

CALVIN :
HIS LIFE, LABOURS, AND WRITINGS.



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HIS LIFE,
HIS LABOURS, AND HIS WRITINGS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
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Introduction.

HISTORY must not merely plead; as soon as it seems to do so it excites mistrust. It is a thankless task, therefore, to narrate the life of a man whose lofty qualities have been often misunderstood, whose faults have often been exaggerated, and whose story, moreover, is allied to that of a cause which we at once defend and love. How shall the writer appear impartial? how even promise to be so at all times and in all things?

We hope, however, to have been so. If this work is a plea, it is only as a conscientious work on a subject long disfigured by ignorance or falsehood must ever be such. It is not our fault if it is become almost impossible to write about Calvin without appearing to be his advocate.

But let no one expect to find here an apotheosis. "There is none good but one, that is God." We know this, and will never forget it.

But if Calvin was a man, he was none the less a great man, or still better, a great servant of God; and we shall protest against the strange eagerness with which, at the present day, he is abandoned, or denied by so many whom simple justice, not to say gratitude, should range among his friends. Between the apotheosis, which we want for none, and an abandonment so ready and complete, there is room at least for a serious study, worthy of the cause and of the man.

It is this study which we have undertaken. We address it to all the friends of Calvin, including such as are not yet, but who might and ought to be his friends; we address it equally to all those of his enemies who have not yet become so hostile as not to wish to know him, whom they have been taught to hate.

BOOK THE FIRST.

(1509–1536.)

SUMMARY.

- Introduction—Calvin in the presence of history.
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 - II. The plague at Noyon—Departure for Paris—Calumnies on this subject.
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 - VI. Returns to theology—Wolmar—How the Bible was then a novelty to all—Luther and Calvin again—Comparative study of their progress towards the Gospel, and of the heart work which made them what they were.
 - VII. Calvin would fain keep silence yet awhile, but they come to him from all parts—His preaching at Paris.
 - VIII. He starts as author by a commentary on Seneca—Astonishment—Had he a hidden motive?—Toleration is a modern notion then unknown—The book is one of mere erudition—Calvin's tribute and farewell to the taste of the times—Success and little money—He sells his patrimony and gives up his benefices.
 - IX. Fresh severities in France—Calvin and the Paris prisoners—Gradual conquests—Nicholas Cope, the rector—His speech the work of Calvin—The Sorbonne—Calvin at Nérac—Marguerite of Valois—The illusions of Lefevre and the scruples of Roussel.
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 - XV. Design and plan: *First book*—God, the Bible, the Trinity, the creation, man, Providence; *Second book*—Sin, redemption—The law—The two covenants—Jesus Christ the author of salvation; *Third book*—Salvation by faith—The Holy Ghost, the agent in the work of salvation—Repentance—The Christian life—Prayer.

- XVI. Predestination—How Calvin is led to it—Let us not impose our logic upon God—Other remarks—Augustine—What this doctrine was in fact for Calvin—What it produced—Geneva and “the rock of predestination.”
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- XXII. How Calvin led small and great—Du Tillet relapses into Romanism—Grief and moderation of Calvin—Du Tillet would fain persuade him to go and do likewise—Calvin’s answers.
- XXIII. Return from Ferrara—What Muratori relates—Modena; Saluzzo—Dangers confronted—Religious state of the Val d’Aoste—Calvin preaches there—Flight—Return to Switzerland across the mountains—1541 and 1541.
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I.

John Calvin was born at Noyon, in Picardy, the 10th of July 1509. His grandfather, who was a cooper, was still living in the small town of Pont l'Evêque, whence the family derived its origin. His father, Gerard Chauvin,¹ settled at Noyon, had become apostolic notary, fiscal attorney of the county, proctor of the chapter, and secretary of the bishop, functions which were all more honourable, it appears, than lucrative, especially for a man burdened with a numerous family. Gerard was favourably regarded by the nobility, by the clergy, and above all by the bishop, Charles de Hangest.

His wife, Jeanne Lefranc, of Cambrai, early accustomed her son to all the exercises of Romish piety, for he was destined for the Church. The tokens of a serious vocation became apparent in him. His father, who had thought, perhaps, rather of temporal advantages than of inward meetness, was at least desirous that on the side of learning, nothing should be wanting to the future priest, and, who knows?—the future bishop or cardinal. The precocious success of the child justified those ambitious dreams of the father. Placed at the college of the *Capettes*, he showed that he was “of good talent, of a natural quickness of perception, and a genius for the study of literature.”² But the college was not sufficient. Gerard wished for his son a more careful, or, as would be said at the present day, a more aristocratic education. Accordingly, he asked M. de Mommor, a noble who was related to the bishop, the favour to have part in the lessons which an able tutor gave to the sons of that gentleman. This favour was granted, and Calvin, in token of gratitude, afterwards dedicated his first work to one of his noble fellow pupils, Claude, the abbot of St. Eloi. The dedication shows us that he cherished with delight the remembrance of the care and consideration of which he had been the object. His natural gravity preserved him from the dangers to which many others might have been exposed by a residence in a wealthy family. His father's strictness also contributed to keep him rather timid and fearful; but this constraint though fatal to some minds, is useful to others, and, to such, abounds in the elements of daring and energy.

