHAPTER XIII.

**A**FTER this remarkable deliverance from the hands of the enemy, Calvin left Italy and returned to his native place, Noyon. He was called there by the death of his eldest brother, Charles, a priest, who died in 1536, by which event the paternal inheritance devolved on Calvin. When referring to his visit to Italy he was ever wont to say that “he only entered it that he might be able to leave it.” No doubt the remark had reference to his signal deliverance by the hand of God, or to some special token of Divine favour granted as he escaped from such imminent danger.

We can well imagine Calvin, in his solitary secret flight from Italy to Noyon, lifting up his heart, and praising God in the words of the Psalmist: “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up

against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Blessed be the Lord, Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth" (Ps. cxxiv.).

Leaving Calvin for awhile to go on his way to France, let us give a few moments' thought to the groundwork of

#### CALVINISM.

Those principles of religion which are *based upon the perfections of God* are sometimes called Calvinism. Not because they were unknown till Calvin's day, but because he was employed by God to remove the veil which ages of superstitious darkness had drawn over those rays of eternal truth which emanate from the God of truth.

On the infinite perfections of Jehovah John Calvin took his stand. He believed God to be "a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." Whatever harmonized not with these perfections Calvin could not receive as truth. He, like Paul, saw God working ALL THINGS after the counsel of HIS OWN WILL (Eph. i. 11), and any uncertainty about the final issue of even the smallest of events he saw detracting from the perfections of God.

Absolute, *unconditional election* of the people of God in Christ, together with their *predestination* to be conformed to the image of Christ, and the absolute *predestination of all means* to bring about this end were therefore some of the fundamental principles of religion with our Reformer. He, too, like Paul (2 Tim. i. 9), was careful to show that God's purpose of mercy and grace *was not based upon any good works foreseen* in the persons chosen from the mass of fallen humanity.

*No uncertainty* did he see about the result of the great sacrifice offered on Mount Calvary; but in the language of the inspired prophet, he could say, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be *satisfied*" (Isa. liii. 11). The *sanctification of the Spirit* and the gracious obedience of God's elect, too, were with him no matters of doubt. He could hear Peter saying, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit *unto obedience*" (1 Peter i. 2).

Neither did he believe it possible for any of these to fall away and be lost. With the following emphatic utterance of the Lord Jesus, his spirit blended, "I give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 28, 29). Like Paul, he was confident of this very thing, that He which begins "a good work in His people *will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. i. 6).

#### LIFE'S TURNING POINTS.

Having settled his affairs in Noyon, Calvin quitted it for ever, and taking with him his brother Anthony, his sister Maria, and a few other friends, he proceeded towards Basle or Strasburg. But the Emperor Charles V., having penetrated with his army into France, Calvin *must needs go through Geneva*. This event, apparently small in itself, gave a turn to the whole course of Calvin's life. It was one of those remarkable little pivots upon which, in the order of a Divine providence, the most momentous circumstances turn.

#### GENEVA.

Geneva, like Bethlehem Ephratah, was small, and on that account despised. But as Jehovah had designed that the sublime, prophetic anthem of Isaiah, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," etc., should have its accomplishment in Bethlehem, and that out of the little city of Judah the Ruler of Israel should come forth, so had He appointed little despised Geneva as the place where the Gospel should take root, and send forth its fruit to the nations.

It is well known to the Papacy, that where Calvinism takes root, its adherents generally become, not only faithful followers of Christ, but most loyal and patriotic. Nothing is therefore more dreaded, hated, and misrepresented by the priests of Rome than the Gospel as believed in and preached by Calvinists. From the little city, which became the favoured scene of our Reformer's labour, there is much to learn. Some of the most desperate, yet most noble battles for freedom from the arrogant claims of a deluded priesthood, were fought both by the sword of steel and by the sword of the Spirit in Geneva.

William Farel, Peter Viret, and Froment were among the true soldiers of the Cross who took the lead in the struggles for life and liberty before Calvin arrived in Geneva. A brief sketch of these worthies, their wars and their victories, it will be needful to give in order to understand Calvin's work at Geneva.



WILLIAM FAREL.

## CHAPTER XIV.

“**M**Y kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world then would My servants fight,” is the clear delineation of the true church of God in this world given by the King whose name is the LORD. It is not necessary then, it appears, for the

Church's existence, that she should have temporal power or be supported by the State. Yet those kings and queens who, according to the promise, have been her nursing fathers and nursing mothers, have added glory to their dignity as monarchs, and strength and establishment to their thrones.

Kings surely can regulate the affairs of their kingdoms according to the light of Divine revelation, and be real cherishers of the kingdom of God on earth, without intermeddling with its internal and spiritual arrangements, and the church can receive support and protection from wholesome laws without her ministers claiming temporal power. The above scripture shows us that to fight to obtain temporal dominion and to make laws to regulate commerce, is not the prerogative of God's ministers, neither is it the prerogative of kings to make laws to regulate the worship of the true God. Yet, if a *national* church like the Church of England be established and endowed, possessing large landed estates, and her bishops take seats as legislators in the House of Lords, it is obvious that such an establishment must come under State regulation.

The Papacy is, however, not rightly called a *church*; it is a corrupt, foreign *political* organization, seeking by *pretensions* to spiritual power, to bring the wealth and power of nations under priestly domination. Whatever name she assumes, whether "Catholic" in Ireland, or "Ritualist" in the Protestant Church of England, she answers to no Scriptural delineation of the Church of God on record. Had Jesus have said, "My kingdom *is* of this world, and therefore *My servants fight*," the Papacy would have been justly described. The history of

#### GENEVA

furnishes some examples of what the spirit and practice of Popery have been from its rise in the 4th century until now, and we may rest assured that there will be no improvement. No sooner was the little city free from the empire of Charlemagne and beginning to arrange the order of its government, than the bishop stepped forward to claim the right of temporal dominion. A concession was granted to the extent of taking the bishop into union with the citizens in the civic jurisdiction, reserving at the same time the right to the people to elect their own bishop.

For ages the little republic maintained its independence against the encroachments of the Counts of Savoy, but in the 15th century the Duke Armadeus VIII. appealed to Pope Martin V. to grant him the lordship of Geneva. The people stoutly resisted, and the Duke withdrew from the hopeless contest. The Pope had, however, a more quiet way of destroying Geneva's freedom. He claimed the privilege of appointing the bishop. This point being gained, he next, in the course of time, appointed a *Prince of Savoy* to the office. Thus the people found themselves duped by having in their council chamber a prince-bishop to represent the Pope and Savoy instead of having a spiritual adviser.

Geneva soon found herself stripped of her birth-rights, and the city filled with the fruits of a profane priesthood. A terrible and lasting internal conflict ensued. Men were saturating the earth with each other's blood, the one that he might trample on the rights of his fellow-man, and hold him as his horse or ass with a bridle; and the other that he might breathe the world's air with freedom, and rightly use his mental and physical powers for his profit. God, however, was preparing a light and liberty for Geneva that neither popes nor kings could take away.

#### WILLIAM FAREL.

The sword had been devouring its multitudes in and around Geneva, when God anointed William Farel and sent him in the sword's track to gather the remnant according to the election of grace. William, in his early days, was a Papist, and a student at the Sorbonne, under Le Fèvre, but was brought to a knowledge of the truth. In the towns around Geneva he preached with marvellous success. "The harvest truly was plenteous." Town after town became Protestant. Images and altars were removed. Priests armed themselves with weapons of war to take his life. They tried to incite the people with shouts of "Kill him, kill him," "Duck him," "Beat out his brains." They sometimes knocked him down and beat him, and once almost killed him, but Farel, strengthened by his God, grew the more zealous, and amidst cold, hunger, and weariness, boldly preached the Christ which had become precious to his soul.

In 1532, he with his friend Saunier entered Geneva and



FAREL PREACHING.

preached upon the Word of God, the *fountain of all Divine knowledge and pardon through the blood of Jesus*. This, of course, could never be permitted. If the Word of God be the fountain of all Divine knowledge, the voice of tradition, or the "living voice" of the church (the priest's), must be of little worth; if pardon of sin be only through the blood of Jesus, priestly absolution must be a cheat. The episcopal council met and summoned the preachers before them, but with their minds already made up not to let them escape. Two magistrates, however, accompanied them to see that they returned alive. Under their *sacred robes* some of the council concealed fire arms. Again let us repeat the words at the heading of this chapter: "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight."

The members of the council, canons, bishops' officers and high clergy were of course all in their robes. The Reformers were asked why they came there. Farel meekly replied, "I am sent by God; I am come to announce His Word." It was told him that a layman ought not to preach. He replied that *they* were not the true successors of the Apostles, as they did not care for the doctrine of Christ. They rose to their feet and pulled the Reformers about. "Come, Farel," said they, "you wicked devil, what makes you go up and down thus? Whence comest thou? What business brings you to our city to throw us into trouble?" "I am not a devil," said Farel; "I am sent by God as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. I preach Christ crucified. He that believeth on Him hath eternal life. He that believeth not is condemned." "He blasphemes; he is worthy of death." "To the Rhone! to the Rhone!" said they. "It were better to drown him in the Rhone, than to suffer this wicked Lutheran to trouble the people." "Speak the words of Christ and not of Caiaphas," replied Farel. "Kill the Lutheran hound," they madly exclaimed. "Strike! strike!" cried Dom Bergeri, proctor to the chaplain. They struck at them, and a servant of the Grand Vicar, armed with a gun, levelled it at Farel and pulled the trigger; but as God would have it, it missed fire. "I am not to be shaken by a popgun; your toy does not alarm me," said Farel.

Through the vigour of the two magistrates, the lives of the Reformers were preserved, but they were ordered to



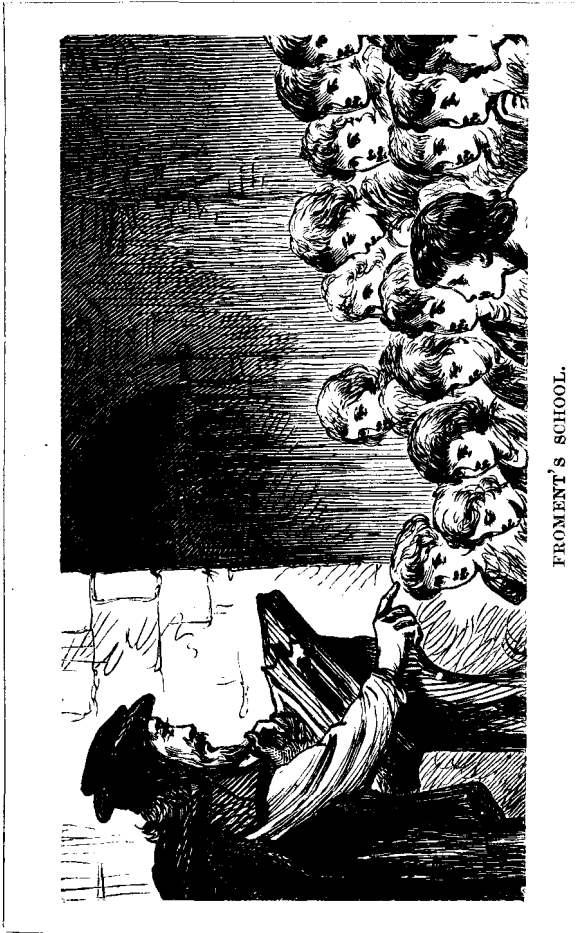
leave the town in six hours or be brought to the stake. Meantime the lower clergy, armed with clubs and daggers, assembled round the door, and like the forty Jews who bound themselves under a curse neither to eat nor drink until they had slain Paul, they vowed vengeance on Farel. But Farel had been recommended by the lords of Berne. To injure him would be to insult them, so the syndics called out the guard, who caused the crowd to fall back, and although one priest aimed a blow at Farel with a sword, he and his friends safely escaped out of the city.

#### FROMENT'S SCHOOL.

Farel next persuaded a young man far less courageous than himself, named Froment, to go and take up the work at Geneva. Froment's appearance was mean. No one seemed to fear him; no one seemed encouraged by his appearance. But he took a room near the Molard or market place, to open as a school. He wrote out the bills, on which he said: "Children and adults would be taught to write French in a month," and "many diseases would be cured gratis." The bills were posted, the doors opened, and numbers of children came. The Bible was the text book, and God so blessed the labours of the humble teacher that his school-room was soon crowded by anxious adult listeners to the Word of Life.

One of the converts was Claudine Levet, wife of a citizen, a bigoted, but no doubt a sincere, Romanist. She came by invitation to hear the singular and simple teacher, taking care at the same time to secure herself against any Protestant infection by incense and charms, by crossings and prayers. God, however, had a purpose of mercy towards her. Her proud heart was humbled, the arrow of conviction entered. At the close of the sermon she asked: "Is it true what you say? Is it all proved by the Gospel?" "It is." "Is the book from which you preached a genuine New Testament?" "It is." "Is not the Mass mentioned in it?" "It is not." The Testament, at her request, was given her, and for three days she confined herself to her room and read. Who, but one that has been a sincere, yet blind, Romanist, can tell the severe struggle between light and darkness that went on in the soul of Madame Levet during those three days? Ye God used His Word, and the scales, at the end of three days, like Paul's, fell from her eyes.

The work of the Lord by Froment thus went forward, until one day, while preaching in the market place, a band



of soldiers and a number of armed priests came to arrest him. He, however, by the assistance of his friends, made his escape, and left Geneva.

## CHAPTER XV.

**F**AREL and Froment were for a season absent from Geneva, but the good seed was sown, and the tender blade was soon found piercing the frozen clod. The work went on according to the word of the Lord by Isaiah (lv. 11): "So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth, it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The beautifully pathetic description of the Church in troublous times given by Malachi (iii. 16), as well applies to the newborn church in Geneva as anything we have seen. "Then they that feared the LORD *spake often* one to another, and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, *for them* that feared the LORD *and that thought* upon His name." Here, in a garden outside the walls of the city, were a few needy sinners seeking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, and the Lord was in their midst. It was a true and complete Church similar to the little band that met at Gethsemane.

"A band of faithful men  
Met for God's worship in some humble room,  
Or screened from foes by midnight's star-lit gloom,  
On hill-side or lone glen,  
To hear the counsels of His Holy Word,  
Pledged to each other, and their common Lord.

These, few as they may be,  
Compose a church, such as in pristine age,  
Defied the tyrant's steel, the bigot's rage:  
For where but two or three,  
Whate'er the place, in faith's communion meet,  
There, with Christ present, is a church complete."

The "little flock" met together to talk of Him whom they loved, and to receive the Lord's supper in commemoration of His death. This sacred and solemn part of the Lord's service is now too often neglected by the godly, and idolized by the carnally-minded professor. Yet it is well when the truly God-fearing, attending to the dying command of their Redeemer, sit at His table in *remembrance of Him*, and by living faith,

"View Him in that olive press,  
Squeezed and wrung till 'whelmed in blood,  
View their Maker's deep distress,  
Hear the sighs and groans of God!  
Then reflect what sin must be,  
Gazing on Gethsemane."

## ANGELS OF DARKNESS AND THEIR WEAPONS OF WARFARE.

A bad cause cannot be committed unto the Lord by faith ; carnal means are necessary to sustain it. Various and curious were the stratagems employed to prevent the progress of truth. Farel and Viret were represented to the superstitious multitude as feeding devils at their tables in the shape of huge black cats. Farel was said to have no white in his eyes, and a devil hanging at every hair of his beard.

Berne and Fribourg, two cantons of Switzerland, were both allies of Geneva. The former, which was by far the larger, early received the Protestant faith ; Fribourg continued to support the Romanists. On March 20th, 1533, Berne demanded that the Gospel should be preached in Geneva. A few days later (March 27th), the canons, priests, and other leaders of the Papists, met by torch-light, armed, in the Vicar-General's Council-hall, and bound themselves by oath to kill all the Protestants in Geneva without one exception.

Next day 700 persons, including 300 armed priests, met in the cathedral, headed by Canon Wernli, a blustering and zealous Romanist. This number was augmented by other detachments until it amounted to 2500, to which were added large numbers of wives, mothers and children, with aprons full of stones, all ready at Wernli's command to make an attack upon the Lutherans or Bible readers. The Lutherans prepared for defence, but this battle was mercifully prevented by the mediation of some merchants of Fribourg. The priests, however, could not rest. Pardon through the blood of Jesus, without priestly intervention, images or relics, was freely proclaimed, and they saw their craft in danger. Seizing the opportunity, therefore, while many of the Protestant merchants were absent at Lyons, Canon Wernli put off his sacerdotal robes, clothed himself in armour like Goliath, and led a company of armed priests into the market place. "Where are the Lutherans? Where are the Lutherans?" he exclaimed. But the night was too dark to well see them. Nevertheless, the zealous canon went forward striking at anyone and anything he could find, protesting his willingness to die for the church, and he did die ! That night (May 4th, 1533) his company was routed, and himself found a silent breathless corpse.

By the demand of Catholic Fribourg the prince-bishop returned to Geneva to try the prisoners. He invited the chiefs of the Protestant movement to his palace, and as soon as the doors were closed behind them, threw them into irons. This inroad upon the liberties of Geneva offended both Catholic and Protestant, and before the trial was over, he gladly returned to his snug quarters.

#### PUBLIC DISPUTATION.

The next attempt to crush the growing thirst for liberty of conscience, was upon a more lawful plan, and if fairly conducted, no Protestant would have had cause for complaint. Guy Furbity, a Dominican, a doctor of Sorbonne, of great reputation for learning and eloquence, was brought to Geneva, and escorted with great pomp to St. Peter's by a large body of armed Catholics. Here the doctor was to have preached Advent sermons, but instead of this, he so loaded the Protestants with abuse, that Berne, Geneva's ally, took it as a personal insult and demanded his arrest. Farel, Viret, and Froment were sent back to Geneva by the Bernese, under the protection of their ambassador, to counteract the evils arising from the doctor's abuse.