Calvin was therefore brought up in the society of the children of the house of Mommor, but at his father's cost.³ Now his father found the expense heavy, and he requested of the bishop for the child of twelve years old a small

¹ Or Cauvin. *Calvin* is the Latin Calvinus, the translation of *Chauvin*. The habit was speedily acquired of giving to the Reformer, even in French, only the name under which he had published his first work, written in Latin. Often too, either for his own safety, or not to compromise his friends, he had to conceal himself under other names—*Alcuin*, the anagram of Calvin; *Lucianus*, the anagram of Calvinus; Charles d'Espeville, Jean de Bonneville, &c.

² Desmay, doctor of the Sorbonne; the author of “Remarks on the Life of Calvin.”

³ Beza. Life of Calvin.

office which happened to be vacant—that of chaplain to the chapel called the Gésine.

A request of this kind was not anything unusual then. Scruples had long ceased to exist about conferring even the highest offices of the Church on young men, and even upon children. Several councils had ineffectually condemned this abuse. The Council of Trent was going to attempt it anew, and, thanks to the Reformation, with better if not yet with complete success. But at the beginning of the sixteenth century the abuse was reigning in all its force. In France there was to be seen a cardinal of sixteen,—Odet de Châtillon.¹ In Portugal there was one of twelve years old; and Leo X., who nominated him, had himself been created Archbishop of Aix at five years of age.

The bishop of Noyon then, received favourably the request, which was moreover justified by the services which would undoubtedly be rendered to the Church by one so well endowed. The enemies of Calvin have not failed, in regard to this, to accuse him of ingratitude. To abandon and condemn the Church! was this not to lacerate the bosom which had nurtured him? Vain declamation! To wish that the conscience and reason of a man should be forever fettered by a benefit received at twelve years old, is to deny reason, and conscience, or to demand, under the name of gratitude, endless hypocrisy. Besides, when once resolved to leave the Romish Church, Calvin voluntarily gave up all he had received from it. What more can be required?

A few days after his nomination (May 1521), the young chaplain received the tonsure. He received it with emotion and with faith, and, though this ceremony did not constitute an irrevocable engagement, in his heart the engagement was complete. He returned to study with redoubled ardour. For two years he continued to make great progress, and his father only desired one thing, which was to send him to some university where he might find masters worthy of himself.

II.

Meanwhile Noyon was afflicted with the plague. Gerard thought with consternation of the risk which might be incurred by this son, the hope of his life. Hearing, moreover, that the young Mommors were about to start for Paris to continue their studies there, he hastened to request of the chapter permission for the young chaplain “to go where he should think fit during the plague,” without giving up the small revenue from the chapel. The authorisation was granted. This was in August 1523.

Why must we encounter, here again, accusations which it is impossible to pass over in silence?

¹ Brother of Admiral de Coligny. He embraced the Reformation in 1561.

Calvin has been represented as afraid of the plague and basely fleeing from his duties as chaplain. This chaplain was a child of fourteen, upon whom his title neither did nor could impose any duties or functions whatsoever.

That was not misrepresentation enough. It has been asserted that the true cause of Calvin's departure was a shameful condemnation, the chastisement of infamous and abominable vices. But for the bishop's intervention, it is said, he would have been burned alive. Death at the stake was commuted for scourging and branding.

If there were nothing against this tradition but its improbability, that would be sufficient cause for its rejection. Where was a vicious lad of fourteen ever punished after such a fashion? And if Calvin were this vicious lad, why wait till after his death to make it known? Many of his relations at Noyon changed their name that they might have nought in common with the heresiarch; and some say that the house in which he was born was razed to the ground, and a man hanged for wishing to rebuild it.¹ Would such hatred have kept silence about this shameful feature of his youth, and would there not have been, through all Europe, lips to expose it? Would not the bare suspicion have sufficed to render impotent and impossible the part of moral law-giver so boldly claimed by Calvin at Geneva?

That is what might be said; but it were superfluous. The key to the whole affair is in a book published as early as 1633—the *Annals of the Church of Noyon*, by Jacques Le Vasseur, a canon of that church. An ardent enemy of Calvin, his calumniator in many a passage, but all the more worthy of belief here, for it is he who informs us that these scandalous details concern another Jean Cauvin, also a chaplain, but “who died,” he says, “a good Catholic,” after having been curate in different parishes, and, finally, at Trachy-le-Val. Thus the basis falls to the ground, and instead of improbability we have unmitigated falsehood. We refer for the details to the *Vindication of Calvin*, by Drelincourt. We also refer to that work for all the calumnies on which we shall not think fit to dwell.

III.

Calvin was, then, at his departure from Noyon, the child we have portrayed. The gravity of his father and his mother's piety formed the basis of that character, somewhat tending to sadness, but vigorously tempered, which he was about to bring into the midst of the noisy schools of Paris.