Furbity undertook to prove from the Word of God all he had stated. A public disputation between him and the Reformers therefore took place, but the poor doctor broke down and miserably failed in his attempt. Farel, Viret, and Froment then went forward, preaching the Word under the protection of the Bernese ambassadors, and the Reformation in Geneva made rapid progress.

#### SPIRITUAL AND POLITICAL PROTESTANTISM.

As Protestantism and liberty always go hand-in-hand, it can readily be understood that vast numbers of the people were willing at any time to fight for the Reformation, not from a love to the Gospel itself, but for the national freedom which the Gospel brought with it. Bearing this in mind, it will not be difficult to conceive how that while some, hearing the Word preached, were brought up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and rejoiced in the pardoning love and eternal mercy of God in Christ; others finding themselves relieved from the iron yokes of Popery,

shook themselves, as it were, from the dust, and looked round for revenge upon the monster that had held them so long under a superstitious spell.

The convents, the strongholds of superstition and sinks of iniquity, were first attacked and pulled down for materials to strengthen the fortifications.

#### THE NUNS OF ST. CLAIRE.

The nuns of St. Claire obtained permission to depart to Anneci. "One of the *sisterhood*, in a book still extant," says Dyer in his life of Calvin, "has painted in the most lively colours the particulars of their removal. It was a piteous thing," this sister tells us, "to see this *holy company* in such a plight, so overcome with fatigue and grief, that several swooned by the way. It was rainy weather, and all were obliged to walk through the muddy roads, except four poor invalids who were in the carriage. There were six poor old women, who had taken their vows more than sixteen years before. Two of these, who were past sixty-six, and had never seen anything of the world, fainted away repeatedly. They could not bear the wind; and when they saw the cattle in the fields they took the cows for bears, and the long-woolled sheep for ravishing wolves. And though our mother, the vicarress, had supplied them all with good shoes to save their feet, the greater number could not walk in them, but hung them at their waist. And so they walked from five in the morning, when they left Geneva, till near midnight, when they got to St. Julien, which is only a little league off."

But the good sister who gives the foregoing account of the *holy company*, omits to name that after they were gone subterraneous passages were found, communicating with the Franciscans.

#### NUNS AND NUNNERIES.

These subterraneous passages must have been dug by some of the *holy* brothers or *holy* sisters. But apart from what this means of communication suggests, before leaving this subject may we not justly ask what good can possibly arise from this unnatural system of imprisoning women for years within convent walls, until they are unable to walk in shoes, and are so ignorant as to take sheep for wolves, and cows for bears?

Is this what we are to understand by the Apostle's words: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate*, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you" (2 Cor. vi. 17)? Certainly the context does not favour such an idea, and if such a construction be put upon the passage it must apply to *all believers*. How then shall they be "diligent in business?" How will their "light shine before men?" How shall "wives be subject to their own husbands," or "children obey their parents," if all such relationships cease to exist in the church of God?

The whole system of conventual life is contrary to human nature, even in its pristine perfection (Gen. ii. 18, 26). It is contrary to Divine revelation, a plague spot on the face of any civilized nation, and a disgrace to modern society. It is Mormonism, despotism, tyranny and slavery, under the *guise of Christianity*, enclosed by walls to hide it from public scrutiny. The anguish of the poor hapless creatures, who too late find out their mistake, is touchingly represented in the following lines:

#### CONVENT BELLS.

Sorrow and Sin, come in, come in! Open our doors and see;  
We chose it? True, but little knew here was such misery.  
Alone? Ah no, would God 'twere so. Watched, hated, *forced* to sin,  
Oh, ye who dare to *speak* your care,—men of the world, come in.

Men of the world, come in, come in! Of what are you afraid?  
Each Convent has its prison doors of strongest iron made;  
Each *mother* (Heaven avenge the lie!) has keys and scowls and  
thongs;

Men of the world, come in, come in, and scan the convent wrongs.

A woman in a *woman's* power: a priest where no one hears,  
Can ye not guess what secrets live within these iron bars?  
Are English Senators so dull in these enlightened days,  
That they can see no need to let the light in on *our* ways?

Ask us once more to take the veil in the broad light of day,  
With no *intimidation* near, and all the pomp away.  
Say, "Will ye be the Brides of Heav'n while yet ye stay below?"  
We turn our eyes upon the priests, and shuddering answer, "No."

Clamour away, O women, for admittance to our cells,  
Men of the city, men of state, ring, ring the Convent Bells,  
O melancholy madness of the people so to sleep  
While *we* are too much maddened by indignities to weep.

Men of the world, come in, come in, and if ye find no crime,  
 Better for *all*,—the devils fear torment *before* their time ;  
 But while the world is bolted out and we are bolted in,  
 To test the holiness of Rome, men of the world, come in !

MRS. T. CHAPLIN.

These and similar wailings call upon the British senators to put the law in force for the rights of helpless British subjects.

#### ALL BIBLES ORDERED TO BE BURNT.

The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, was the powerful weapon by which the Reformation in Geneva was being obtained. This the priests soon discovered, and on January 1st, 1534, they issued an order for all copies of the Bible, whether in French or German, to be burned.

In Protestant countries, where the Word of God is considered of more authority than the word of poor, puny, sinful man, such an order would bring the priesthood into contempt. In the place of it, therefore, we hear such unscrupulous assertions as the following : "Protestants do not believe *all* the Bible." "They worship a book; the Lord Jesus is nothing to them." "They trust to a book instead of the living voice of the Church." True Protestants, however, are too well taught to believe that a few self-seeking men are the "Church." They know that every real believer in Jesus is a member of His Church. Jesus to them is the one thing needful. And the Bible, the whole Bible, "not cunningly devised fables," they value as "the more sure Word of prophecy," as Peter said : "Whereunto YE DO WELL THAT YE TAKE HEED."

#### SHAM PILGRIMS.

Conspiracy after conspiracy was formed between the prince-bishop, the Duke of Savoy, and Catholic Fribourg, to humble the people who had cast off their authority. But God defended the right, and the little city stood like a light-house upon a rock, as a beacon to the surrounding nations to guide them to the Harbour of Rest. In May, 1534, a large company of armed men, under the guise of pilgrims, presented themselves at the city gates with banners, crosses and relics, desiring, as it would seem, to do homage to some of the saints before their images. The Genevese, however, saw through the pious fraud, and kept the army outside.



It is remarkable how the Devil by Popery apes the kingdom of God. The people of God are pilgrims and strangers upon earth, because they, through grace, came



AN ARMED BODY OF CATHOLICS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER GENEVA  
UNDER THE GUISE OF PILGRIMS.

out from the world's religion and pleasures to seek a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. The Devil, therefore, has his pilgrims, not such as have

fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, but such as make pilgrimages to the works of men's hands.

#### GOD PRESERVED THE REFORMERS FROM BEING POISONED.

In 1535, a determined effort was made to poison the three Reformers. Farel, Viret and Frément lodged in the same house, and a woman, who waited upon them and professed to be a convert, was induced by the priests to put poison into some Spanish soup under the idea that she would be performing a very meritorious act. Frément was just about to taste it when a messenger announced that his wife and children had arrived, so he escaped. Farel preferred something else. Viret, who had not recovered from a wound received from a priest, took some, but the woman's conscience immediately smote her, and she entreated with tears that he would drink some water as an antidote. She escaped to the house of the canon who had induced her to commit the sin, but was brought back and confessed all.

#### PROTESTANTISM ESTABLISHED IN GENEVA.

On August 10th, 1535, the Council of Two Hundred was assembled. Farel addressed them, and the result was that the Mass ceased to be publicly performed in Geneva; and on the 27th of the same month the Council issued an order requiring the citizens to worship God according to the Scriptures, and forbidding all papistical idolatry. Thus the Reformation of Geneva was so far established, and a republican form of Government more definitely arranged. Many and terrible, however, were the battles yet to be fought to defend the city from outside foes, and many victories had to be gained by the sword of the Spirit within.

The Reformers had so far, at the risk of their lives, struggled to bring light and truth into Geneva, and God had given them the victory. But a more calm, powerful, and logical mind was necessary to ground and settle the national and spiritual affairs of Geneva. Farel felt the need of this. He and his companions had pioneered the way, but now they feel the need of a man to take the work from their hands and consolidate it. Their hearts are uplifted to God. He sees and hears His praying servants,

and while they are praying, Calvin, having finished his business at Noyon, is on his way to Geneva.

“O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.”

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## CHAPTER XVI.

IN the foregoing chapters we have seen struggles and triumphs between the light of truth and the darkness of error and superstition, in and around Geneva.

We have also seen truth established by decree in Geneva. But the decree of the creature and the decree of the Creator are vastly different. When God decrees, He foresees all the opposition that will be brought against Him, and He knows that He is able to work all things after the council of His Own will; when man decrees he knows not how much strength may be brought to overpower him.

The decree to disestablish Popery and to establish Christianity might *defend* the Protestants, but it could not make one real one. God only can deliver a sinner from the power of darkness and translate him into the kingdom of His dear Son.

### THE SEEDS OF INTERNAL DISCORD.

Truth was preached and defended in Geneva, and in this there was cause for rejoicing. But had the great Preacher of Capernaum sat on Geneva's mountain side, we should again have heard His sublime description of the kingdom of heaven, saying, “Behold a sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed *some seeds fell by the wayside*, and the fowls came and devoured them up; *some fell upon stony places*, where they had not much earth, and forthwith they sprung up because they had no deepness of earth, and when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root, *they withered away*. And *some fell among thorns*, and the thorns sprung up and choked them, but *other fell into good ground*, and brought forth fruit” (Matt. xiii. 3-8).

A people trained in the lap of the mother of harlots

to see every conceivable deception and wickedness practiced under the name of religion, could not readily understand the sincerity and purity of Protestantism. Leaving, then, for awhile the seeds of internal discord, we will go to meet

#### CALVIN AT THE GATES OF GENEVA.

It is toward the end of August, 1536, and the young Reformer is on his way to Basle or Strasburg, as he supposes. He has called to tarry for a night only in the Protestant city. But Farel, who is now the most influential man in Geneva, has received orders to bring preachers of the Gospel from all quarters, and he hears that the author of the "*Institutes*" is in the city. Immediately he is on his way, and in a few minutes the Reformer of forty-seven years of age, full of uncompromising fiery zeal, and the young, slender, retiring, but logical, powerful student and author of twenty-seven meet together.

Farel showed what victory had been obtained and what an open field there now was in the city for useful labour, and urged Calvin to join him in the important work. Calvin shrank from the prominence that the work of Geneva would call him to; he loved retirement, and felt that his pen was his forte. He declared that he had only come for one night.

#### FAREL'S DENUNCIATION AND CALVIN'S SURRENDER.

"Why seek elsewhere for what is now offered you?" said Farel. "Why refuse to edify the Church of Geneva by your faith, zeal, and knowledge?" "*I cannot teach,*" replied the modest scholar; "I have need to learn, and there are special labours for which I wish to reserve myself. This city cannot afford me the leisure I require." "Study, leisure, knowledge!" rejoined the other. "What, must we never *practise*?"

Calvin pleaded that he was weak and needed rest. "Rest! Death alone permits the servants of Christ to rest from their labours." Calvin objected on the ground of his timidity. He could not battle with such strong spirits as the men of Geneva. But Farel's withering interrogation, "Ought the *servants of Jesus Christ* to be so delicate as to be frightened at warfare?" almost provoked him to buckle on the armour. Next the case of Jonah and the Lord's

chastening was instanced, but Calvin still held to his purpose: his love of retirement and study had almost become a snare.

Farel, then, as if inspired from above, placed his hand upon Calvin's head, and fixing his piercing eyes in his, solemnly said, "May God curse your repose! May God curse your studies, if, in such a great necessity as ours, you withdraw, and refuse to give us help and support." He accused him of seeking himself rather than Christ.

Calvin trembled in every limb. The dreadful denunciation unhinged his purpose. He felt, as he afterwards said, "as if God from on high had stretched out His hand to stop him." And like the prophet who felt his pardon



CATHEDRAL OF GENEVA.

sealed, and receiving his commission from the high court of heaven, said, "Here am I, send me," so Calvin at once felt bound to surrender all his powers to the work of the Lord at Geneva.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"**R**EADING," it has often been said, "makes a full man; conversation a *ready* man, but thinking makes a *great* man." Calvin, as we have seen, possessed each of these advantages in a very high degree; but being taught by the Spirit of God, he also well knew that human qualifications alone could not fit him to preach "Christ crucified;" "Christ the power of

God and the wisdom of God ;” and “ the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom ” (1 Cor. i. 23, 24, and 27).

Being settled at Geneva, he was appointed theological teacher and preacher, but the latter office he for some months declined to accept, fearing that he was not thoroughly qualified. He had often preached at Bourges and other places when much younger, without presuming to think himself a preacher, but now that he is asked to regularly fill that office, the great and solemn responsibilities of it stand before him, and he with Paul is ready to ask, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” His lectures on theology he delivered in the cathedral of Geneva.

#### THE THEOLOGICAL TEACHER NOT A GOSPEL PREACHER.

Evidently, Calvin saw a difference between the theological teacher and the Gospel preacher. Without any special spiritual qualifications, and even without Divine grace in the heart, men of learning and of ability may deliver able lectures upon biblical and sacred literature without being Gospel ministers. And from such men the ministers of Jesus are generally as glad to learn as the builder is glad to avail himself of the help of the ladder-maker, brick-maker, labourer, etc. Yet, certainly, while the Gospel minister must be considered a theological teacher, there is a vast difference between his office and the work of the teacher above referred to.

Does the teacher lecture upon Bible lands, the journeys of Israel, the nature and extent of the wilderness, and the giving of the law on mount Sinai ? The minister, in addition to this, has to warn the sinner of the spiritual nature of the law and of his utter inability to meet its holy inflexible demands, even as he has felt the same in his own soul, like Paul, who said, “ The law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin ; and the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death. ” In the wilderness journeys of Israel the minister sees and preaches the type of the trial of faith through which his own soul and the souls of all the spiritual Israel of God have to pass ; while manna from heaven and water from the rock exhibit to him the bread which came down from heaven (John vi. 51), and the gladdening stream from the

Rock of Ages (Ps. xlvi. 4), for such as hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Does the teacher lecture upon the existence of God, His *infinite holiness, power, wisdom, knowledge, immutability, etc?* The minister also discourses upon all these, and yet sees *God in Christ*, reconciling the world unto Himself. He shows *the way up to a holy God* through Christ Jesus. The *power of God*, he is happy in speaking of, but the exceeding *greatness of His power* to us-ward who believe, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, the minister of the Gospel sees to be most precious. The *infinite wisdom* of God in all His works he admires and proclaims, but God *abounding toward us* in all *wisdom* and prudence by redemption through blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace, forms a precious addition in the minister's theological addresses.

In short, the teacher counts the number of grapes in the cluster; he discourses upon the weight, shape, and constituent parts thereof; the minister squeezes the juice into the cup of thanksgiving; he hands it to the man that is ready to perish; he drinks thereof himself and calls upon the name of the Lord. Few perhaps of God's sent ministers are qualified theological teachers in the literal sense. "Not many wise men after the flesh are called;" and perhaps few theological teachers are called to be Gospel ministers. Yet each have their particular part to take among the "all things that work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." The Divine interrogation, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" has reference to no human authority, but is aptly expounded thus:

"Jesus sent the Holy Spirit,  
And the Spirit sends the man."

CALVIN'S FIRST SERMON IN GENEVA.

When Calvin commenced preaching, his first sermon created such enthusiasm that multitudes followed him home to testify their gratification, and he was obliged to promise to preach again the next day, that others might have an opportunity of hearing. "His first labours seem to have been almost gratuitous. In the entry of the

registers of February 13th, 1537, we find it proposed to give him six gold crowns, seeing as yet he had scarcely received anything." Self-denial and freedom from covetousness were special features in Calvin's life.

#### PUBLIC DISPUTATION, AND A FRIAR CONVERTED.

As a means of instructing the people in the principles of the Reformation, the Council of Berne appointed a public disputation to take place at Lausanne, to which all the clergy of that district were invited. Every effort was made by the priests to prevent this means of enlightening the people. They got the citizens of Lausanne to second their efforts, and the emperor to prohibit the meetings; assassins were stationed on the road to murder the Protestant ministers; yet all was of no avail; the people met, and Calvin, Viret, Farel, and others attended.

On the fourth and fifth days, Calvin addressed the meeting with so much force on the subject of transubstantiation, that a bare-footed friar, named Tandi, confessed his conversion on the spot. Transubstantiation we consider to be the most absurd, blasphemous, God-insulting, unscriptural and degrading piece of idolatry the world has ever known, and it is no small mercy to be made instrumental in opening the eyes of the deluded followers of the Papacy to see the sophistry of this master-piece of iniquity.

Calvin may now be considered to have fairly started upon his work at Geneva. But the devil did not mean to give up the field very quietly, and as he can do nothing but by Divine permission it is evident that the Lord suffered

#### THE DRAGON AND HIS ANGELS

to fight against Jesus and His servants, yet he prevailed not. Truly it may be said of those godly, laborious, self-denying Reformers, "They overcame him by the BLOOD OF THE LAMB, and by the WORD of their testimony; they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. xii. 11).

Peter Caroli, a doctor of the Sorbonne, was one of the prominent angels of darkness in the devil's campaign, and for some time a sore trial to Calvin and his companions. At Paris it is said he lived a dissolute life, yet he forsook the church of Rome and joined the Protestants. Subse-



quently he returned to the Catholic faith and distinguished himself as a persecutor of the Protestants; again he passed himself off as a convert among the Protestants, but was by Farel detected in appropriating the proceeds of a collection for the poor. "Vain, fickle, insinuating, and hypocritical, Caroli's only object seemed to be to attract public attention by any means whatever." By his duplicity he succeeded in obtaining the ministry of Neuchâtel, but insisting in a sermon on the necessity for praying for the dead he was brought before the consistory of Berne. Here his anger burst into a flame and he accused Calvin, Farel, and Viret of Arianism.

"It is but a few days ago," said Calvin, "that I dined with Caroli; I was then his very dear brother, and he told me to make his compliments to Farel. He then treated as brethren those whom he now charges as heretics, and protested that he wished always to live in brotherly love with us. But not one word did he say about Arianism. Where was then the glory of God, or the honour of the Council of Berne? If you had a single spark of true zeal or piety, would you have silently suffered your brothers and colleagues to reject the Son of God? But supposing all this of no consequence, I demand how you know that I am infected with the Arian heresy? I believe I have given a pretty clear testimony of my faith, and that you will find no more ardent supporter than myself of the divinity of Jesus Christ. My works are in the hands of everybody. But you! What proof have you given of your faith, except, perhaps, in taverns, or other worse places? For such are the haunts in which you have passed your time. Show us, then, the very passage on which you found your accusation; for I will wash out this infamy, and will not endure to be unjustly suspected." Caroli was overwhelmed and alarmed, and confessed Calvin's writings to be orthodox. At a special synod called in March to bring Caroli's accusations to the test, he, to save further exposure, publicly confessed the immorality of his life in France; how he had dissembled in religious opinions, and even thrown into the hands of the persecutors, young men of his own acquaintance of whose conduct and principles he inwardly approved.

After this he went to Rome, and handed in a paper to the Pope in which he condemned the lives and doctrines

of the Reformers. The Pope received him back into the Romish church and gave him full power to exercise the functions of the priesthood. Here we have the sketch of the life of a hypocrite, and should it be asked, "Whatever can induce men to thrust themselves thus into company which they hate?" the answer is given by the Lord Himself (Matt. xiii. 39), "The enemy that sowed them is the devil."

#### DIVINE CHASTENING IN LOVINGKINDNESS.

Surely there is a lesson to learn from this mysterious yet Divine dealing. The Lord, who said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed" (Gen. iii. 15), also said, "Let both grow together until the harvest," "the harvest is the end of the world" (Matt. xiii. 30, 39). In the unfathomable deeps of Jehovah's counsels, He has so ordered that His own Spirit-taught people should be tried by indwelling sin and afflictive circumstances, tempted by the devil and persecuted by the ungodly. Jacob obtained victory by faith but halted upon his thigh. David had Joab as a thorn in the midst of all his prosperity; Paul had his thorn in the flesh, and he, being let into the secret, reveals the cause of the afflictive dispensation, saying, "*Lest I should be exalted above measure*" (2 Cor. xii. 7). Here, then, we see the cause of the wave upon wave of trial that met Calvin in his new sphere of labour. He had unparalleled success. No king nor emperor was doing so much for the real peace, liberty, and prosperity of Europe as this skilful wielder of the sword of the Spirit. Therefore the Lord, not in anger, but in lovingkindness sent the trials.

"'Tis, *if need be*, He reproves us,  
Lest we settle on our lees;  
Yet He in the furnace loves us,  
'Tis expressed in words like these:  
*I am with thee,*  
Israel, passing through the fire.

"To His church, His joy, His treasure,  
Every trial works for good,  
They are dealt in weight and measure,  
Yet how little understood;  
*Not in anger,*  
But in His dear cov'nant love."

## SUPERSTITIOUS CONSECRATION OF BELLS.

Caroli's was not the only trial that confronted Calvin in Geneva; the *registers of the city* show that years before the Reformation both priests and people were alarmingly immoral. Prostitution was sanctioned by the state. It would soil our pages too much to give accounts even of some of their public games, which resembled the rites of Pagan idolaters. Where superstition abounds, vice also abounds. It ever proves itself to be the parent of corruption.

In England we sometimes hear of the consecration of church bells; this is a modification of what took place in Geneva. Bells about to be hung were carried to the font, dressed like a child to be baptized. Sponsors stood for them. They were then sprinkled with water and smeared with oil. This ceremony having been performed to consecrate them to the Virgin, they were foolishly supposed, when rung, to keep away all bad weather, ghosts, enchantments, and all evil spirits.

## THE IMMORAL FRUITS OF SUPERSTITION.

These and such-like wicked absurdities a priest-ridden people are always subject to. Priest-ridden, we say, because the whole of the laws of the Papacy tend to exalt the priesthood to the place of God and to degrade and enslave the consciences of the people.

"If the manners of the laity were corrupt, those of the clergy were as bad or worse. The authentic documents just referred to bear frequent evidence of their profligacy. The canons of St. Peter's, whose office conferred upon them a share in the spiritual government of the city, were particularly notorious for their misconduct. In 1530 the Genevese refused to pay them the tithes, which were so unblushingly applied to the purposes of debauchery."\*

## THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE ROMISH MASS.

A population thus corrupted could not, by any faithful Protestant minister, be admitted to the Lord's table, neither could such things have been expected if the Scriptural order had been understood. The Lord's supper is held by the Protestant to be a commemorative service, according to the words of Jesus, "*Do this in remembrance*

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\* Dyer's "Life of Calvin," page 77.

of *Me.*" And in memory of the *one sacrifice for sin, he, "examining himself eats of this BREAD and drinks of this cup:"* according to the word of the Holy Ghost by Paul, "As often as ye eat this BREAD and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. xi. 26-28).

This Lord's supper, corrupted into the Romish mass,\* is by the Papist received as the real sacrifice to wash away sin. Therefore, we find him both before and after the most atrocious crimes receiving mass at the hands of his priest. What, indeed, can be more productive of evil? If a man wishes to commit an extensive robbery, murder his landlord, or blow up the king and parliament, what can so strengthen his purpose as to be fully persuaded that in the very act he has the favour of God. To this same thing may be traced the large amount of crime committed in all priest-ridden countries.

Calvin found it needful to excommunicate or exclude from the Lord's table all the immoral and ungodly professors of religion. This, to the half Romish part of the population, seemed an exclusion from the only means of pardon, and the only means of freedom in their debaucheries. The exclusion, therefore, stirred up the Libertines to almost open revolution, and Calvin and the other leading Reformers were banished for three years from Geneva.

Men naturally love sin, yet most men have a conscious insecurity under it, and some will do anything to shelter themselves in a false refuge, but none without a new heart and a new spirit will seek refuge in Christ, the only Saviour. The Papists of Geneva had a fancied refuge in this sacrament; Calvin showed the deception, and they drove him out of the city. The Jews went about to establish their own righteousness; Jesus revealed their danger, and said, "If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins," and they despised and rejected Him. Nothing will stir up the enmity of a deceived sinner so much as to expose his false religion by the light of Divine truth.

With a conscience void of offence, and with the felt

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\* This corruption, called *Transubstantiation*, was decreed by the Council of Placenza in 1095, before which time it was not fully ceived even by the Church of Rome.



A VIEW IN GENEVA.

approbation of God, these men could leave Geneva. In their measure they were treading in the footsteps of their Master. "The chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas and destroy Jesus." He was led out of the city by men of like spirit with the Genevese. He could sympathize with His servants, and comfort them in all their tribulations.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

**B**EFORE Calvin and his colleagues were banished from Geneva, they had to encounter a terrific tempest of ungovernable rage, which called forth in them that true heroism, based upon faith in God, which is found in all worthy Reformers.

The real cause of banishment was the Reformers refusing to administer the Lord's supper to a godless and manifestly wicked multitude. Other charges were brought against them, such as their unwillingness to use unleavened bread at the Lord's table. One of the most powerful weapons still in use by the Papists against the true church, is that of *raising disputes upon matters of little importance* among Protestants in order to divide their ranks and weaken their strength. This Calvin was aware of, and therefore thought it wise to consider leavened or unleavened bread a matter of indifference. But to hand the cup to men who, according to his certain knowledge, would take it unworthily, he could not.

"On the morning of Easter, 1538," says Dr. Wylie, "Farel ascended the pulpit of St. Gervais, Calvin occupied that of St. Peter's. In the audience before them they could see the Libertines in great force. All was calm on the surface, but a single word might loose the winds and awake the tempest. Nevertheless, they would do their duty. The pastors expounded the nature of the Lord's supper; they described the dispositions required in those who would worthily partake of it, and concluded by intimating that this day the holy supper would not be dispensed. Hereupon, outcries drowned the voice of the preachers.

“The uproar was specially great in St. Gervais; swords were unsheathed, and furious men rushed toward the pulpit, Farel waited with his arms crossed. He had long since learned to look on angry faces without trembling. Calvin in St. Peter’s was equally resolute. Sooner should his blood dye the boards he stood upon than he would be guilty of the profanation demanded of him. ‘We protest before you all,’ he said, ‘that we are not obstinate about the question of bread, leavened or unleavened; that is a matter of indifference which is left to the discretion of the church. If we decline to administer the Lord’s supper, it is because we are in a great difficulty, which prompts us to this course.’

“Farel had borne the brunt of the tempest in the morning; it was to be Calvin’s turn in the evening. On descending to the church of Rive, he found the place already filled with an assembly, many of whom had brought their swords with them. Whatever apprehensions the young Reformer might have felt, he presented to the people which hung upon the edge of the storm, a calm and fearless front. He had not been more than eighteen months in their city, and yet he had inspired them with an awe greater than that which they felt even for Farel.

“Calvin stood apart from, and rose above, all around him—above Farel—even above the council, whose authority was dwarfed before the moral majesty that seemed to clothe this man. He was among them like an incarnate conscience; his utterances were decrees, just and inflexible, like the laws of heaven themselves. While Calvin is preaching, we see a dark frown pass suddenly over the faces of the assembly. Instantly there come shouts and outcries; a moment after, the clatter of weapons being hastily unsheathed salutes our ears; the next, we are dazzled by the gleam of naked swords. The tempest has burst with tropical suddenness and violence. The infuriated men, waving their weapons in the face of the preacher, press forward to the pulpit. One single stroke and Calvin’s career would have been ended.” But by the interposition of some of the more friendly, He, Who calmed the troubled seas of Galilee, hushed the tempest in the church of Rive, and bloodshed was prevented.

On the next day the Council of Two Hundred met, and pronounced sentence of banishment. Great efforts

were made by the authorities of Zurich and Berne to reconcile the difference between the Genevese and the Reformers, and to retain the latter in the city. But the licentious party was irreconcilable. Some in the council wished to hear the defence ; others drew their swords and demanded the death of the offenders. When this decision was communicated to Calvin, he said, "Certainly had I been the servant of men I had obtained a poor reward; but it is well that I have served Him Who never fails to perform to His servants whatever He has promised."

#### REFLECTION.

Here let both reader and writer reflect upon the character and work of these men, and upon the grace and mercy of the Lord towards them, and also towards us, in raising up and qualifying men to roll back the mighty waves of bondage, superstition, and crime, that were flooding the earth. Look at the men. What were they? Were they the delegates of a gigantic organized system like the Papacy? Had they the prestige of kings, emperors, Pope, and cardinals at their back as a fascinating charm to prompt them in their arduous, self-denying work? No, they stood as solitary individuals, conscious of an inward realization of Divine support and approbation.

They looked for no earthly reward; they sought no earthly honours. Easy would it have been for them, had they been so minded, to have arisen to places of distinction, ease, and luxury, in the church of Rome. But, seeing the people under the spell of an arrogant and superstitious priesthood, their rights as men and Christians entirely ignored, Goddishonoured, and the Bibleunknown, they faced the world, willing at any time to die, if they could in any measure remove the yoke that bound the nations, and bring life and immortality to light. God be everlastingly praised for the men and their work.

The flood that was driven back in the 16th century is now returning. What are you doing, my reader, to stem this tide? Indifference is sin, selfishness, and shame. *Something you can do.* Can you pray? Try it. Can you help any Protestant society or movement? Do it, if it be ever so little. Never help the begging "Sisters of Mercy," nor any other Romish movement, or you may help to raise a fund for a massacre in England, similar to the great



massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, in 1572. Try to prevent others helping them.

THE SHAFTS OF THE ALMIGHTY AGAINST CALVIN'S ENEMIES.

When King Charles II. asked John Milton, "Do not you think that your blindness is a judgment upon you for having written in defence of my father's murder?" "Sir," answered the poet, "it is true I have lost my eyes; but, if all calamitous providences are to be considered as judgments, your Majesty should remember that your royal father lost his head."

Calamitous providences cannot always be taken as judgments. The Lord Jesus showed this in the case of the man who was born blind. When the disciples thought this calamity to have arisen from some *special sin* on the part of this man or his parents, Jesus said, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John ix. 3). Yet it is nevertheless true that "*God overthroweth the wicked for their wickedness*" (Prov. xxi. 12). And the shafts of the Almighty were clearly seen smiting those enemies of Calvin who drove him from his work at Geneva.

The Libertines, as the unruly party were designated, banded together and called themselves "Brothers in Christ." By their rude conduct at the annual election of syndics, they obtained seats for four of their party, and to the efforts of these the banishment of the Reformers was chiefly due. One of them tauntingly told Calvin that the city gate was wide enough to let him go out. He, however, was, during Calvin's absence, accused of sedition, and attempted to escape by his window, but falling headlong broke his neck; another of the four perished on the scaffold, and the other two being accused of similar charges, fled, and so escaped with their lives. Thus the rod of the Lord was seen to rest upon these four wicked men in one month.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**THE** wisdom and kindness of God towards Calvin conspicuously appear in his removal. The weak and weary servant of the Lord, worn by incessant conflict with the hard, turbulent spirits of Geneva, needed rest in the atmosphere of kindness. Being earnestly

invited to Strasburg by Bucer and Capito he repaired thither, where three years of happy useful labour awaited him.

Strasburg contained many distinguished foreigners, exiles for the Gospel. The French refugees, said to be about 15,000 in number, formed themselves into a congregation, and made him their pastor. Here he laid the foundation for the French Protestant Church. The Town Council also appointed him lecturer on theology, and appropriated the church of the Dominicans to his use. The fame of his lectures spread far and wide and drew students from other countries, and Strasburg rapidly grew as a School of Theology. Here he found more genial temperaments and a more educated class of men than Geneva could at this time furnish.

THE GENEVESE INVITED BY THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS TO  
RETURN TO HER GRASP.

While Calvin was at Strasburg matters went from bad to worse at Geneva. And the little city being now without a defender of the faith, and by the sophistry of the priesthood, divided against herself, Rome embraced the opportunity as a fitting one to open her arms to tempt Geneva into her iron grasp. One of her most able sons, James Sadoletto, Bishop of Carpentras, who had just received the cardinal's hat, was selected for the purpose. He was a man of great eloquence, possessing all that plausibility of manner that the present Pope, Leo XIII., seems to possess.

James Sadoletto, in 1539, penned a letter to the Genevese into which he threw all his powers of eloquence, plausibility, learning, and fascinating sympathy, to assure them of his paternal care, and to invite them back to their mother—the church of Rome. Not a man in Geneva could be found to write a reply. But Calvin having read Sadoletto's letter in Strasburg "forthwith answered it with so much truth and eloquence," says Beza, "that Sadoletto immediately gave up the whole affair as desperate."

The pen of the ready writer and elegance of the accomplished scholar are discernible in both these letters. But Calvin having the advantage of being right, displays that openness, frankness, and energy in his vindication of truth which his opponent found it impossible to adopt.

Like an accomplished counsel, who pleads the cause of a guilty client, Sadoletto showed his marvellous ability to pass off the Church of the Inquisition as the chaste bride of Christ, but Calvin with equal ability unrobed the **MOTHER OF HARLOTS**, and exposed the deception of the Cardinal while he did honour to his learning.

MACAULAY'S REASON FOR WISE MEN BEING FOUND IN THE  
CHURCH OF ROME.

To some persons it may be astonishing that men of such highly cultivated intellects as Sadoletto, Manning, Newman, and others, should be found within the pale of such a palpably corrupt and erroneous system as the Papacy. But the following telling remarks by Lord Macaulay will, no doubt, help to enlighten the minds of such. Referring to men embracing extremely erroneous views, he says, "The truth is, that no powers of mind constitute a security against errors of this description. Touching God and His ways with man, the highest human faculties can discover little more than the meanest. In theology, the interval is small indeed between Aristotle and a child—between Archimedes and a naked savage. It is not strange, therefore, that wise men, weary of investigation, tormented by uncertainty, longing to believe something, and yet seeing objections to everything, should submit themselves absolutely to teachers who, with firm and undoubted faith, lay claim to a supernatural commission. Thus we frequently see inquisitive and restless spirits take refuge from their own scepticism in the bosom of a church which pretends to infallibility, and after questioning the existence of a Deity, bring themselves to worship a wafer." \*

We much admire this apt elucidation of a somewhat mysterious fact.

NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE CONTRASTED.

One of the foregoing wise remarks by Macaulay we must digress a little to notice. He says, "*Touching God and His ways with man, the highest human faculties can discover little more than the meanest.*" We would be the last to

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\* His. Eng., vol. vi. 29.

undervalue human learning, yet we cannot help noticing how readily fallen man will ascribe the highest meed of praise to any human attainment, and at the same time pour contempt upon that wisdom which cometh from above.