He first went to his uncle, Richard Cauvin, a locksmith; and a few days after he entered at the college of La Marche. There was one man, a professor there, towards whom he immediately felt attracted, the regent Cordier, who

¹ Varillas. *History of France*.

was subsequently to be called by his pupil of 1523 to direct the college of Geneva.¹ Cordier was one of those rare men whose vast erudition does not prevent them from loving children and being loved in return. Besides, the system of teaching had not then that modern regularity, which makes of each class a step of the scholastic ladder, and keeps each professor within his exact limits. They said everything about everything, a method often troublesome but sometimes not unsuccessful. Cordier excelled in taking advantage of elementary instruction, in order to initiate his pupils in literary, philosophical and historical questions. His elevation of soul and uprightness of heart made themselves felt as well as his science. Accordingly, Calvin ever took delight in recognising what he owed to his old college tutor at La Marche. In dedicating to him his *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, he attributes to the lessons of Cordier, all the progress he had made in higher branches of study; and, if posterity, he says, derives any fruit from his works, he would have it known that it is indebted for it, in part at least, to Cordier.

Did Cordier exercise any direct influence upon the religious ideas of the Noyon scholar? To answer this question, it would be necessary to know how far advanced Cordier was himself, and that is what we do not know. A zealous Protestant in 1538, it is scarcely probable that he had remained a stranger till 1523 or 1524 to a movement already powerful, and till then powerful especially in the world of intelligence and literature. Perhaps he himself was scarcely more aware of what was passing in his head and heart, than his pupil was of the germs of latent power deposited in his own head and heart by the words of his master. Engaged shortly after in the most fearful struggles, the men of that period had neither leisure nor inclination for solitary grappling with their own history. At least, it did not occur to them that this close self-study might ultimately be of some interest; and if they did enter upon it in any measure, they kept it to themselves. Luther only is more explicit, though it does not occur to him either to give us an exact and complete analysis of what took place within him, his ingenuous and loquacious vivacity made him scatter here and there the traits which, methodically arranged, have finally given us a complete portraiture of his youth, struggles, and transformations. Such anecdotes are rare in the writings of Calvin; even in the famous preface to his commentary on the Psalms, in which he sums up his life, he contents himself with saying, that he was at first “more obstinately attached than any one to papal superstitions,” and that, by God’s grace, he had been detached from them. No dates, no details, and everywhere else still less. There is nothing to show that he began by being one of those whom he now attacks. Invested with authority, he speaks as though he had always been the same. He

¹ *Regent* was the title formerly given in France to those who taught in a college. It is still used in the communal colleges or schools.

seems to think that he always was, and perhaps such is his belief for he needs to believe it. The thought that a change had been necessary for him to possess gospel truth, would, it seems, trouble and humble him. This feeling is one of the secrets of his strength. Luther draws you on as a man, and because you as a man recognise yourself in him. Calvin draws you on as a master, and because he has none of your weakness, or, at least, shows none.

We should also like to know something of the impression produced upon Calvin by the severity already exercised at Paris upon the *Lutherans*, for as yet that was the only designation employed. He might have seen burned on the Place de Grève young Jacques Pavanne, a Protestant at Meaux, but a Romanist afterwards, through weakness, in the prisons of Paris. Brought back by remorse to the gospel faith. Happy to confess it and happy to die for it, he became the proto-martyr of the Reformation at Paris. He might have seen burned before Notre-Dame the poor hermit whom the gospel had sought and found in the forest of Livry, and who had unconsciously become a Protestant, a heretic to be burned, whilst he only thought he had become more charitable and Christian. What did Calvin think of these executions? Alas! time was to show only too well that they did not inspire him with the horror of such cruelties. But one fact remains, and it is the only one at present noteworthy. Calvin saw these tortures, and, shortly afterwards, Calvin went out to face them. It was by the light of those flames that he resolutely entered upon the path in which, at every step, such fires might be kindled for him. When we judge the man, let us not forget the terrible and pitiless education which the age had given him.

IV.

But whilst Romish intolerance, terrible against heresy, left in peace all the scandals of the Church and Court, severity of morals in Calvin was a prelude to severity of doctrine. The scholar of sixteen already announced the man who would always begin by exacting of himself what he required of others. The pastimes of his fellow-students had no attractions for him. Their levities or their follies alike met in him with a stern censor, so much so that, if the author of the *Annals of Noyon* is to be believed, they had surnamed him the *Accusative*. But nothing indicates that they intended it as a reproach. They avenged themselves, schoolboy-like, by a jest; but it was only another homage to the ascendant of their grave school-fellow, whose pale face and stern and piercing look, were more imposing to them than their master's gown. Let us listen once more to one of his enemies: "Under a lean and attenuated body, he displayed already a lively and vigorous spirit, prompt at repartee, bold to attack. A great faster, either on account of his health and to stop the fumes of the headache which assaulted him continually, or to have his mind more free for writing, studying, and improving his memory. He spoke but

little; but his words were always full of gravity, and never missed their aim. He was never to be seen in company, but always in retirement.”¹ All this we own has not the charm of the adventurous and poetic youth of Luther. Is there, however, but one style of poetry? And is there no poetry in that steady pursuit of the good and true all through the age of pleasure, illusion, and disorder?