Who would reverence the labouring *Christian* man in fustian, or the *godly* rustic at the plough-tail, as he would reverence the learned, though godless linguist, philosopher, astronomer, or the doctor of law, of physic, or of music? Yet much as any of us may admire the cultivated, capacious powers of any human intellect, we cannot help seeing the greatest of such qualifications dwarfed before the humble *Christian* and his *personal knowledge of God*. In comparison therewith even Sir Isaac Newton, with all his grand astronomical discoveries, appears but as an ant at Land's End, calculating the wonders and wealth of the mighty ocean and discovering the waters to be salt.

The greatest human attainment comes but to the threshold of the *works of God*, where unfathomable and incomprehensible wonders are ever beyond man's reach. But the Christian, although of humble station, *knows God*. He has fellowship with the great Creator, "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure" (Isa. xl. 12). He has a knowledge of God in Christ—which knowledge is life eternal. Viewing thus the admirable works of God, a knowledge of which is the unbeliever's highest attainment, the Christian is constrained to say :

"The whole creation can afford  
But some faint shadows of my Lord,  
Nature to make His beauties known  
Must mingle colours not her own."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge of the holy is understanding" (Prov. ix. 10).

#### GENEVA REPENTING.

But we must return to notice Geneva repenting that she had banished the Reformer. The letter of Sadoleto did no harm to the Protestant cause. It helped to show the Genevese how much they needed the presence of Calvin, and from that time popular feeling began to rise

in his favour. The city registers of 1540 show that, on September 21st, the Council charged Amy Perrin, one of its members, "to find means if she could to bring back Master Calvin." "Oct. 13th, it was resolved to write to Monsieur Calvin that he would assist us." Oct. 19th, the Council of Two Hundred resolved, in order that the honour and glory of God may be promoted, to seek all possible means to have "Master Calvin as preacher." Oct. 20th, it was ordered in the General Council, or assembly of the people, "to send to Strasburg to fetch Master John Calvin, who is very learned, to be minister in this city." The enthusiasm of the citizens is thus described by an eyewitness, Jacques Bernard: "They all cried out, Calvin, Calvin! we wish Calvin, the good and learned man, the true minister of Jesus Christ."

#### CALVIN RELUCTANTLY RETURNS TO GENEVA.

Three several deputations did Geneva send to entreat his return. It was a critical moment, not only in Calvin's history, but in that of Christendom. The thought, he tells us, filled him with horror.

"Who will not pardon me," he writes, "if I do not again willingly throw myself into a whirlpool which I have found so dangerous?" At last, however, he resolved in the strength of the Lord to go from all the happy associations of Strasburg and face persecution, or even death itself in Geneva, if the will of the Lord should be so. On September 13th, 1541, Calvin re-entered the gates of Geneva. The pulpit of St. Peter's was prepared for him, a piece of cloth was given him as a gown, and his salary fixed at 500 Geneva florins (about £120 of our day), twelve measures of corn, two casks of wine, and a house to live in. But the Geneva of 1541 was no better than that of 1538.

The Libertines still wished for liberty to practise the grossest immorality, and Calvin had returned with the full purpose of reforming the abuses, first in the Church, and next in the state.

*The Political Reformers* were then like some who call themselves Reformers in our own day. They were too much disordered in mind to be at liberty, and not



CALVIN RE-ENTERING GENEVA.

sufficiently disordered for the asylum. They made *politics* their first principle, and their own numerous wills and fancies the rule of action. This, with them, was *liberal principle*, and anything contrary to it was considered as the Inquisition over again. Calvin set the *honour of God first*, and took *Divine revelation* (the Bible) as his rule of action.

The honours which accompanied him from Strasburg, and the fresh honours which met him at Geneva's gate, might help to pave the way a little, but he saw before him a battle-field, a tremendous struggle, and victory or death.

#### MORAL LAWS INTRODUCED.

When Calvin was invited to return to Geneva, it was agreed by the Senate that a code of moral laws should be introduced. These laws were drawn up by the ministers and appointed members of the Senate in conference, and presented to the Council on September 28th, 1541. After this they were amended and re-modelled and received by the final vote of the people, January 2nd, 1542. These moral laws, be it observed, were not like the laws of the Church of Rome, *to regulate the conscience*, but for the *general well being of society*, and they were twice solemnly and unanimously voted by the people.

"The people could not afterwards allege," says M. Gaberal, "that they were deceived as to the bearings of the laws they were sanctioning. For several weeks they could meditate at leisure on them; they knew the value of their decision, and when twice—on November 20th, 1541, and again on January 2nd, 1542, they (about 20,000 of them) came to the Cathedral of St. Péter's, and after each article, raised their hands in acceptance of it, the vote was an affair of conscience between God and themselves."

Under this new regulation all went well for a time, and Calvin worked hard to extend the principles of the Reformation throughout Christendom. But after about six years, Popery and Infidelity began again to raise their heads. On December 16th, the Council of Two Hundred met to discuss the measures necessary to be taken to deal with the debauchery and hatred of some of the people. On this occasion the contention was so hot, and the threats uttered against the pastors, and especially against Calvin,

were so violent, that the friends ran to beg the ministers not to appear that day before the Council. An excited crowd was gathered at the door of the Council hall.

"I cast myself," says Calvin, "into the thickest of the crowd. I was pulled to and fro by those who wished to save me from harm, but," he adds, "the people shrank from harming me as they would from the murder of a father." Passing through the crowd he entered the Council chamber. There fresh combats awaited him. On his entrance the cries grew louder and swords were unsheathed. He advanced undismayed, stood in the midst of them, and looked round on the scowling faces and naked swords. All were silent.

"I know," said Calvin, addressing the members of the Council, "that I am the primary cause of these divisions and disturbances." The silence grew yet more profound, and the Reformer proceeded: "*If it is my life you desire, I am ready to die. If it is my banishment you wish, I shall exile myself. If you desire once more to save Geneva without the Gospel you can try.*"

Who could hear this admirable sentence without forgetting his quibble and feeling dwarfed before the spirit of a prince. This brought the Council to their senses. Anointed by the same Spirit as the apostle, Calvin truly could have said, "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (Acts xx. 24).

Sovereign Ruler of the skies,  
Ever gracious, ever wise;  
All my times are in Thy hand,  
All events at Thy command.

His decree Who form'd the earth  
Fix'd my first and second birth;  
Parents, native place, and time,  
All appointed were by Him.

\* \* \* \*

Plagues and death around me fly;  
Till He bids I cannot die;  
Not a single shaft can hit  
Till the God of love sees fit."





“CRIES GREW LOUDER AND SWORDS WERE UNSHEATHED” (page 102).

## CHAPTER XX.

**W**HEN Calvin was about thirty years of age he resolved upon marrying, but so multifarious were his labours that he was obliged to leave his friends to find him a fit companion. First they proposed a lady of noble birth and wealth. But these qualifications were not the attractions the Reformer sought. He proposed that the lady should learn the French language, and as he anticipated, she refused. Another was proposed, but Calvin discovered in time that she was not likely to be a true yoke-fellow with a Christian Reformer. At last Idelette de Bure, a widow to whom Calvin's ministry had been greatly blessed, was proposed by Bucer. She was a godly woman, of elevated soul and Christian courage, and proved to be a girdle of strength to the Reformer. They were married at the end of August, 1540. For nine years only was Calvin favoured with this true yoke-fellow and companion of his trials and triumphs.

While Calvin, like his glorious Leader, was enduring the contradiction of sinners against him; while kings and priests were plotting and threatening; while enduring the scoffs, hisses, and the putting out of the tongue from the Libertines, whose temporal salvation he was working, Idelette de Bure, as an additional trial, was taken from him. She was a loving, tender-hearted, and faithful companion, cheerfully attending her husband in his affliction, pleading his cause in secret at the throne of grace, and ever ready to welcome the numerous visitors who waited upon Calvin. But, alas! her frail and delicate health gave way under the pressure of a protracted illness, and early in 1549, Idelette de Bure died. "Oh glorious resurrection!" were her last words. "God of Abraham and of all our fathers, not one of the faithful who have hoped in Thee for so many ages have been disappointed; I also will hope." These short sentences were rather ejaculated than distinctly spoken.

"Truly," said her husband, writing to Viret, "I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life; of one who, had it been so ordered, would have been not only the willing sharer of my indigence, but even of my death. During her life she was the faithful helper of my ministry." Marrying in that day by the clergy meant something more

than simply taking a wife. It was a bold protest against the doctrine of the Church of Rome called

#### CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY.

The vow of celibacy of the clergy or priesthood, although *contrary to divine institution*, is of very ancient date. *Astarte* or *Ashtaroth*, the Assyrian queen, who lived about 1800 years before Christ, and who professed to be the *Queen of Heaven*, after whom the Virgin Mary is so named and worshipped, had an extensive priesthood, over whom was placed a pontiff. This order was divided into certain classes or ranks, the higher of which took the *vow of celibacy*.\* Thus it may be seen that this doctrine of Rome, like most of the others introduced by her, came from pagan idolatry. She, however, imposes universal celibacy on all her clergy, from the pope to the lowest deacon and sub-deacon.

The advocates for this usage pretend that a vow of perpetual celibacy was required in the ancient church as a *condition of ordination*, even from the earliest apostolic ages. But the contrary is evident from numerous examples of bishops and archbishops, who lived in a state of matrimony without any prejudice to their ordination. Neither is it true that they were required, as stated by the Papists, to enter into this state after their ordination. It is true that *some few*, but not all, of the holy fathers, after their conversion, *voluntarily* put away their wives, perhaps because their wives, remaining unconverted pagan idolaters, were found to be unequal yoke-fellows. Cyprian, for instance, who was martyred in the year 258, resolved, from his conversion, upon a state of celibacy. But Cæcilius, on the other hand, the minister of the Church of Carthage, who in 246 was instrumental in his conversion, lived in a state of matrimony, and at his death committed to Cyprian the care of his family.

Novatus, *presbyter* of Carthage, was complained of by Cyprian because he had struck and abused his wife, which caused her so to suffer as to prove that this priest did *not* live in a state of celibacy. Velens, *presbyter* of Philippi, mentioned by Polycarp and Chaeremon, both had wives. It was when the church became corrupt, and when her bishops

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\* See "Babylonianism," by Rev. J. W. Straton. Price 1d. Partridge, etc., Paternoster Row

and ministers, inflated with pride, strove to assimilate the Church of God to the worship of Ashtaroth, in order to swell their ranks by the influx of the pagans, that this custom was from time to time introduced.

In the Council of Nice, A.D. 325, the motion was made to oblige the clergy to abstain from all conjugal society with their wives, but Paphnutius, a famous Egyptian bishop, and one who himself never was married, vigorously declaimed against it, upon which it was unanimously rejected. Certain it is that, whatever motive has induced the Church of Rome to impose this yoke upon her clergy, it has, in connection with the confessional, led to a vast amount of immorality and murder, and it is as unscriptural as it is wicked.

#### MARRIAGE IS HONOURABLE IN ALL.


It was instituted before sin entered into the world, "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone:" "Enoch who walked with God," Abraham the friend of God; Isaac and Jacob; Moses, who saw God face to face, and Aaron the high priest, were all married. Caiaphas the high priest (John xviii. 13) and *Peter* himself (Matt. viii. 14) were married; and Paul asks: "Have we not the power to lead about a sister, *a wife, as well as other Apostles?*" (1 Cor. ix. 5.) "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one *wife,*" said Paul, "having his *children* in subjection with all gravity" (1 Tim. iii. 2, 4).

It is not in the least surprising that the Church of Rome should discourage the reading of Holy Scripture. Divine revelation completely condemns her human and unholy dogmas, and distinctly foretells her departing from the faith. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly," we read, "that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; FORBIDDING TO MARRY."

#### SRVETUS

and his association with Calvin must next come under our consideration, and we are glad that there are records in existence sufficient to enable us to come at the facts of this perplexing part of the Reformer's life. And we hope to deal faithfully and impartially as far as we can gather up the evidences of the case.

## CHAPTER XXI.

LL great and successful men have their enemies, who, like the little snarling cur that follows the mastiff, do their utmost to tarnish the fame of their superiors. Through ignorance of the self-denying virtues of the religion of Jesus, or through envy, many such opponents of the Reformer have readily received and published the most unfounded imputations against him. Never was a greater piece of injustice done to any man than is done to John Calvin, when he is charged with the burning of Servetus. It was Europe of the 16th century, trained in the lap of the Papacy, that condemned Servetus, and we are indebted not to Roman Catholicism, but to the God of *Protestantism* for any advancement in toleration since that time.

Most solemnly do we abhor the errors of Servetus, yet we praise the Lord that we live in an age when such as he are tolerated and protected. Opposition from the powers of darkness will do the cause of truth no real harm, and if it seems to do so, let the ministers and lovers of truth bestir themselves and defend it by the sword of the Spirit. They need not fear for the ark of the Lord; only let them buckle on the armour and use it. At the time of this unhappy event Calvin neither possessed power to condemn nor power to save a prisoner. It is a marked and favourable providence for him that during the whole of his pastorate at Geneva, his voice was never less regarded, and he never so powerless in the council as at the time when Servetus was tried and condemned. Of this we shall be able to give unquestionable proof from the records of that age. But let us first turn our thoughts to

## SERVETUS.

Michael Servetus was a Spaniard, born in the same year (1509) as Calvin, endowed with a penetrating intellect, highly imaginative genius, and a strongly speculative turn of mind. He was the son of a notary, who sent him to Toulouse for the study of the civil law. Excited by the discussions of the Reformers in that city he gave his attention to theology; but his naturally speculative imagination carried him not only above the dead formularies of the Church of Rome, but away from the Book of Divine

revelation, and landed him in the quicksands of *Pantheism*—the theory which supposes nature, or the things that are made of God, to be God. “Pantheism,” says a great author, “when explained, to mean the absorption of the infinite in the finite, of God in nature, is *atheism*,” and



MICHAEL SERVETUS.

atheism in some form is the gulf into which most speculators upon Divine things fall, when they become wise above what is written, or leaning to their own understanding, forsake the Holy Book.

Having imbibed these and other peculiar views, Servetus, flushed with his supposed new discoveries, and pleased with his own abilities, went to Germany, and

published them in the form of tracts; but finding his opinions obnoxious in Germany, he escaped to France, and there, under the name of Michael of Villa Nauva, was engaged as corrector for the press. He then went to Paris, where he studied physic, and graduated as a doctor. Here he heard of Calvin, who, though like himself, only twenty-five years of age, was then gaining such notoriety as a leader of the reformed faith, that his safety in Paris was questionable. Upon Calvin, therefore, Servetus fixed as a disputant worth vanquishing, and challenged him to a public discussion upon the doctrine of the Trinity. The young Reformer, though at the risk of his life, accepted the summons, and appeared at the time and place appointed, but Servetus never came. In 1537 he taught in Paris, with success, geography, mathematics, and even astrology, which drew upon him a denunciation from the Sorbonne, and a sentence from the Parliament.

Soon after this he quarrelled with the medical faculty at Paris, and quitted the city in 1538. For three years he practised in Charlieu, and then at the instance of the Archbishop of Vienne, he removed to Lyons. About 1546 he wrote to Calvin to the effect that he had only preached a half-way Reformation; he offered to set him at the head of a much greater movement, and sent a volume of MS., in which he was to see, he said, "stupendous and unheard of things." Calvin soon discovered that the "stupendous things" were his absurd system of Pantheism. In 1553 Servetus published his "Matured Theological System," for which the magistrates of Vienne committed him to prison.

From the prison in Vienne he made his escape, and purposing to go to Naples he called at Geneva. Why he came there is not clearly known, but this much is certain, that being one of the most learned men of the age, and having, as he supposed, a system of matured theology, he ever envied the popularity of Calvin. And the Libertines having brought Calvin at this time into disrepute, it is supposed that they invited Servetus to head their opposition. Certainly they defended him, and the whole tenor of the part that the Spaniard took in his own defence clearly demonstrates that he hoped to have Calvin executed for heresy, and to succeed him as the leader of the Reformation. Calvin, however, heard that he was in Geneva, and according to the requirements of the constitutional

laws, he reported his presence in the city to the Council, and demanded

#### HIS APPREHENSION.

The law of Geneva required the accuser should go to prison with the accused, and be detained till the matter was investigated. Nicholes de la Fontaine, a young student and secretary to the Reformer, took this duty upon him, and Servetus was committed to prison on August 13th, 1553.\*

Now will come before us all that can fairly be said for and against Calvin in this matter, as far as we can gather from authentic sources, and a careful perusal of ten different historians, among whom may be classed some of the Reformer's vilest calumniators. Four things we find necessary to remember, and to make an allowance for, when reading much that is written of Calvin.

1st.—The natural enmity of the human heart against the Bible doctrines, called Calvinism or Predestination. This alone has caused many to condemn the man of whom they have been totally ignorant.

2nd.—That Calvin was the most powerful and successful opponent of Popery that ever lived. This, we may be sure, has not raised him in the estimation of that body.

3rd.—That the Church of Rome holds that the *end* of a transaction, if it serves the church, sanctifies the *means*, and the means may be as bad as the St. Bartholomew Massacre.

4th.—That many authors, in order to raise themselves in the eyes of the Papacy, have written of him without the very slightest regard to truth.

By remembering these four things we may easily find the cause of much that is said and written against John Calvin. On the day after his apprehension Servetus was examined, and thirty-eight articles of accusation extracted from his works by Calvin, were brought against him. On the morrow (August 15th) the Council assembled in the criminal audience chamber in the prison, and Servetus having been questioned upon the articles, admitted some, denied others, and demanded a public disputation, promising to confute Calvin from Scripture and the Fathers. Calvin replied that "there was nothing he more desired than to plead such a cause in the temple before all the people." This the Council declined. At this preliminary examination the Council found the charges true, they

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\* The reader is requested to carefully notice the date of each transaction.



therefore liberated the accuser Fontaine, and assembled on August 16th to prosecute.

#### A LIBERTINE CONSPIRACY AGAINST CALVIN.

Now let us carefully notice the prevailing feeling at Geneva. At this time the Libertines, finding Calvin unflinching in his purpose of excluding from the Lord's table all profane persons, were striving to deprive the clergy of that right, and to place the power of excommunication in the hands of the Council. To this end they had succeeded in placing Perrin, a leading Libertine and Calvin's mortal enemy, at the head of the Council. Daily they were gaining such strength, and stirring up such jealousy against the Reformer in the Council, that it appeared as if one strong effort only was necessary to drive him from Geneva or to have him apprehended. Philip Berthelier, assistant of the Lieutenant for Criminal Causes, had been excluded from the communion table for a year and a half. At this moment he had a petition lying on the table of the Council, to have this sentence of the spiritual court cancelled. He, therefore, seizing the opportunity to oppose Calvin, appeared on the 16th to defend Servetus. Colladon, a Protestant refugee, a counsellor, appeared as accuser's advocate. This meeting, therefore, turned into a violent political debate upon Calvin and the liberty of the Libertines, rather than upon Servetus.

Calvin now saw that it was not Servetus about whom the Libertines were concerned, but that they were using him as a fulcrum to overturn the Protestantism of Geneva. Boldly he therefore came forth as accuser, seeing that the Protestantism of Geneva and of Europe was concerned in this trial. What the issue of it would be he could not tell, but to shrink from such important duty through fear of the result either to Servetus or himself, would have been to have abandoned the ship at the moment of danger.

Calvin never counted his *own* life dear unto him when for truth's sake it was necessary to endanger it, and shall he now, to spare Servetus, keep silent, and suffer him and the Libertines to destroy the work of the Lord? This he could not do.

#### THE TRIAL.

The Reformer was now invited by the Council to assist, "in order that the errors might be better demon-



CALVIN AND SERVETUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF GENEVA.

strated, and to have whomsoever he chose with him at the examination of the prisoner." At the first meeting after this, Calvin was present, and a sharp debate between him and Servetus took place. At this meeting the pantheistical errors of the prisoner were revealed, and much that he said is too profane to repeat. But the following extracts will be sufficient to show what unreasonable speculations the carnal mind will arrive at, in preference to believing the record which God has given of Himself:—

"What!" said Calvin, "if one were to strike this pavement with his foot, and to say that he was trampling upon your God, would'st thou not be horrified at having subjected the majesty of God to such opprobrium?" Servetus replied, "I have no doubt that this bench, this cupboard, and all that can be shown me are the substance of God." When it was objected that according to him even the devil would be substantially God, he replied laughing: "Do you doubt it? All things are part and parcel of God."\*

Here let us reflect upon the waves of error and of sins, of persecution and powers that the little barque Protestantism had to encounter. Yet through the might and mercy of the Lord she has outweighed every storm.

"Valiant for truth, her banners wave around,  
The terror of Apollyon and the world;  
An army more than conquerors by grace,  
Ascribing all her victories to Christ.  
Heav'n, earth, and hell, cry who is this?  
All worlds take int'rest in her high career,  
While her untarnish'd banners are unfurl'd,  
Displaying love, and blood, and grace divine,  
The dread of hell—the glory of the Church."

J. IRONS.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

✦ It is marvellous how deep rooted and wide-spread in the 16th century was the awful notion that a *persistent adherence to, and a determination in spreading, error* should be punished by the state, and awarded with death. No doubt, on account of the Papacy for so many

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\* Bunceuer's "History of the Life, Labours and Writings of Calvin."

years claiming authority over kings and princes, it seemed natural to the men of Geneva, even in drawing up laws to regulate a republic, to blend religion with the state to such an extent that to preach error was to disturb the peace of the society and endanger the safety of the nation.

We must not, however, confound this condition of society, whatever its dreadful results, with the intolerance of the Papacy. The Church of Rome would diligently seek after and burn men for their *private opinions*, and even for *reading the Bible*; while the laws of Geneva would only punish men who, *by propagating their errors*, were *determined disturbers of the public peace*, even as Servetus who had for about twenty years disturbed Christendom with his strange notions.

To us, in England, in the 19th century, with our advanced toleration, and its happy results, it may seem strange that Protestant Reformers should not have advocated far more liberal sentiments. We must not, however, suppose that that toleration which is good for a well regulated and peace seeking community to be good for every nation, and under all circumstances. Everything must be educated up to the same standard, or toleration would simply be confusion. It is the state of society that suggests right rules for its regulation. By the laws of Geneva, and this prevailing notion of state interference, we must account for Calvin giving notice of the presence of Servetus in the city, and demanding his apprehension.

#### A FRESH INDICTMENT AGAINST SERVETUS.

On August 23rd, 1553, however, Calvin was entirely relieved of this responsibility, and his indictment was virtually at an end. The prosecution was then taken entirely into the hands of the Attorney-General, and he produced a new indictment, which ran thus: "These are the interrogations and articles upon which the Attorney-General of this city desires to question Michael Servetus, a prisoner guilty of blasphemies, of heresies, and of disturbing Christendom."

"If Servetus had had in the eyes of the Genevese justice, no other fault than that of which De la Fontaine had declared him guilty in regard to Calvin, his acquittal had been sure," says Rilliet. "If Calvin alone," he con-

tinues, "had been concerned in the affair of Servetus, all his efforts would have been unavailing to secure his condemnation. Servetus was tried and condemned by the majority of the judges not at all as the opponent of Calvin—scarcely as a heretic—but essentially as seditious. Politics acted a much more important part than theology towards the close of the trial—they came on at this stage with the Attorney-General."\*

The idea that the Reformer entertained strong feelings of personal animosity against Servetus is without foundation. Calvin said at the trial he hated the errors, *not the man*. That Servetus ever regarded him as his most implacable enemy, even as the Pharisees regarded Christ because He told them the truth, cannot be doubted; and that Calvin, however wrongly, in common with all Europe, except a few personal enemies of the Reformer, regarded the death of Servetus as a political, social, and religious necessity, we will not deny, but that he was moved with godly zeal to preserve the Reformation from the hands of destroyers, and not from personal feelings of bitterness, we think the whole tenor of this trial fully demonstrates.

THE COUNCIL RELEASE BERTHELIER AND DEPRIVE CALVIN  
OF THE POWER TO EXCLUDE THE PROFANE FROM  
THE LORD'S TABLE.

It will be remembered that Philip Berthelier, assistant of the Lieutenant for Criminal Causes, had been excluded from the Lord's table. On the morning of September 1st, he appeared before the Council and demanded that the sentence of the Spiritual Court should be annulled. Calvin hastened to warn the Council that to comply with Berthelier's request was contrary to the edicts of the republic. Regardless, however, of the Reformer's expostulations, whose authority they now held in contempt, they took this power into their own hands, and released Berthelier from the sentence of the pastors, giving him power to appear at the Communion table on the next Lord's day. According to this sentence, Calvin was expected, as the servant or

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\* Rilliet, of Geneva, in his "Life and Trial of Servetus" p. 131: "Such is the dispassionate judgment of one who has thoroughly weighed the documentary and historical evidence of this melancholy affair, and who has suffered himself to be blinded by no veneration for Calvin or sympathy for his work."—Dr. Wylie.

slave of the Council, instead of the Lord's free man, to administer the symbols of the body and blood of the Lord, contrary to his conscience, to a man of ungodly life. Thus the Libertines were gaining victory upon victory, while Calvin was losing power.

In the afternoon of the *same day* Calvin and his colleagues were again called upon to confront Servetus in the prison. Here Perrin and Berthelier and their party, flushed with the morning's victory, and seeing, as they supposed, the Reformer falling before them, proposed in the interests of Servetus, that the debate between him and Calvin should be continued in writing. Calvin was therefore ordered to make thirty-eight extracts from the works of the prisoner without note or comment, and these were to be handed to Servetus for his replies. The following Lord's day, being the first of the month, Calvin and the other pastors would have to administer the Lord's supper. Berthelier was expected by the Libertines to be present, and Calvin, by administering the supper to him, to throw the reigns of the Reformation into their hands.

#### THE SNARE AND THE DELIVERER.

What a striking similarity is observable between the snare that was laid to entrap the godly Daniel and the trap laid to catch this man of God. The powers of hell and of ungodly men combined to bring forth nothing new. The same temptations and snares that we read of in the Word we find practised over again every day. "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God" (Daniel vi. 5), said the presidents and princes of Babylon. The next step was to make a law that would give undue honour to the king; a law that Daniel, as a man of God, would be compelled to break. Just so with the Libertines of Geneva. They had induced the Council to arrogate to themselves a power to which they knew the Reformer could not submit without offending his conscience and his God. They knew, too, that for Calvin to defy the Council was to endanger his life. Already they seemed satisfied of victory. Even Servetus in his cell, who heard through the gaoler of the Reformer's impending downfall, changed his tone, and expressed himself as one who had his enemy under his feet. Had it not been the Lord who

was on Calvin's side, "men would have swallowed him up quick," but the Lord is "a very present help IN trouble." God can deliver, when to reason there seems no way of escape. Many were the sighs and cries of the Lord's praying people, we doubt not, on that

#### EVENTFUL OCCASION.

Dr. Wylie's valuable "History of Protestantism," says of Sunday, September 3rd, "No more eventful day had for centuries risen over Geneva, or indeed over Christendom. This day it was to be seen whether Protestantism, which had retreated within its last stronghold, would recruit its powers and re-organize its forces, and from hence go forth to re-conquer Christendom, or whether it would relinquish the battle as beyond its strength. France, under Henry II., was blazing with martyr-piles. With Mary in England had come a fiercer tempest of persecution than that country had ever before known. On every side, up to the limits of Genevan territory, the Reformation was pursued by the tyrant and the inquisitor.

"The customary hour of worship was now come. The throng of worshippers had rolled past, and now the streets which had resounded with their tread were empty and silent. It was around the pulpit of St. Peter's, and the man with pale face, commanding eye, and kingly brow, who occupied it, that the heart of Geneva palpitated. The church was filled with an uneasy crowd. On the benches of the Consistory sat, unmoved, the pastors and elders, resolved to bear the greatest violence rather than not do their duty. A confused noise was heard within the temple, and a numerous band of men, of all ranks, their hands upon their sword-hilts, forced their way in the presence of the holy table.

"Calvin, calm as ever, rose to begin the service. He could but see the group of Libertines in the vast congregation before, but he seemed as if he saw them not. He preached on the state of mind with which the Lord's supper ought to be received. At the close, raising his voice, he said, 'As for me, as long as God shall leave me here, since He has given me fortitude, and I have received it from Him, I will employ it whatever betide; and I will guide myself by my Master's rule, which is to me clear and well known. As we are now about to receive the holy

supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, if any one who has been debarred by the Consistory shall approach this table, though it should cost my life, I will show myself such as I



CALVIN REFUSING THE LORD'S SUPPER TO THE LIBERTINES IN ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, GENEVA.

ought to be." Berthelier, who had received a voucher from the Council authorizing him to approach the table, did not enter the church with the band of Libertines, and



a messenger was sent by the party at this juncture warning him not to come in.

“When the liturgies were concluded, Calvin came down from the pulpit and took his stand before the table. Having blessed the bread and wine, he was about to distribute them to the congregation. At that moment there was seen a movement among the Libertines, as if they would seize the bread and the cup. The Reformer, covering the sacred symbols with his hands exclaimed with a voice that rang through the edifice; ‘These hands you may crush; these arms you may lop off; my life you may take; my blood is yours, you may shed it; but you shall never force me to give holy things to the profane, and dishonour the table of my God!’ These words broke like a thunder-peal over the Libertines. As if an invisible power had flung back the ungodly host they slunk away abashed, the congregation opening a passage for their retreat. A deep calm succeeded; and ‘the sacred ordinance,’ says Beza, ‘was celebrated with a profound silence, and under a solemn awe in all present, as if the Deity Himself had been visible among them.’ Thus Calvin acted, like Daniel, in the fear of the Lord, and God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths that they should not hurt him.

#### CALVIN TAKING FAREWELL OF HIS FLOCK.

In the afternoon of the same Sunday he ascended the pulpit to take farewell of the flock from which he expected the coming day would see him parted, probably, for ever. He chose as the subject of his discourse, Paul’s farewell address to the elders of the Church at Ephesus. Here he warned the people that he was not a man to teach others to fight against magistrates, although he had been compelled to act contrary to their edict. He exhorted the people to keep close to the doctrine which he had ever preached among them. At the close of the sermon he stretched forth his hands over his weeping and loving flock, and said, “Since these things are so, allow me also, brethren, to use these words of the Apostle, ‘I commend you to the Lord, and to the Word of His grace.’”

The next day the Reformer waited hour after hour for the order of banishment, but no order to this effect came. Calvin’s bright example of a faithful minister of

Christ is most worthy of emulation. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" is the



CALVIN PREACHING HIS FAREWELL SERMON.

soul inspiring promise of the Son of Man who holds the seven stars in His right hand.

“ The Christian warrior—see him stand  
 In the whole armour of his God ;  
 The Spirit's sword is in his hand,  
 His feet are with the gospel shod.


Undaunted to the field he goes,  
 Yet vain were skill and valour there,  
 Unless, to foil his legion foes,  
 The trustiest weapon were ‘ all prayer.’

With this, omnipotence he moves,  
 From this the alien armies flee ;  
 Till more than conqueror he proves,  
 Through Christ, Who gives him victory.

Thus, strong in his Redeemer's strength,  
 Sin, death, and hell he tramples down,  
 Fights the good fight, and wins at length,  
 Through mercy, an immortal crown.”

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

 HE work of Calvin was not yet finished at Geneva. Small as the city was, God had designed that it should be a strong Protestant eminence, from which the pen and tongue of the Reformer should speak to the nations of Europe. Could the exasperated Libertines have had their way, they would not only have waited upon him with an order of banishment, but they would have led him to the stake long before. God, however, was a wall of fire around him, and the glory in the midst, and His servant was immortal till his work was done.

Of the real character of Calvin and of his bearing towards Servetus, much may be gleaned from our last chapter. Can we suppose him to have been a self-seeking, time serving man, full of rage against Servetus, when, at the very moment that both their lives were in the same balances, he endangered his own standing at Geneva, and put his life in the hands of his enemies rather than dishonour his God? Surely the true character of the faithful ambassador of Christ is here manifest to every honest mind that is acquainted with the circumstances. Had Calvin failed in his bold adventure, the probability is that he would have exchanged places with Servetus.

## AN OFFICER FROM VIENNE DEMANDS SERVETUS.

On August 31st, three days before the memorable September 3rd, a state officer from Vienne arrived at Geneva to thank the magistrates for informing them of the detention of Servetus, and to beg that he might be sent back with him, that the sentence of slow burning already passed upon their prisoner might be carried into execution. It is remarkable that Roman Catholics, in the face of this fact, should not only unjustly charge Calvin with the martyrdom of Servetus, but reproach him with it as an act of cruelty. Considering, too, that the laws of the Papacy, by which hundreds of thousands of God's children have been tortured and burned, are unrepealed to this day.

The officer was introduced to Servetus, and the latter was asked if he would prefer returning with him to Vienne, but he fell upon his knees and begged that he might remain and be judged in Geneva. The sequel, however, proved that the unhappy man gained but little advantage from the choice. The government of Geneva had been remodelled, and some laws for the suppression of immorality had been introduced. But the old *canon law of the Papacy* for the burning of heretics was still in force, and Calvin having, at this time, lost his influence with the Council, his earnest entreaties that the sword might be substituted for the stake were disregarded.

## THE ARTICLES OF ACCUSATION.

The articles which Calvin was ordered on September 1st to extract from the prisoner's works were immediately prepared and handed to him for his replies. They chiefly contained blasphemies against Jesus and the Holy Ghost. Servetus complained of not having books for reference, but Calvin engaged to lend him such as he might require, that no injustice might be done to him. Servetus, trusting to the success of his friends, the Libertines, and viewing Calvin as already fallen, did not deem it necessary now to hide his real principles, nor, in his reply, to enter into an elaborate argument, but contented himself chiefly with abusing the Reformer.

"The replies of Servetus to this document," says Dyer, "are very insolent, and seem almost like the productions of a madman." The whole of his answer is interspersed with sentences like the following:—"Wretch,

do not think to stun the ears of the judges by your barking! You have a confused intellect, so that you cannot understand the truth. Perverted by Simon Magus, you are ignorant of the first principles of things. You make men only blocks and stones, by establishing the slavery of the will. Deny yourself to be a homicide, and I will prove it by your acts. Who, therefore, can trust you as a good tree? In so just a cause my constancy is unshaken, and I fear not death."

To the reply of Servetus, Calvin wrote an answer, which was signed by all the fourteen pastors of Geneva, and presented to the Council with notes of Servetus attached to the same.

#### THE CASE REFERRED TO THE CHURCHES AND MAGISTRATES OF SWITZERLAND.

After careful deliberation, the magistrates and Council of Geneva were unwilling to pass judgment without first obtaining the opinions of their Protestant allies. It was therefore resolved that a state messenger should be despatched with the documents, and letters addressed to the magistrates and pastors of the four reformed cities of Switzerland. On September 21st, Jacquemoz Jernoz started on the state errand to Berne, Zurich, Schaffhausen, and Basle, with special orders to give them time for careful deliberation. While this messenger is on his way, let us read

#### THE LETTER OF SERVETUS.

"In a letter to the Council he is 'content to die,' he says. "If he does not succeed in confounding Calvin, he only asks that he may be detained a prisoner like himself, and once confounded, be put to death instead of him."