He also pursued the beautiful—not in the arts, it is true, but in ancient literature, and already, it would seem, with a clear perception of the use he should one day have to make of it. Cicero was his favourite, and while intending to be one day more nervous than he, he felt that Cicero was the most *French* of the ancients, the best master to be followed by one who would make himself heard in France. Montaigne had also the same feeling, but at a later period; and he found the French tongue already endowed by Calvin with all that Calvin had borrowed from Cicero—correctness and precision, harmony for the ear, and harmony for the mind. The scholar of sixteen probably asked no more of Cicero than the elegant Latinity that was admired in his first works, but it would soon be perceived that to study Latin thus was to study, or rather to create, French. When a language has reached the point which the French had then attained, every man of genius, whether he perceives it or not, is enlisted among the workmen employed upon it. Calvin was the great workman of that half of the century, and it is a glory, the possession of which Bossuet has been pleased to ratify. “Luther,” says he, “triumphed orally, but the pen of Calvin was more correct. Both excelled in speaking the language of their country.” The sixteenth century had already rendered him full justice in this respect, even by the lips of his enemies. “Calvin,” says Etienne Pasquier, “was a man who wrote well . . . to whom our tongue is greatly indebted.” “No one of those who preceded him,” says Ræmond, “excelled him in writing well, and few since have approached him in beauty and felicity of language.” But more of this hereafter.

The college of Montaigu, which he entered afterwards, offered him very different lessons. A Spaniard invincibly attached to Aristotle, and, through him, to Romanism, such as Aristotle had made it, was professor there in bad scholastic Latin. But if the faith and Latin of the master were not pleasing to the new scholar, the dialectics must have been grateful to his stem intellect, and he made great progress.

Meanwhile, the Chapter of Noyon had more than once summoned the young chaplain to return and occupy his place,—summonses which were a mere form, for nothing was more common than to study at the universities, as he was doing, while enjoying the revenues of a benefice.

¹ Florimond de Raimond. “History of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of the Heresy of this Age.”

Accordingly, on the report of his success, his father had no difficulty in obtaining for him the cure of Marteville, which he exchanged two years afterwards for that of Pont-l'Evêque, the cradle of the family as we have already said. "Thus were the sheep committed to the wolf's keeping," says Desmay. This was in 1529. Beza affirms that Calvin, before leaving France, preached sometimes at Pont-l'Evêque; and it was the only clerical function he could perform, having as yet only received the tonsure. Beza, however, does not give the precise date, and we have in all that period of Calvin's life few dates of any certainty. A letter of his to his friend Du Chemin, of Orleans, informs us that he took a journey to Noyon in May 1528, to see for the last time his father, who was seriously ill. He says, in this letter, that the malady is protracted, but that there is no hope of a cure; we know not, however, whether Gerard Cauvin died then, or whether his life, as some have thought, was prolonged for two or three years more. At any rate, Calvin was not present at his last breath, for Beza informs us that the news of his death reached his son at Bourges. This occasioned another journey to Noyon, and it was then, perhaps, that Calvin's parishioners saw him in the pulpit for the first time. His mother had died before, but we know not exactly when her death took place. What did he preach to the people of Pont-l'Evêque? How far advanced at this period was the great inward movement which was accomplishing itself in him? Let us retrace our steps a little, and endeavour to form some conception of it.

V.

He was peaceably prosecuting at Paris his studies in divinity, when he received from his father the order to discontinue them. "My father," he tells us,¹ "considering that the science of the law commonly enriches those who pursue it, this hope made him change his mind. This was the cause of his withdrawing me from the study of philosophy, and of my being put to learn the law, on which, to obey my father, I endeavoured faithfully to occupy myself. Nevertheless, God, by His secret providence, turned me in another direction." This rapid statement needs to be completed by some details. It appears that, at first, Calvin was not sorry at having to give up divinity, such at least as was then taught in the schools, and it has been thought that this change of taste might be attributed to the connexion he had perhaps formed, about this time, with Robert Olivetan, his countryman and relative. Olivetan, who was to have the honour of being one of the first to preach the Reformed faith at Geneva, was also, it appears, one of the first by whom Calvin heard it openly preached.

¹ Preface of "Commentary on the Psalms."

But Calvin was not one whose enthusiasm would kindle at the first touch. The new idea must be slowly elaborated in his mind, which was at once so prompt, and yet so controlled by the imperative need of a logical conviction which was logically immovable. Calvin could not acquiesce in the overthrow of Romanism before he felt himself in possession of a complete doctrinal system, ready to replace the other. To waver was contrary to his nature, and we willingly admit that he would prefer giving up divinity to remaining a divine with doubts and blanks.

So he started for Orleans. A clever and acute juriconsult was professor there—Pierre de l’Etoile, who became afterwards the president of the parliament of Paris. The success of Calvin in his new career is attested, as well as his success as a scholar, by Ræmond. That historian tells us that he distinguished himself by “an active mind and a strong memory, with great dexterity and promptitude in gathering up the lessons and sayings which fell from his master’s lips, noting them down afterwards with marvellous facility and beauty of language, everywhere exhibiting many sallies and flashes of refined wit.” “At the expiration of a year, he was no longer considered,” says Beza, “as a scholar, but as a teacher.” In fact, he was more than once called upon to supply the master’s place, and his position seemed marked out amongst the highest dignitaries of the law. God had otherwise decided.