"On September 22nd he writes formally to the Council to demand that an accusation may be brought against Calvin, and in his turn he draws up a long list of 'articles about which Michael Servetus demands that John Calvin should be interrogated.' He ends by saying that Calvin ought to be expelled from Geneva, 'like a magician, as he is, and his property ought to be adjudged to me, in compensation for mine which he has caused me to lose.'" \*

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\* Bungener, p. 252.

## THE VERDICT OF THE CITIES AND PASTORS OF SWITZERLAND.

“At the end of nearly a month the messenger returned. The answers of the cities and pastors were given in to the Council on October 18th. They were eight in all, there being a deliverance from the government and a deliverance from the church in each case. The verdict, eight times pronounced, with awful unanimity, was death. Thus outside the territory of Geneva, was the case of Servetus decided.\* The magistrates of Geneva closed their Diet of October 26th with a decree condemning Servetus to death. We record with horror the sentence, but it is the sentence, not of the magistrates of Geneva only, nor of the magistrates and pastors of reformed Switzerland only; it is the sentence of Christendom of that age. The Inquisition on one side and Melancthon, the mildest of the Reformers, on the other, are heard expressing their concurrence in it.

“At this supreme hour one man alone comes forward to attempt a mitigation of the punishment of Servetus. Who is that man? *He is John Calvin. He earnestly interceded* with the Council that the sword might be substituted for the fire; but he interceded in vain. ‘It is to him, notwithstanding,’ says Rilliet, ‘that men have always imputed the guilt of that funeral pile, which he wished had never been reared.’”

“The pile,” says Bungener, “whose bloody smoke has cast so odious a shadow over the whole life of Calvin, —Calvin did not demand it,—Calvin did not desire it,—Calvin wished that the guilty man might be exempt from it.”

## NOW LET US REFLECT UPON THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

We must candidly confess that we never thoroughly investigated the case of Servetus till we commenced this memoir. Often have we been as deeply pained to hear it said, that “the burning of Servetus would ever remain a blot upon the memory of Calvin,” as we have been perplexed to reconcile such an act with the grace the Reformer possessed. Now, having carefully weighed all that Theodore Beza, T. H. Dyer, Dr. Wylie, Felix Bungener,

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\* The replies of the magistrates and pastors of the four cities may be found in Ruchat, tom. vi., pp. 43-48 and Dr. Tweedie's translation of Rilliet.

and some others, have written, together with the numerous authors they quote, we are relieved and gratified to find that the charges brought against the Reformer are most unfounded. He took no more part in this solemn matter than any honest Christian man, *under the same circumstances*, would be compelled to take. Roman Catholic authors, of course, feel justified in slandering a heretic, to serve their church according to Canon Law, which directs them to persecute the same unto death. The absurd things they sometimes publish respecting Calvin are self-evident falsehoods. Such things we pass over, leaving them till that day when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."


If Calvin had been all powerful at the time of the trial at Geneva, we might safely conclude that his opinion must have weighed heavily on one side or the other. A careful review, however, of the events proves that the Council of whom Perrin, Calvin's enemy, was chief, was in direct conflict with him *during the whole period of the trial*, and that he could therefore in no way have influenced the Council against Servetus. On August 15th, 1553, Servetus had his first hearing. August 16th, the first day of the trial, Calvin and Servetus held a debate. At this meeting Berthelier, *who was excluded from the Lord's table by Calvin*, undertook to defend Servetus. On the 21st, Calvin and his colleagues were *ordered to be present* to assist the Council in understanding Servetus' interpretation of the Fathers. August 31st, the state officer arrived from Vienne demanding their prisoner that he might be executed according to *their wish*.

On September 1st, the Council withdrew from the pastors the right to exclude from the Lord's table, took the power into their own hands, and gave Berthelier a warrant to be at the communion against the wish of Calvin. On the same day Calvin had to meet the prisoner and discuss the different points of their faiths. September 2nd, Calvin appeared before the Council to demand the cancelling of the warrant, but they declined to comply. September 3rd, he withstood the order of the Council, and refused communion to the Libertines at the peril of his life; and preached what he supposed to be his farewell sermon,

On September 4th, he waited for the order of banishment. September 5th, the documents of Servetus and Calvin were presented to the Council. September 7th, Calvin wrote to Bullinger saying, "Our Council will shortly send the dogmas of Servetus to you, to learn your opinion of them. I protest against them giving you this trouble; but they have arrived at such a pitch of madness and fury, that *they are suspicious of all that I say*; so that if I should affirm at midday that the sun shone, they would immediately begin to doubt." By this time the trial was virtually at an end, so that it may easily be seen that Calvin was not all powerful with the Council as has been generally supposed.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

 A black spot upon a clean face is more unseemly, and naturally more repugnant to one's feelings than the soot which covers the whole body of a sweep, so the condemnation and martyrdom of one Servetus by a Protestant nation has called forth more astonishment and repugnance in some quarters against Calvin, as a leading Protestant, than all the hundreds of thousands of martyrdoms of the saints of God by the Papacy.

The attempts, however, that are made to magnify this black spot upon the Reformation, do but prove the purity of the whole system. It is to Protestantism we turn with gratitude for extinguishing Rome's fires, which in that century consumed thousands of Europe's most noble sons. The blood of the saints quenched the flames, and the great Reformers broke down the stakes, scattered the faggots, exposed the priestly blood-hounds, and rendered it impossible for man to drag his fellow man alive to a martyr's stake with impunity. But for the glorious Reformation it would even *now* be as common to see men, women, and children, of all ranks of society, bound alive in the flames, as it was when the Romish priesthood possessed the power to trample upon the rights of men to sustain their superstitious dignity.

Viewing the death of Servetus from the 16th century, the reformed nations and churches considered it a necessity; viewing it from the 19th century, we condemn



the act as a mistake—alike unprotestant and unchristian. It was one of the blacks from Rome's furnace that settled upon the fair face of the Reformation. Thanks eternal to the God of all grace, that the religion of Jesus is not a persecuting system. The Great Founder and Foundation of religion showed the very spirit and nature of Christianity by His own act of laying down His life for His enemies. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." All His works and words prove that He came not to set one class of men in arrogance above another.

Servetus was executed on October 27th, 1553, prior to which Calvin, in company with two of the Council, visited him. At this meeting Calvin laboured to bring him to repentance, but finding him still hardened, "he obeyed," he says, "the command of Paul, and withdrew from the heretic, and left him to Farel."

#### TRUTH REVEALED AND TRUTH SEALED.

Some persons blame the Reformer for not speaking words of sympathy to the condemned. But what could he, as an honest man, say, seeing that the heart of Servetus was closed against all that Calvin had to administer? Other weighty matters, too, were pressing upon him. This was not the only martyrdom taking place. At the very time of the trial and martyrdom of Servetus, Calvin was every day receiving the news of the apprehension or martyrdom of some of those gracious men, who, under his direction, had gone out to preach the Word. These were his soldiers and his brethren, they therefore demanded a share of his attention and sympathy.

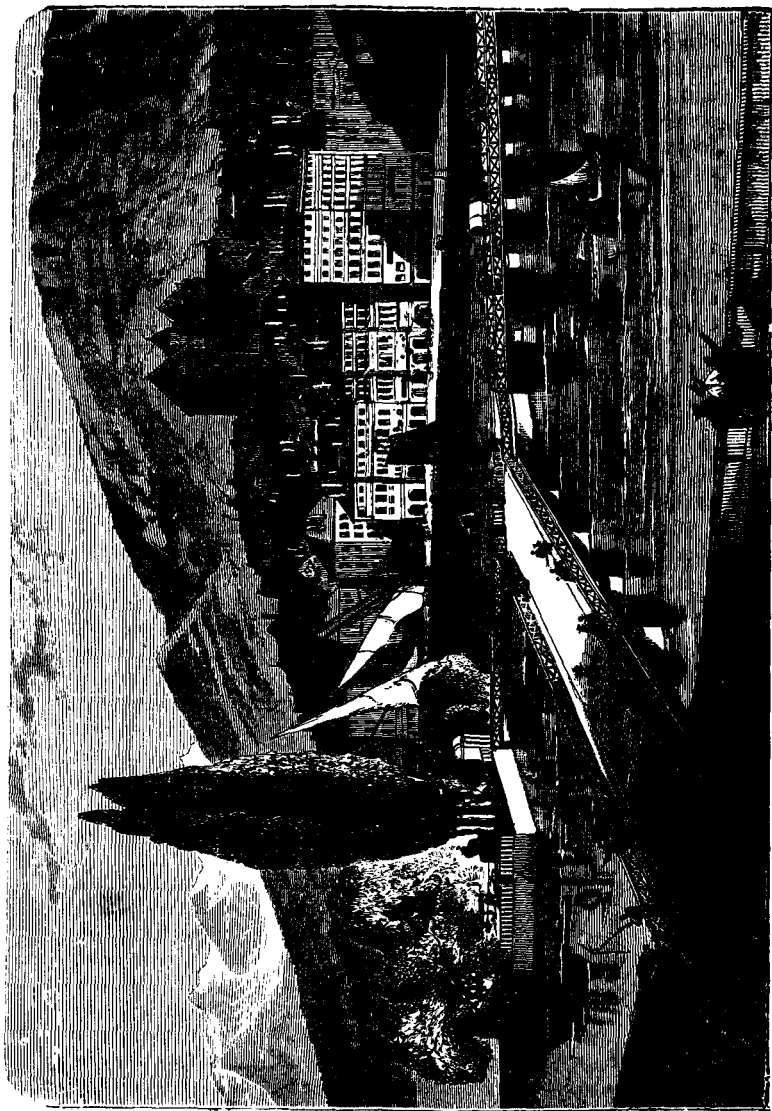
"God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness" was shining into the hearts of men over all Europe, "to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Rome's devoted sons and daughters, thus brought to see the fallacy of the Papacy, were rising from their mock devotions and casting away the yoke of bondage. The "Mother of harlots," drunk with the blood of the saints, was busy in those days preparing fires to consume all who dared to question her infallibility. She killed their bodies—it was all she could do. Their victorious spirits ascended to glory to unite in the God-inspired cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that

dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Rev. vi. 10, 11).

#### CALVIN'S LETTERS TO THE MARTYRS.

Calvin was busy administering consolation, by means of numerous letters, to the valiant soldiers of Christ as they passed through Rome's flaming martyr piles to glory. "The collection of Calvin's letters," says Bungener, "contains one addressed, a fortnight before the death of Servetus, 'to the faithful of the isles,' that is, 'those of the coast of Saintonge,' and the bearer of the letter is Philibert Hamelin, the first preacher of the Reformed faith in those parts. Arrested at Saintes, and condemned to death, he had succeeded in escaping to Geneva, where he became a printer. But he could not long endure to be inactive whilst his brethren were suffering elsewhere. He set out, furnished with this precious letter. He reached his destination, where he assembled audiences to whom he preached, and whom he encouraged and organized. After a four years' apostolate he was taken anew, and burned alive at Bordeaux.

"Others, nearer Geneva, had perished while the trial of Servetus was proceeding, and they also were comforted and strengthened by the Reformer's voice. A letter of August 22nd is addressed to two men who expected death in the prisons of Lyons, and who were burned, the month after, with two others. Already, on July 7th, on the news of their imprisonment, he wrote to them, 'Though it has been a sad message according to the flesh,—even according to the just love we bear to you in God,—yet must we submit to that good Father and Lord. As He has fortified you with His strength to sustain the first assault, it remains that ye pray Him to fortify you more and more, according as you have to combat. When He does His people the honour to employ them to maintain His truth, and leads them to martyrdom as by the hand, He never leaves them destitute of the arms which are requisite. . . . Be assured, therefore, that this good God, who appears in time of need, will not forsake you till you have wherewith mightily to magnify His name. . . .



A VIEW IN GENEVA.


Meditate on the glory and heavenly immortality to which we are invited, and are certain to attain, by the cross, and shame, and death. . . . It is a strange thing to human sense, that the slaves of Satan should keep us with their feet upon our throats; but we have wherewith to comfort us in all our tribulation, awaiting the happy issue which is promised us,—that God Himself shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.’ And after many other words, which we regret not to transcribe, he adds, ‘If you can communicate with the other brethren, I pray you to salute them also as from me.’ Do you know how they held communication one with another?

“Louis de Marsac, who was one of them, wrote to Calvin: ‘I could not tell you, sir and brother, the great comfort I have received from the letters which you sent to my brother, Denis Peloquin, who found means of passing them to one of our brethren who was in an underground cell above me, and read them to me because I could not read them, inasmuch as I can see nothing in my dungeon. I pray you, therefore, to persevere in aiding us always with like consolation, which invites us to weep and pray.’

“This is that Louis de Marsac, who was offended, when they led him to the stake, because they did not put a halter round his neck, as they did the rest, on account of his noble birth. He asked why he was refused the collar of that ‘excellent order’ of martyrs. A Genevese, Peter Berger, had shortly before had that honour, and when the flames reached him, he had said, like Stephen, ‘I see the heavens opened.’”

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## CHAPTER XXV.

“ All the martyrs whom Calvin had to exhort at this period, five especially—the five prisoners of Lyons, as they were called—had to bless him in their time of trial. They were five young Frenchmen desiring to take part in the Reformation of their own country, who had studied at Lausanne, where the ministry had just been conferred upon them. During the long season of preparation they had no doubt looked forward with mingled feelings to the great struggle in which they were to take part. But now, having completed their

course of study, they, after passing a few days at Geneva, return to France. On their way, a stranger, of whom they entertained no suspicion, introduced himself as a fellow traveller. Soon after their arrival at Lyons, however, their new acquaintance betrayed them, and they were arrested and thrown into prison. The intervention of the Bernese government, the influence which was exerted in their behalf in high quarters, and the interest which these young men excited in many Romanists, all served only to protract a painful trial, in which the brutality of the judges was only equalled by the constancy of the victims. In a letter, written in June, 1552, Calvin speaks to them of what has been done to save them, and of what yet will be attempted; but, without taking all hope from them, he prepares them for the most terrible results, and invites them to seek in God, without delay, that courage which is found in God alone. When condemned in effect by the Lyons judges, they appealed to the parliament of Paris. They were, therefore, taken to Paris, but brought back to Lyons to await their sentence, which they received on March 1st, 1553; the sentence of death was conclusive.


“‘We have been,’ writes Calvin to them, ‘in greater sorrow than ever, having heard the decision taken by the enemies of the truth.’ Other attempts will yet be made; but the great and only one which cannot fail, will be to recommend them to Him who has already sustained them so greatly. ‘We shall herein do our duty, by praying to Him that He may glorify Himself more and more in your constancy; that, by the consolation of His Spirit, He may soften and sweeten all that is bitter to the flesh, and may so carry away your senses to Himself, that, looking at the heavenly crown, you may be ready to leave all that is worldly without regret.’ At length, in the beginning of May, he writes a last letter. ‘The King of France hath flatly and curtly rejected the requests presented by the gentlemen of Berne. There is no more expectation on that side, nor, indeed, anywhere else that we see here below.’ While there was still hope, they had been enabled to look without ceasing to God; how should they not do it now that ‘necessity exhorts them to direct all their senses toward heaven?’ God has chosen them to make His strength perfect in their weakness, ‘inasmuch as He has granted you this privilege that your bonds have

been famous, and that the noise of them hath been spread everywhere; your death, in spite of Satan, must resound even yet more loudly, that the name of the Lord may be magnified.' Thus he continues at great length; he is moved, but firm, ever speaking in the name of duty, ever demanding such a sacrifice as he himself would accomplish without distraction, and without asking enthusiasm to spare him any pang or effort, but immovable in his courage, and immovable in his faith.

"They perished, therefore, on May 16th, animated by this spirit, and full of this courage. 'Being come to the place of execution,' as Crespin relates in the 'History of the Martyrs,' 'they ascended with a joyful heart the pile of wood, the two youngest first. The last who ascended was Martial Alba, the eldest of the five, who had a long time been on both his knees, praying to the Lord. He asked Lieutenant Tignac to grant him a gift. The lieutenant said to him, "What willest thou?" He said to him, "That I may kiss my brethren before I die." The lieutenant granted it to him. Then the said Martial kissed the four, who were already bound, saying to each of them, "Adieu, adieu, my brother!" The fire was kindled. The voices of the five confessors were heard still exhorting one another: "Courage, my brethren, courage!"' 'And these,' continued Crespin, 'were the last words heard from the said five valiant champions and martyrs of the Lord.'"

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

OW marvellously the wisdom of God appears in selecting and preparing His servants, each for their peculiar work, and for the age in which they are called to labour. Never, perhaps, was this more manifest than in Martin Luther and John Calvin, who were both men of the most remarkable order; and both taught by the same Spirit. Yet the gifts they received from the Spirit so widely differed, and each was so remarkably adapted to the times, that had the work of Calvin preceded Luther's by twenty-six years instead of being twenty-six years after it, we cannot suppose that such great results could ever have been achieved. But "to everything there is a season,

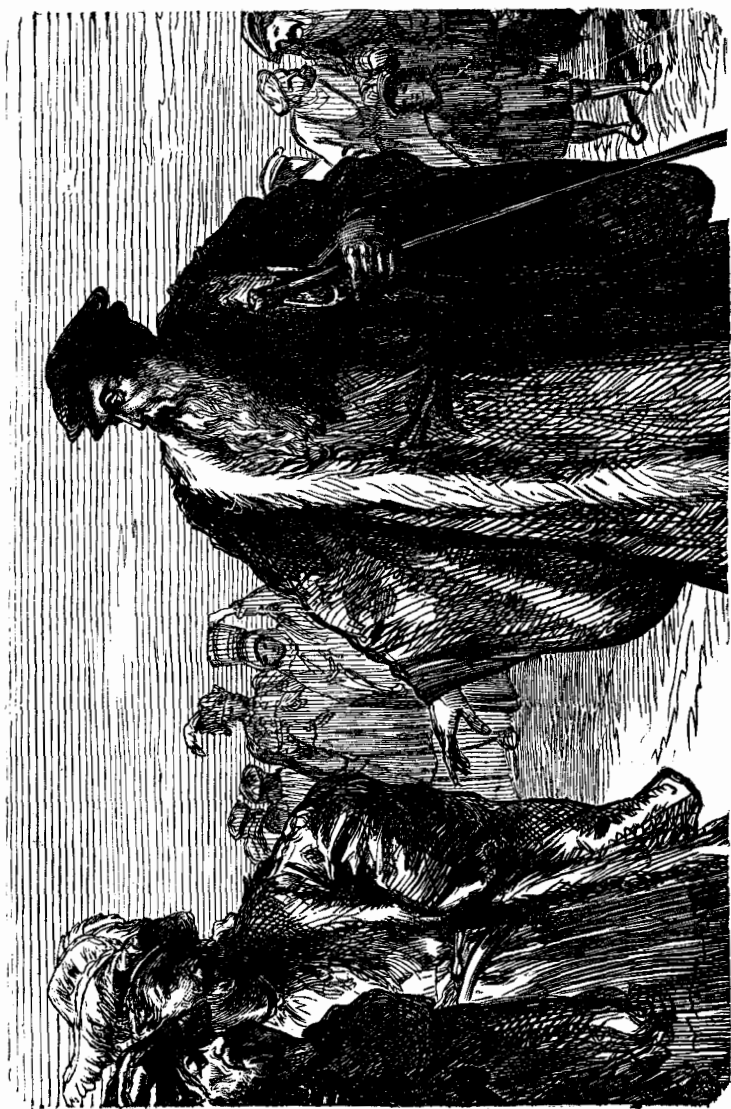
and a time to every purpose under the heaven ;” a time to break down, and a time to build up, and “our times are in His hands.”

Some years since we were passing through one of the streets of the city of London, and saw a man pulling an old house down. With a pickaxe in hand, he stood upon a piece of brickwork about four feet wide, and about thirty or forty feet from the ground, and with the greatest composure he removed brick after brick from the very piece of wall on which he stood. The gazing multitude, with breathless anxiety, watched the trembling wall as it bowed slightly first one way, and then the other, expecting every moment to witness a fatal catastrophe. But if I am not deceived, the man worked his way safely down, and was employed in the erection of the new building, yet, not as a builder, but as a *labourer*. The man was skilled at pulling the rotten old house down, and preparing materials for the new one; but to raise the new structure in every part, according to definite plan, was the work of other minds and other hands.

So Martin Luther, like Jeremiah, was sanctified and ordained a prophet unto the nations, and set over kingdoms, “to root out, and pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant.” But his special work was to *pull down* Antichrist, and to prepare the materials for other workmen. The *reforming* of the Church according to the Bible plan was especially the work of Calvin, Luther was the *protestor*, and right gloriously, through grace, he did his work; Calvin was the *Reformer* and his work remains to this day. For the *Reforming* of the Church of God Calvin was set over the nations. The strokes of his pen, in his quiet, humble study in Geneva, vibrated through Christendom to the comfort of martyrs; to the counselling of monarchs; to the construction of Reforms, and to the confusion of the Papacy.

#### THE LIBERTINES

were, however, permitted for a time to be a thorn in the flesh, messengers from Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure. “While Calvin was counselling monarchs, drafting plans of reform for statesmen, organising churches, corresponding with theologians in all countries, and labouring to harmonize their views of Divine



CALVIN INSULTED BY THE LIBERTINES.



truth—in short, acting as the moral legislator of Christendom—he was the object of unceasing and bitter attack on the part of a faction of the Genevese,” says Dr. Wylie. “They detested his presence in their town; openly insulted him in their streets, and ceaselessly intrigued to drive him from Geneva, the city which he had made famous throughout Europe, and which, the moment that he quitted it, would sink into its original obscurity.”

About this time he writes to Bullinger, “My position has become almost unbearable.” By excluding the Libertines from the Lord’s table, Calvin practically aimed at a separation between the government of the Church and the government of the State, but this they were not willing to see. On January 9th, 1555, ten of them, having supped together, took each a candle, and paraded the streets, singing at the full stretch of their voices, the psalms, interlaced with jeers; yet they ignorantly maintained that to allow Calvin to exclude them from the Lord’s table was to revive the tyranny of the pope under a new name, and to destroy the liberty they had so dearly bought. Calvin, on behalf of himself and the other pastors, maintained that they had a right in the Church to claim obedience to the Bible, the law of Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church.

“He has given us,” he said, “the power to *bind and to loose*—in other words, to *preach the Word* and to administer the sacraments. To us holy things have been committed, and we shall take care that the table of the Lord is not dishonoured by the presence at it of the profane.” “So far,” said the Reformer, “is the power of the pastors from being a menace to the liberty of the republic, that it is its best protection. Liberty without the Gospel is but a miserable slavery.” These advocates of liberty had, however, but little respect for the liberty and rights of others.

“We have too many ministers and too many sermons,” they exclaimed in the Council. They also complained of the number of books printed, and the number of refugees. They loved darkness rather than light, and the godly, noble men taking refuge in their city, the number of books appearing, and the faithful discourses from their pulpits, were so many rays of light exposing their dark deeds.

## THEIR UTTER CONFUSION.

No favourable impression was made upon the Council by these complaints. "On May 16th, Perrin returned again to the Council with a larger number of followers, chiefly fishermen and boatmen, armed with swords. 'On Friday, May 18th, 1555, the heads of the party met in a tavern, ten in number,' says Bonivard, 'of brawling companions.' The more moderate, who may be presumed to have been also the more sober, were for convoking the Council General; but the more violent would hear of nothing but the massacre of all the refugees of religion and their supporters. The Sunday following, when the citizens would be all at church, was fixed on for the execution of this horrible plot.

"The eagerness of the Libertines to consummate their crime caused the plot to miscarry. The very night after their meeting, the fumes of the wine, we may charitably believe, not having yet exhaled, the mob patriots rushed into the streets with arms in their hands to begin their dreadful work. 'The French, the French,' they shouted, 'are taking the town! Slay all! slay all!' But not one of the refugees was to be seen. 'The Lord,' says Calvin, 'had poured a deep sleep upon them.' But the other citizens rushed into the streets. There was a great uproar, shouts, cries, and clashing of arms; but fortunately the affray passed without bloodshed."

In a few days the Council assembled to take measures to preserve the peace of the city, and to bring the seditious to justice.

## THE SPEEDY RISE AND PROSPERITY OF GENEVA.

Four were beheaded. Perrin and others fled, and the rest were banished. Calvin could now say, "The snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth." Thus God delivered Geneva from a fretting plague which sought only to spread its corruption. Geneva was now free. Small as she was, she nevertheless numbered among her 11,000 inhabitants many of the brightest intellects and most gracious men in Europe, who had fled within her gates for safety. Here, too, not on a pontifical throne (a title taken from the Pagan Emperor Pontifex), arrayed in gold and scarlet, not in a

gorgeous palace or Vatican with its 11,000 rooms, but in a humble residence, without any worldly show or pomp, lived the minister of Christ, the Reformer of Christendom. Under his hand, however, Geneva was to be re-moulded, and in a short time to rise to eminence. Calvin, under God, was to marshal his Protestant troops, armed only with the sword of the Spirit (the Word of God), and send them forth to conquer mighty nations. Through the gates of the little city passed multitudes of faithful ambassadors ready to preach the Word and then die at the stake.

“What an astonishing phenomenon must the sudden rise of this little town have appeared to the men of those times! How portentous to the friends of the old religion. It had not been built up by human hands; it was not defended by human weapons; yet here it stood, a great light-house in the centre of Christendom, a mother of churches, a nurse of martyrs, a school of evangelists, an impregnable asylum of the persecuted, a font of civilization, an abode of letters and arts: a great moral tribunal where the actions of all men were weighed, and in whose inexorably just and righteous awards men heard the voice of the higher tribunal.”\*

John Knox, who visited Geneva at this time, writes to his friend Locke: “In my heart I could have wished, yea, and cannot cease to wish, that it might please God to guide and conduct you to this place, where I neither fear nor shame to say is the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion to be so sincerely reformed I have not seen in any other place besides.”

#### CARDINAL SADOLETO'S VISIT TO CALVIN.

At this time, when the Pope himself was not a man of more influence in Europe than the humble pastor of Geneva, Cardinal Sadoletto, passing through Geneva, would gratify his curiosity by paying him a visit. How astonished was the Cardinal Prince (who had visited the Vatican, and seen the earthly pomp of the Pope), to be conducted to No. 122, Rue des Chanoines, and to find Calvin himself open the door in answer to his knock.

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\* History of Protestantism.




What an instructive scene was this for Sadoletto to reflect upon! Had he been in possession of spiritual wisdom how readily would he have contrasted this primitive, unostentatious manner of life with the ambitious display of the Vatican. We can imagine, and would that it were true, God [who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shining in unto him, giving him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus as he stood at the Reformer's door. How soon then would he have seen himself with his scarlet attire, dangling cross, and train of attendants, as the minister of Antichrist, and Calvin as the minister of Christ.

We can imagine him thus enlightened and saying, "Peter, whom we suppose to be our first Pope, said, 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock' (1 Peter v. 2, 3). Surely the man that is now before me is more like the successor of Peter than any of our Popes have ever been." When Pope Pius IV. heard of the death of Calvin, he said: "That which made the strength of that heretic, was that money was nothing to him." What a mystery to the Pope must this have been when he knew that money was *everything* to himself and his church.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

UR last article upon the Reformer brought us to his victory over the Libertines, the comparative tranquility of Geneva, and the visit of Cardinal Sadoletto, whose astonishment was so manifest at not finding the Reformer surrounded with courtier-like servants in a magnificent palace. We must now return to notice some of the literary works of Calvin, which organized and consolidated the Reformation. He had now but nine years to live. For the past nine years he had endured the most violent struggles with the Libertines. He had suffered with a weak afflicted body. He took but two meals a day, and sometimes only one. He regularly attended to his preaching, lecturing, and correspondence, yet during the

short space of these nine troublesome years, the following commentaries appeared, by which "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

In 1546 and 1547, we have the Epistles to the Corinthians; in 1548, the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the two to Timothy; in 1549, the Epistles to Titus and the Hebrews; in 1550, the Epistle of James and the two to the Thessalonians; in 1561, Isaiah and the Epistles of John, Jude, and a new edition of all Paul's Epistles, and in 1552, the Acts. In 1553, the very year in which Servetus with the Libertines so molested him, the commentaries on Matthew, Mark and Luke appeared, which were arranged as a harmony, and supplied by a parallel commentary, followed by a commentary on John; and in 1554 Genesis appeared.

"The commentaries of Calvin," says Bungener, "mark a revolution in the study of the Bible, and on that account occupy a distinguished place, not only in the history of theology, but in that of the human mind. It is truth, sought in every verse and every word, by the straightest and shortest road. Biblical science owes him, in a word, what any science owes to the man who transports it to the domain of facts, and lays at its basis observation and experience."

#### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

Neither his extreme weakness and bodily affliction, nor the struggles and triumphs of Geneva, could absorb the sympathies of the Reformer. His eye rested upon the whole of the campaign throughout Western Europe, and his pen, as the sword in the hand of a mighty warrior, was constantly wielded for the direction and encouragement of his forces, or to the confusion of his opponents.

The Reformation in England especially claimed the attention of Calvin. The light he had received he could no doubt trace to the two valiant martyrs, John Huss, of Bohemia, and Jerome, of Prague; and from them to John Wickliffe, the "morning star" of the Reformation. It was by the writings of that great English Reformer that Jerome was brought to a knowledge of the truth, which he carried to Bohemia. God was pleased to honour England with the first great pioneer of the Reformation. Nearly two hundred years before Calvin entered Geneva, Wickliffe, by

the Bible doctrines called *Calvinism*, wounded the Romish hierarchy. In the 16th century, great advances were made, but the Reformation in this country was never completed. Romish rites, doctrines, and adornments were never thoroughly cast out when the Protestant Church of England was established.



KING EDWARD VI.

England is now selected by the Jesuits as the campaign for the great struggle. The Lord grant that the MOTHER OF HARLOTS may here receive her death blow from the Lamb of God, that the nations of the earth may no longer be deceived with the "golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication."

Edward VI., who showed himself zealous for the

establishment of the Reformation in England, was but fourteen years of age when Calvin dedicated to him two of his works, "Commentary on Isaiah," and the "Commentary on the Catholic Epistles." These two books were not presented to Edward simply as a king, "but to the extraordinary child who was already able to read them, to judge of them, and to nourish himself with them. His precocious intellect and eminent faculties had struck with astonishment, from his earliest years, the masters who were entrusted with his education.

"His living piety caused him to delight in every religious study, whether edifying or controversial. It was about this period that he wrote, under the form of a discourse, a plan of reformation, based in all probability upon Calvin's letter to the Duke of Somerset."\* The offer of these two books was a great joy to the young king, and to the bearer of them was given a very honourable reception. With them was sent a letter to Edward, showing what must yet be done to complete the Reformation.

While Calvin was one day preaching upon

#### THE NOBILITY AND DIGNITY OF THE CHURCH,

it occurred to him to dictate to the young king a brief exposition of Ps. lxxxvii. "Hoping," he says to Edward, "that you will take pleasure in it, and that its perusal will also be profitable to you. The argument seemed to me so suitable to you, that I was moved immediately to write the sum of it. Kings are in danger of forgetting the kingdom. Now in this Psalm the nobility and dignity of the church are spoken of which ought so to attract to herself great and small, that all the goods and honours of earth cannot keep them back.

"The *Church* here is, therefore, the *spiritual church*—Christendom, holy and without spot—the *kingdom of heaven*, on earth or in heaven. To be a king is much; but to be a Christian, a simple subject of the kingdom, is more—infinitely more. It is therefore," continues Calvin, "an inestimable privilege which God hath granted you, that you should be a Christian king. A king among men, but a subject of Christ. But to this privilege great duties are attached. The young king knows them; it is his to order

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\* Bungener.



and maintain the kingdom of Jesus Christ in England. The task will, perhaps, be a laborious one; therefore let this Psalm serve him for strength and buckler, and God, the King of kings, make him prosper and flourish to the glory of His name."


The glory and honour of the Church are that God is in the midst of her; Christ is her righteousness, and glorious things are spoken of her. The church of which Calvin here speaks is not a *visible body* with a *visible uniformity*, but the body of Christ, composed of *all true believers in Christ* in every part of the world.

One great stumbling-block to Calvin, when his eyes were first opened, was, that if he left the Church of Rome he could see no other organized body of persons with a visible uniformity to which he could unite himself like that Church. This has, no doubt, been a trial to thousands who have not been brought to see the true Church as a *spiritual body* united to Christ *by faith* in the *unity of the Spirit*. There is a very illustrative case to the point quoted in the Critical English Testament, vol. iii. page 417, upon the sealing of the servants of God (Rev. vii. 3). The Rev. H. Van Maasdyk, a Roman Catholic priest in Belgium, relates that even after he had come to a knowledge of the truth as regards the main features of the Gospel, and had thrown off the errors of Rome, he was much troubled about the existence of a *visible Church*, when suddenly, as it were, all his difficulties disappeared as he one day read, in 2 Tim. ii. 19: "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His." "Yes," I said to myself, "I have found it. *The Lord knows those that are His.* He will bring them together. If we acknowledge Him as our Head we need not disquiet ourselves as to where the members of the body are. The Lord alone knows where His body is, His church, and He directs it; He leads it, and He makes all work together for its good."

"There is a family on earth,  
Whose Father fills a throne!  
But though a seed of heavenly birth,  
To men they're little known.

"Whene'er they meet the public eye,  
They feel the public scorn;  
For men their fairest claims deny,  
And count them basely born."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.


**E**AR the heart of our Reformer, as a Frenchman, would naturally lie the Reformation in France. Here with marvellous success his attention was turned; 2150 churches were organized. The extraordinary demand for preachers was such that Calvin writes: "We are asked for preachers on all sides; inquirers for them besiege my door, and contend for them with pious emulation. We are, however, quite exhausted; nay, we have lately been obliged to send such journeymen out of the booksellers' shops as possessed some slight tincture of learning and religious knowledge."

"Some slight tincture of learning" with Calvin would no doubt be a fair education. If, however, he sent gracious men blessed with a personal knowledge of Christ, and endowed with a gift to preach the Word, although possessing but little human learning, he did as his Master did, when He made fishermen fishers of men, and as God did when He sent Bunyan the tinker, and Huntington the coal-heaver, to so unfurl the standard of grace that the colours of the kingdom revealed by them still float upon the breezes of the Spirit, and cast their cover over many a weary warrior. "The base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things that are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1. 28, 29.).

One of the ministers sent from Geneva, thus writes to Farel: "I cannot express to you what mercy God daily shows towards our church. From several places persons are come, demanding labourers for the new harvest. They are particularly pressing us from Tournon and the Agenois . . . for in those parts more than three hundred parishes have abolished the mass, but are yet without a minister. I have heard it said that if from four to six thousand preachers could be sent, there would be room for them all."