We know not what progress he made towards gospel truth during his sojourn at Orleans. According to Desmay, who is evidently mistaken, it was in that city that he was “first perverted from the faith by an apostate Jacobin, a German by birth.” According to Ræmond, it was at Bourges and later, that “he afterwards acquired a taste for heresy.” The *taste for heresy* was everywhere, that is, there were everywhere aspirations towards the gospel, everywhere men in whom these aspirations were beginning to assume a definite form. Did Calvin meet with some one at Orleans who helped him in the formation of his views? It is possible; but only at Bourges did there elsewhere await him a man who was definitively to open up for him the way.

It was not, however, to go in quest of that man that he went to Bourges. He was attracted thither by the celebrated Milanese jurist, Alciati, probably one of those in Gerard Cauvin’s mind when he spoke of the riches and glory to be acquired by the law. Summoned by Francis I., Alciati, thenceforward called *Alciat*, he had been received with honours all but royal. Twelve hundred golden crowns, an enormous sum for the times, were his salary at Bourges, and in a letter to the Chancellor Duprat, the sheriffs of the city say, “The King has well spent the twelve hundred crowns which he grants to Messire Alciat, for never was the city so brilliant and prosperous.” Such was the man whom Calvin went to seek, and his expectations were surpassed. Alciat knew the Roman law, as perhaps no Roman had known it, and more than that, as a child of the Italian revival, he brought into the arid field of law the

poetical enthusiasm in which he had been nurtured by his country. Calvin, upon whom poetry alone would probably have had no effect, was subjugated by this singular blending of law and poetry. He became an enthusiast both for the professor and for the science, but an enthusiast in his own peculiar way, consuming in toil all the ardour kindled in his soul! He protracted his vigils, Beza tells us, till midnight, an hour extraordinarily late in those times of early habits, and in the morning, “after awaking, he would remain some time in bed, recalling to memory and ruminating over what he had learned the evening before.” Alciat remarked, at the foot of his chair, that profound look fixed upon him, that smile which admiration only could extort from the serious youth, and, as at Orleans, Calvin may have been deemed irrevocably won over to the science which had so great a charm for him.

VI.

But Calvin, for a moment drawn aside, had begun anew to sigh after a science more serious than even that of human laws, and that other science had, at Bourges, an eminent representative. Melchior Wolmar, also summoned by Francis I., ostensibly taught the Greek of Homer, Demosthenes, or Sophocles, but less publicly, though with small attempts at concealment, the Greek of another book, far mightier and more important. He had known this book in Germany; and in Luther’s hands he had seen it change the faith of that country. There, he said, was the answer to every problem, the remedy for every abuse; and the rest of every heavy laden soul, whether erudite or ignorant.

At the present day, there are those who deny that, at that epoch, the Bible could be so great a novelty. They show that it existed in print before the Reformation, both in Germany and in France; and they think thereby to refute all that Protestants say as to the oblivion to which it had been consigned, and the care which the Church had taken to conceal it.

The proofs they bring, were they all strictly correct, must all give way before the incontestable fact, that teachers and peoples were alike surprised, profoundly surprised, when they opened the Bible, and began to study its pages. That some, like Luther, should never before have read it or seen it, and that others, like Calvin, should perhaps have had occasion to see and read it, was of no account. Both, under the influence of the same inward movement, felt themselves, with that book, in a new world, and each, according to his genius, began to search among treasures so long unknown. Luther, the warm-hearted and imaginative, utters a cry at each discovery, and each cry is repeated by millions of voices. Calvin, more calm, will speak to the world only when he has discovered all, and classified every discovery. Luther fervently presses the Bible to his lips at every response it gives to the

questions of his soul. Calvin demands of it a system, and the more clearly the system rises before him, the more clearly is the Bible to him the word of God, the Truth, and the source of all truth. He will not, like Luther, attack Romanism, first at one point and then at another, by degrees, as his studies offer him the opportunity. He will overthrow the edifice only when he has at his command, ready hewn and numbered, all the stones of the future building. But for him, as for Luther, and for all who, in that country, had opened or were to open the Bible, the Bible was as completely a revelation as though the earth then saw it for the first time.

This was the revelation, of which his soul had had the presentiment, and after which his spirit had sought, and the question now was, to take possession of it. Calvin, therefore, set to work with all the ardour demanded by such a task. His other studies leaving him but little time, he stole from his slumbers wherewithal to read the Scriptures. Now he inquired their meaning of the commentators of every age. Now setting aside the works of man, he stood face to face with the pages of Inspiration, and, in all probability, it was not then that he experienced the most difficulty in penetrating their sense. But he was filled with awe at these solitary communings with the Divine thought, and, more than once, like Luther, he heard the inward voice (which whispered to the German reformer, “Art thou the only wise? the only intelligent? Canst thou reasonably imagine that the Church is mistaken, and that it is thou who seest clearly?” Other voices also made themselves heard: indolence and timidity suggested, “Would it not be better to renounce these investigations and remain in the old stream of thought, believing or seeming to believe what others do? Wherefore cast myself into this agony at the risk of gaining nought save persecution?” Calvin was not one of those for whom danger has charms, and who see in it an argument in favour of a cause to be embraced. That chivalrous idea was at no time his. Not only was he too much of a logician to allow any external or accessory circumstance to dictate to him as to the substance of things, but, he tells us, he was by nature “timid and lax in danger”¹—a sad confession had it been penned by one who yielded to constitutional weakness. A noble confession from one who never faltered. Calvin, therefore, did not heed the voice which counselled silence and repose; and if he entered upon his career only after examination, from duty, reason, and conscience, his progress was not less steady than if he had been impelled onward by enthusiasm. As to the other voice which endeavoured to alarm him at his audacity, he heeded it even less. The errors of Romanism were in his eyes too patent for him to fear seriously, lest he should be rash in the sight of God in striking a blow at them in the name of the gospel. As to man’s judgment, he cared but little for that. The one thing alone to be respected in