The Calvinists of Normandy used to assemble in the open air, in bodies of three or four thousand. What a glorious extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, what a wondrous ingathering of God's elect seemed to be here! The harvest truly was plenteous. If God would spare Sodom for the sake of ten righteous, and bless Laban for

Jacob's sake (Gen. xxx. 27), and the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake (Gen. xxxix. 5), how much national honour and glory would He confer upon France for the sake of the many thousands of praying souls sheltered under her



banner? But did she shelter them? Did she understand the children of God to be the salt of the earth? Alas, she understood not! In the course of a few years her gutters were flooded with their blood. Her river was red with the blood of the saints, and on its surface many thousands of

their dead bodies were borne. Like Jerusalem she was favoured with a true church and the light of Divine truth. "How is the gold become dim! how is the most fine gold changed."

The influence of the Calvinists was so great that a conference was arranged, which took place on September 9th, 1561, between the reformed ministers and the prelates of France with the hope of effecting a reconciliation between the two religious parties. Calvin was invited to be present, but the Council of Geneva objecting to this, Beza undertook to plead the cause of the Calvinists. The young king, Charles IX., who was but eleven years of age, opened the conference with a short speech. Toleration in



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S MEDAL.

those days was a thing very unpopular, and this effort to reconcile light with darkness, as may be expected, failed. Another conference was held in January, 1562, with no better result.

#### THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY.

Through the crafty, insidious workings of Catherine de Medici, the Queen-mother, there was much political bias and bitter feeling intermingled with the Reformation of France. Cruel injustice gave rise to war, and battle after battle was fought, but finding it impossible to subdue the Protestants either by martyrdoms or by open combat, Pope Pius V., who before his elevation to the Papal See was the

most zealous of the inquisitors, designed a general massacre of the heretics. Blind as Saul of Tarsus, when, before sovereign mercy reached his heart, he made havoc of the church, Pius V. showed his intense hatred of Protestantism and his fixed determination to root it out.

Writing to Cardinal Loraine, he says, "Our zeal gives us the right of earnestly exhorting and exciting you to use all your influence for procuring a definite and serious adoption of the measures most proper for bringing about the *destruction* of the implacable enemies of God and the king."

To the young king of France, he writes, "The more the Lord has treated you and me with kindness, the more you ought to take advantage of the opportunity for



ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S MEDAL.

pursuing and *destroying* all the enemies that still remain ; for tearing up entirely all the roots, and even the smallest fibres of the roots, of so terrible and confirmed an evil."

To the execution of this diabolical project the Queen-mother was constantly urged by Pius V. and Philip of Spain. She, however, seems to have needed no promptings, yet this sanguinary measure was not enacted till St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th, 1572. Before this Pius V. was called to his account. But Gregory XIII. was quite equal to the impious task. The young king, Charles IX., under the influence of his mother, signed the edict for, and took part in, this wholesale butchery, by which the cities, villages, and fields of France were deluged with blood.

By this most awful enactment the Reformation in France was mortally wounded. 70,000 Protestants (according to Sully, the generally received authority) were cruelly murdered, and France has been restless ever since. God still requires the blood of His slain at her hands. Surely in the great day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for that city.

The pope, drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus, ordered a jubilee in honour of this general massacre. Cannon were fired at Rome, several processions took place, the *Te Deum* was chanted, and the city was illuminated for three nights. Several medals in commemoration of the event were struck, one with the pope's profile on one side and a representation of an angel slaying the Huguenots, or Protestants, on the other. This is but the faintest outline of a very dark picture. Enough, however, is recorded to show that the system which could plan, practise, and praise such carnage could not be indued with that wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Popery in power has always proved itself to be earthly, sensual, devilish (James iii. 14-17).

#### SILVER LINING TO A DARK CLOUD.

Over this dark picture, history, however, cast one bright gleam, which we would fain believe came from the Sun of Righteousness. While the pope and the clergy continued to exult in their carnage, great terror and remorse came upon the young King Charles. He had not quite two years to live, and he seemed to be in constant apprehension of some approaching calamity. His mind was in agony. In his affliction he sweat blood and cried to God for pardon. His order had been that not one Huguenot should be spared to remind him of the massacre. But strange to relate, he had one for his nurse whom he seemed to love in his dying moments.

Estoile, an old historian, tells us that "as she seated herself on a chest and was beginning to doze, she heard the king moan and weep and sigh. She came gently to his bed-side, and adjusted the bed clothes. The king began to speak to her; and heaving a deep sigh, and while the tears poured down and sobs choked his utterance,

he said, 'Ah, nurse, dear nurse, what blood, what murders! Ah, I have followed bad advice. Oh, my God, forgive me! Have pity on me if it please Thee. I do not know what will become of me. What shall I do? I am lost; I see it plainly.' His nurse sympathized with him and pointed him to Jesus as the only way of justification.

May we not hope that this guilty man was, through grace, brought to repentance and saved by the precious blood of Jesus? Never yet on the earth has there been a sinner too great for all-conquering grace; never yet a sinner too polluted to be washed in the precious blood of Jesus. When He poured out His soul unto death, He opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness, and His blood cleanseth from all sin.

"That sacred flood from Jesus' veins  
Was free to take away  
A Mary's or Manasseh's stains,  
Or sins more vile than they."

Charles IX. died on May 30th, 1574, aged twenty-four years.

#### A COLLEGE AND ACADEMY AT GENEVA.

Calvin had gone to his rest eight years before God gathered into His garner the harvest of redeemed souls so cruelly reaped by wicked hands. His last great work was to build a college and academy for Geneva. Bungener says, "As early as 1552, the Council had bought the ground, but this ground, six years afterwards, was still untouched. Then Calvin took the work in hand more directly. He set on foot, as we should say now, a national subscription, and very soon he was in possession of 10,000 florins, a large sum for those times. The Council then judged that the work might be begun. The ground was levelled, the foundations dug, and the walls raised. More than once Calvin was seen, while suffering from quartan-ague, dragging himself slowly over the works, encouraging the workmen, and contemplating with joy the rapid progress of the edifice. June 5th, 1559, the college was ready to receive both pupil and master.

"There, for three centuries, the children of the city of Calvin have succeeded each other. The edifice, saving a few modifications of detail, has remained the same. After their venerable cathedral no building is dearer to the Genevese, and few days pass without some stranger

bending his steps thither to evoke the memories which are equally sacred to all the children of the Reformation. If you go upstairs over the class-rooms, you are in the rooms of the library, full of memorials yet more living and particular. There you will be shown the books of Calvin's library, the mute witnesses of his vigils, his sufferings, and his death; there you will turn over the leaves of his manuscripts, deciphering, not without difficulty, a few lines of his feverish writing, rapid as his thoughts; and if your imagination will but lend itself to the breathing appeals of solitude and silence, there he himself is; you will behold him gliding among those ancient walls, pale, but with a sparkling eye,—feeble and sickly, but strong in inner energy, the source of which was in his faith. There also will appear to you, around him, all those of whom he was to be the father,—divines, jurists, philosophers, scholars, statesmen, and men of war, all filled with that mighty life which he was to bequeath to the Reformation after having received it from her. And if you ask the secret of his power, one of the stones of the college will tell you in a few Hebrew words which the Reformer had engraved upon it. Come into the court. Enter beneath that old portico which supports the great staircase, and you will read:—

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*

And it is neither on the wall nor on one of the pillars that these words are engraved. Mark well: it is on the keystone. What an emblem! and what a lesson!"

On February 6th, 1564, Calvin preached his last sermon. On April 26th, he was visited by the Council of twenty-five lords of the city, in all the pomp of public ceremony. Far more glorious attendants, however, were near at hand.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

**W**HEN the Council of Geneva visited our Reformer on his death bed, he addressed them at considerable length.\* "Having finished his discourse," says Beza, "he offered up a prayer to the Almighty and merciful God to shower down upon them, in still greater

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\* Their registers have preserved the summary of his words.





CALVIN ADDRESSING THE COUNCIL FOR THE LAST TIME.

abundance, His gifts, and by His Holy Spirit to direct all their consultations to the welfare of the whole republic. He then gave his right hand to each separately, and bade them adieu. All the senators departed in tears, manifesting deep sorrow, as if it were their last interview with a common father. I know not if there could have been a sadder sight for these magistrates, who all considered him, and rightly, for his office' sake, the mouth of the Lord."

#### HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE PASTORS.

The day following (April 27th, 1564), he wished to see the pastors, who waited upon him in a body. To them he delivered a solemn and affectionate discourse, in which he tried to stimulate them in a fearless onward course in their duty after his death. He reminded them of his first arrival in that city, when he said, "the Gospel was indeed preached, but everything was in the greatest confusion, as if Christianity consisted in nothing else than the overturning of images. Not a few men arose in the church from whom I suffered many great indignities; but the Lord our God Himself so strengthened me, and banished all fear even from my mind, who am by no means distinguished for natural courage (I state the real fact), that I was enabled to resist all their attempts." He reminded them of his exile, of his return, the struggles of every kind which he had had to sustain, and how he had seen the blessing of God upon his labours.

This meeting with the pastors was most affecting, and his address like Paul again giving his charge to the elders of Ephesus. At the close he asked pardon of God and of his brethren for any peevishness or impatience he might have manifested under his disease. "Finally," adds Beza, "he gave his hand to each, one after the other, which was with such anguish and bitterness of heart in every one, that I cannot even recall it to mind without extreme sadness."

#### CALVIN'S WILL.

A few days before this Calvin made his will, which is more a testament of his faith than a division of his earthly goods. Of the latter he had but little to leave. He loved a life of poverty. To live honestly, but humbly, was all he in this respect desired. He was too much occupied with higher considerations to encumber himself

with the "thick clay." In his will, he first thanks God for delivering him from "the deep darkness of idolatry in which he was plunged, that He might bring him into the light of the Gospel. He declared his full intention to pass the remainder of his life in the same faith and religion. He testifies that, as a suppliant, he humbly implores the Lord to so wash and purify him, by the blood of the sovereign Redeemer, that he may stand before His tribunal in His image." He declares "that in all the controversies and disputes which he has conducted with the enemies of the Gospel, he has used no craftiness, nor corrupt sophistical arts, but he has defended the truth with candour and sincerity."

"But, alas! my study and my zeal," says he, "if they deserve the name, have been so remiss and languid that I confess innumerable things have been wanting in me to discharge the duties of my office in an excellent manner; and unless the infinite bounty of God had been present, all my study would have been vain and transient." He confesses his entire dependence upon the mercy of the Lord. He also expresses the wish that "after his departure his body might be committed to the earth in that manner and with those *funeral rites which are usual in that city and church.*"\*

He valued his earthly goods, including books and furniture, at two hundred and twenty-five crowns, but the sale brought three hundred. Ten crowns he left to the college and ten to the fund for "poor strangers" or refugees. The rest was to be divided among his nephews and nieces. Calvin had now just one month to live, which his biographer tells us was spent in almost constant prayer. Two events, however, transpired during that time which we must not overlook.

#### WILLIAM FAREL AND CALVIN MEET FOR THE LAST TIME.

His old friend and fellow labourer, William Farel, who preceded him in Geneva, could not now let him depart without taking his hand and wishing him Godspeed across the river. Farel was now nearly eighty. In his

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\* This custom which, according to Bungener, has been observed almost down to the present day, was that no monument should be raised upon any grave, however illustrious the deceased might be.

early days he had preached in and around Geneva, with zeal and power, more like the Apostle Paul than a preacher of modern days. We remember how his solemn denunciation withdrew Calvin from his purpose, and settled him as a preacher at Geneva. Having travelled, perhaps, fifty miles on foot, from Neuchatel, the old man, dusty and weary, entered the sick chamber.

This meeting can be better imagined than described. These two veteran victors, although differing considerably in age, are both about to take their leave of time and of each other. As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, for many years they have fought under His banner. For twenty-eight years they have stood, as it were, side by side in the front of the battle. Hundreds of their brethren have died as martyrs in the tremendous struggle. But they have lived to see the powers of Rome shaken, the Gospel freely preached, and the consciences of men freed from the iron rule of the man of sin. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, has been their weapon of warfare, and now, before they leave the field, leaning upon their sword-hilts, for the last time they look each other in the face, and their thoughts run over the struggles and triumphs of their glorious campaign. Before God and before men they can say, "We have fought a good fight." But they have nothing here to glory in. Their laurels are not here. Salvation by free and sovereign grace has been the theme of their ministrations. By grace they are saved. By grace they have conquered; and their own failing strength now proves their personal need of more grace. Their crowns of righteousness are laid up at home for them, whither their thoughts and affections are tending. They have seen Satan as lightning falling from heaven; but the Spirit within them says, "Rejoice not in this, but rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven." Indeed, the words of Samuel Rutherford seem remarkably applicable to each of these departing saints :

"The sands of time are sinking,  
 The dawn of heaven breaks,  
 The summer morn I've sighed for,  
 The fair sweet morn awakes :  
 Dark, dark hath been the midnight  
 But dayspring is at hand,  
 And glory, glory dwelleth .  
 In Immanuel's land.

“ Oh ! Christ He is the Fountain,  
 The deep sweet well of love !  
 The streams on earth I've tasted,  
 More deep I'll drink above :  
 There to an ocean fulness  
 His mercy doth expand,  
 And glory, glory dwelleth  
 In Immanuel's land.”

#### THE REFORMER'S LAST MOMENTS.

May 19th, or the Friday before Whit Sunday, brought round the day when the clergy assembled to admonish each other, and take a friendly but modest repast. Calvin desired that this meal should be prepared at his house. And rallying his little strength, when carried from his bed into the room, he said, “ I come to see you, my brethren, for the last time, never more to sit down with you at table.” “ Such,” says Beza, “ was the commencement of one of the most melancholy repasts we ever took. He then offered prayer, took a small portion of food, and discoursed with us at supper in as cheerful a manner as his weakness would permit. Before supper was finished, he had to be carried back to his own room, and said with a smile, ‘ This intervening wall will not prevent me from being present with you in spirit, though absent in body.’ ”

The following days were spent in almost constant communion with the Lord. Often he was heard to say, “ Lord, I opened not my mouth because Thou didst it;” and at times, “ I did mourn like a dove.” Once also, “ Thou, Lord, bruises me, but I am abundantly satisfied, since it is Thy hand.”

#### HIS DEATH AND BURIAL.

“ On May 27th, 1564, it seemed,” continued Beza, “ that he spoke more loudly and more easily, but it was the last effort of nature. Toward eight o'clock in the evening he expired, and so it was, that on that day, and at the same moment the sun set and the greatest light on earth in the Church of God was withdrawn to heaven.

“ During that night, and the following day, great lamentations prevailed throughout the city, for the republic regretted the want of one of its wisest citizens, the church deplored the death of its faithful pastor, the college sorrowed for such an incomparable professor, and all grieved

for the loss of a common parent and comforter bestowed upon them by God Himself. At two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, his body was carried to the common burying-place, called Plein Palais, without extraordinary pomp. His funeral, however, was attended by the members of the senate, the pastors, all the professors of the college, and a great proportion of the citizens. The abundance of tears shed on this occasion afforded the strongest evidence of the sense which they had entertained of their loss. According to his own directions, no hillock, no monument was erected to his memory, on which account I wrote the following epitaph :—

“ Why, in this humble and unnoticed tomb  
Is Calvin laid—the dread of falling Rome,  
Mourned by the good, and by the wicked fear'd ;  
By all who knew his excellence revered ;  
From whom ev'n virtue's self might virtue learn,  
And young and old its value may discern.  
'Twas modesty, his constant friend on earth,  
That laid this stone, unsculptured with a name ;  
Oh ! happy turf, enrich'd with Calvin's worth,  
More lasting far than marble is thy fame !

“ He lived fifty-five years, ten months, and seventeen days.”

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Such are the wise arrangements, and such are the love and mercy blended with the purposes of our covenant God, that His people, however useful in their different spheres, have but a very limited period allotted to them here. They finish their work, and enter into rest. Others less known, and at first less esteemed, are raised up and anointed by the Spirit to carry on the work. Like the people of Geneva, and churches of Christendom, who wept over their loss of Calvin, we may mourn when our Hezekiahs and Josiahs are taken away, and know not till “ afterwards,” when the trial yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness, how much we were trusting to an arm of flesh.

Men, who appear to be the very key-stones of society, or pillars of the most grand and gracious enterprises, are sometimes called away to their unfading crowns, when, according to our contracted view, the very honour of God and the real good of His church seem to demand their presence here. But the Captain of our salvation not

unfrequently removes His standard-bearers and passes the colours to another, lest we should trust to the bearer instead of the God of the banner.

Notwithstanding the excellency of Calvin's character, and the great good bestowed upon all nations by his work, his name is not generally admired. The reason is that the doctrines of the Gospel, which he so faithfully made known, are as humbling to proud nature as they are exalting to the God of grace.

Vain man likes to consider the will of God as being dependent upon his own; but God works all things after the counsel of His own will (Eph. i. 11). God from eternity knew His people and chose them in Christ. And "whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. viii. 29). There is no uncertainty about it. The great God does not allow His mighty arrangements to hang in uncertainty upon the caprice of mortal man.

When Jesus Christ shall come in His glory and separate the people as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, He then shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied (Isa. liii. 11). He will not have to weep over the loss of any of His elect; they will be all there. He has power to give eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him (John xvii. 2).

The unhumiliated sinner does not, however, feel his need of salvation and all pertaining thereto as the absolutely free gift of God. The name of John Calvin, the noble defender of these precious truths, is, therefore, through lack of knowledge despised.

That God by His Spirit may bring both reader and writer into a deep spiritual acquaintance with the truth as it is in Christ, is the prayerful desire of

THE AUTHOR.