¹ Preface to “Commentary on the Psalms.”

this world was, in his eyes, truth. No respect, no consideration of any kind was thought due by him to what was not truth. Other maxims obtain at the present day, and these maxims are certainly not devoid of good. They are connected with incontestable progress in charity, and in a just and Christian mistrust of self. But they are connected also, and too often, with weaknesses and meannesses such as Calvin never knew. Did he know those secret conflicts of which Luther's soul had been the scene?

What brought Luther to doubt in Romanism was the feeling of sin, the impossibility of finding peace in the expiations indicated to him by the Church. He sought, and was in torment till he found peace, and that was for him the surpassing revelation, the sublime gush of light which rendered all the gospel luminous. Calvin, in this respect, had not to seek. Olivetan, perhaps, and Wolmar certainly, told him what Luther had found, and justification by faith was early pointed out as the solution of the grand problem. But to know the solution was a small thing. It was requisite that it should become true *for him*, for his own soul, that he should understand and accept it, as a matter of faith must be understood and accepted, under penalty of never being aught save a matter of form, a mere formula. It was on this ground that the conflict took place, and to it apparently the Reformer alluded in the somewhat vague details he gave as to the state of his soul at that epoch. "I was very far," he says, "from having a conscience perfectly tranquil. Every time I went down into myself or raised my heart to God, so extreme a horror fell upon me that no purifications, no satisfactions, could cure me of it. And the more closely I considered myself the sharper were the goads which pressed my conscience, so that there remained to me no other comfort than to deceive myself by forgetting myself." But God had mercy on him. "Though I was so obstinately addicted to the Papal superstitions, that it was very hard to draw me out of that deep slough, God subdued and gave my heart docility by a sudden conversion." That *docility*, according to the preceding details, was evidently the final renunciation of the Romish idea of salvation by works and religious practices,—a notion always dear to the old man, and the final acceptance,—always painful to the old man, of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. The gospel appeared to him in all its clearness and grandeur, and his vocation was decided. The theologian took final precedence of the lawyer. "Having, therefore, acquired some taste and knowledge of true piety, I was immediately inflamed with so great a desire to profit, that, albeit I did not wholly abandon other studies, I somewhat relaxed in my zeal for them."

VII.

But his friends had not waited for the end of this long heart-work to compel him to preach to them the things which he was yet studying in fear and

trembling. They had an instinctive confidence in him, and in his genius, and just as, when a simple student at Orleans, he had been sometimes called upon to ascend the chair of jurisprudence, so now, in despite of himself, he was compelled to teach that science whose field is heaven, the human soul, and eternity. "Before the year was past," he tells us, "all who showed any desire for the pure doctrine came towards me to learn, though I was but myself a learner." He was *quite amazed* at it, the more so, he adds, "that being by nature somewhat unsocial and shamefaced, I have always loved repose and tranquillity. I began therefore to seek some hiding place and means of withdrawing myself from the people; but so far was I from succeeding in my desire, that all retreats and isolated places were for me like public schools." And he then relates how, in spite of all his desire to be unknown, God had so "led him and whirled him about," as to leave him no repose "in any place whatever," till, notwithstanding his very different inclination by nature, "He had brought him to the light and into action."

These details belong either to the close of his stay at Bourges, or to his stay at Paris, whither he subsequently repaired. Here again it is impossible to give precise dates. A letter written by him from Paris, bears the date of July, 1529. It is still at Paris that we see him in 1532, and all seems to indicate that he passed there, if not the whole, at least the best part of those three years. At this period, we find him lodging with a tradesman, Etienne de la Forge, "whose memory ought to be blessed among believers as a holy martyr for Christ."¹ Etienne de la Forge, in fact, perished in 1535, the victim of his zeal for the Reformation, and probably also of his friendship for the reformer. It was at his house that Calvin began to hold assemblies, at first in secret, and afterwards almost in public. People of every rank gradually enlarged his little church which might, in one day, be drowned in blood by persecution. As for himself, he had at length accepted his task, and appeared to be entirely devoted to its accomplishment.

VIII.

It was not therefore without exciting some surprise that in that same year 1532, Calvin published a book altogether foreign to the burning questions of the day—his Commentary on the *De Clementia* of Seneca. Several of his historians have not been able to reconcile themselves to this seeming parenthesis. They contend that the hidden motive of the work was to induce Francis I. to manifest less severity towards the Protestants, and great efforts have been made to find in the book traces of such an intention. Now the author, in his most confidential letters, says nothing of the kind. Nor is there anything in his later works, in which he might so often have found an opportunity of

¹ Calvin. "Against the Libertines."—ch. iv.

recalling the true intention of this. Besides, had he entertained such an idea, it is not under that form that he would have insinuated it. In fact, the idea attributed to him does not belong to his age, and is one from which no man was further than he. To ask *clemency* of a king for the friends of the Reformed Faith would, in his eyes, have been to ask clemency and compassion for truth,—for the Gospel, and to ascribe to that king authority over God Himself. The men of the sixteenth century never asked for *toleration* in the more modern sense of the word, a fact too much forgotten when they are so loudly accused of not having granted it themselves while the power was in their hands. Never did they say to the mighty: “Tolerate us: considering us, if you think proper, as having gone astray, and leaving us, indulgently, in peace.” They said: “We are the representatives of truth; we are the truth.” Their rights were to them, those of truth itself, and *toleration* is not asked for truth. All this was not very philosophical, assuredly, and far from humble; but it was, at least, courageous, and the humility which they lacked is too often only that of the men of little faith. The Reformed religion, in one word, had only learned to offer the mighty these two alternatives,—to submit to her, or to crush her.

The Commentary on Seneca is therefore a book of pure erudition, but one of the best of the epoch, rather heavy as to its matter, but elegant and noble as to its form. Calvin is wise enough not to imitate Seneca, though he follows him step by step, and while he praises his style as a writer of a declining period, he himself continues to be inspired by those of the Golden Age. Great praise was given to his Latinity; and his science was admired. This science, however, was rather that of the departing generation, a borrowed science, wealthier in quotations than in experiments, and more proud of collecting than of creating. The future innovator it would seem, will, as yet, only contribute his quota in the somewhat decayed society of the Literati of the *renaissance*, the old Romans and Greeks, who issued for a moment from the tomb to see the birth of a new world. True, the author chosen by him is the austere Seneca; “Seneca, whose vigorous sentiments,” Beza tells us, “bore some resemblance to the manners of Calvin, who always read him with pleasure.” But if the selection is that of the stoic, the Commentary is none the less that of the man of letters,—serious, yet florid; and learned, but with that learning the vanity of which Calvin, more than any other was about to make men feel. Be that as it may, this book was not to be lost as regards the future work of Calvin. The reputation of the man of letters was to pave the way for the Reformer.

But the book, meanwhile, procured him more of glory than of profit. His letters at that period reveal to us the difficulty he had experienced in finding the means to have it printed, and then, his anxiety as to its sale. “The die is cast,” he writes to one of his friends, Francois Daniel. “My Commentary has

made its appearance, but at my own expense, and it has cost me more money than thou wouldst imagine." He hopes to cover this outlay; but his aspirations go no farther. Were they satisfied? We know not. This alone is certain, that, in spite of the extensive circulation which his works eventually obtained, they did not enrich him. At his death he left three hundred crowns,—one fourth of what the King of France gave yearly to Alciat.

It was, however, while thus straitened, that he resolved to give up the curacy and chaplaincy which were his means of subsistence. His enemies never could and never did say that he had been forced to do so. It was of his own free will that he refused to be supported by the Church, which he would no longer serve. Is he to be reproached for not having done so earlier? This would be to judge the facts of that time by posterior facts, and to regard the situation as far more clearly defined than it could yet be. The men who led the movement did not think of quitting the Church, but of transforming her. They did not feel bound in conscience, therefore, at the outset, to give up the position they occupied in her bosom. Why should Calvin, from the very beginning, have renounced the idea of preaching one day, as curate, in his parish of Pont-l'Evêque, what he preached at Paris without an official title? For had not curates in Germany and Switzerland remained as ministers in their converted parishes?

Meanwhile, Calvin had sold his share of the paternal inheritance, either to pay his printer, or to be master of his slender fortune, when the storms should come which he too clearly foresaw.

IX.

The storm was in fact becoming more and more threatening, and Calvin was defying it more and more openly. The man of action had succeeded to the man of study, but without the abdication of the latter. It was "among his books," Pasquier tells us, "that Calvin showed himself most active for the progress of his sect." A bond ever stronger linked him with those whom his word had gained. "We saw sometimes," adds Pasquier, "our prisons overflowing with poor deceived people, whom without ceasing, he exhorted, comforted, and strengthened by his letters, and he was never lacking in messengers to whom the doors were opened, in spite of all the care of the gaolers to prevent it. It is by such proceedings that inch by inch he gained a part of our France." In an enemy's mouth, this is no mean praise. Calvin has not, like Luther, the glorious lot of setting in motion vast countries by one blow. It is *inch by inch*, that he conquers part of France; and part of Paris to begin with. Because the great remained as yet unmoved, he devotes himself to the small. It has often been said that the movement in France originated in the upper ranks, and was not popular, at least not at the outset. That is incorrect.

A certain movement originated indeed in the upper ranks, witness Marguerite of Valois, the king's sister; but it was met by another movement from below, to fortify and direct, which Calvin was then labouring at Paris. He had well understood that every Church, like every State, which will live, must be founded upon the people. Hence his unseen and indefatigable devotedness, supported by success and sanctified by peril.

But he had not renounced conquests more splendid; and amongst the people who were *deceived* by his word, as Pasquier says, was the rector of the university, Nicolas Cop. Cop had, according to custom, to deliver a speech on the octave of Martinmas. He begged Calvin to write it for him; and Calvin "framed for him," says Beza, "an oration very different from what was customary." Very different, indeed, for the merit of works was roughly handled, and justification by faith was distinctly preached. The Sorbonne was in commotion. The parliament took the matter in hand; and Cop, learning that he was going to be arrested, fled to Basle. But the true author of the harangue was known, or, at least, suspected, and the parliament was glad of the opportunity which at last offered for arresting him. Warned in time, "he escaped," as Desmay relates, "by a window, and ran to the St. Victor suburb, to a vine-dresser's, and changed his clothes there." Meanwhile, the famous criminal lieutenant,¹ Jean Morin, was searching his papers, which betrayed the names of several of his adherents. The greater part of them, like himself, were obliged to flee.

He withdrew at first to the castle of the lord of Hazeville, near Mantes, then to Saintonge, into the house of a canon of Angoulême, Louis du Tillet, a secret partisan of the Reformation. At last, he went where many of those whom persecution had chased from Paris, Orleans, and Meaux, had taken refuge. Marguerite, the Queen of Navarre, held her court at Nerac, and it was there she gave them an asylum.

Marguerite of Valois, the sister of Francis I., is one of the most interesting personages of that century. The daughter of a shameless mother, and the wife of a profligate husband, she preserved herself pure and respected in the midst of a corrupt court, and the first rumours of the Reformation had found her ready to seek earnestly after truth. As early as 1521, she read the Bible and had it explained to her by the pious Le Fèvre. Scarcely was she converted to evangelical truth than her sole desire was that her brother should also be converted. The King consented to be present at the private assemblies, presided over by Michel d'Arande, in her residence, and seemed to be affected. With what joy did she write to Briçonnet, the Bishop of Meaux, who had sent her Michel d'Arande! With what happiness did she state that even the queen-

¹ A magistrate of the old Parisian court of justice, the Chatelet. His office was to take cognisance of criminal cases.—*Tr.*

mother, Louise of Savoy, appeared to incline towards the Reformation! During the whole of 1522 these feelings of the king and queen continued to gain strength. But the queen's ambition was too worldly, and the king's levity too inveterate. Then came the battle of Pavia, lost by the cowardice of the duke of Alençon, who died of shame shortly after. Left a childless widow, Marguerite was almost on the point of marrying Charles V., and who can say what might not have been her influence on that arch-enemy of the Reformation! The king refused the alliance; and in 1527 gave his sister to Henri d'Albret, the king of Navarre. But in vain did she expect results from the favourable dispositions which she had flattered herself she had seen in her brother. If he did not go so far as to persecute, he allowed persecution in his own name, and the most he granted to Marguerite's entreaties was an order that some whom the Church would fain have smitten, should remain in peace. The Church, however, might again clutch her prey, and there was no security save in the States of the princess at Nerac.

Among those who were there at that time, was the aged Le Fèvre, he who had been the first to see clearly what Providence was preparing, and who one day, at the very outset, seizing Farel's hand, had said to him, "My dear Guillaume, God will renew the face of the world, and *you* will see it!" But Farel had had to leave France, and Le Fèvre asked himself, not without discouragement, who then would inherit the part which had been taken from his friend, till then the most eloquent and able of the apostles of the Reformation. But when he saw Calvin, he soon perceived that a greater than Farel was there, and one who excelled all the others; and Beza tells us that he looked with "a favourable eye upon the young man, as if presaging that he was one day to effect the *restoration* of the Church in France." Le Fèvre still believed, or wished to believe, in the possibility of the regeneration of the Church by the Church—by a reconstruction without a previous demolition. It was he who, in his lectures on faith at the Sorbonne—which were at first but little noticed—had discerned, ten years before Luther, the hidden organic defect of Romanism, and the secret of the regeneration sought after; but he still retained, fifteen years after Luther, the reverence and illusions which had at first held back the arm of the German monk. Calvin proved to him that nothing would be obtained by that course. It is said, that what the sight of so many events had failed to do, Calvin did, and that the old man suffered himself to be convinced that there was no accommodation possible between the Gospel and Rome—that the axe must be laid to the foot of the tree.

Calvin was less successful with Gerard Roussel, the queen's almoner or chaplain. Roussel is one of those men whom it is difficult to judge; ardent at first, prudent afterwards, but of such a prudence that it is not easy to say whether it is prudence or cowardice, charity or weakness, Christian concession or calculation. Roussel said mass, and Marguerite heard it. A strange

mass, it is true, with bread instead of the host, and wine for all the communicants; no elevation or adoration of the host (which was equivalent to the abandonment of the real presence); and no mention of the Virgin and the saints. This mass was, as it were, the symbol of Roussel's Christianity—evangelical in substance, but Romish in form; and therefore powerless and barren. Nothing authorises the idea that Roussel was not sincere; but Calvin vainly attempted to give him clearer views. When he was made a bishop, not long after, there seemed ground for thinking that his strong recommendation "to cleanse the house of God rather than to destroy," proceeded chiefly from his desire to keep a good place for himself in that house. Calvin made him pay dearly for it, by addressing to him his treatise "against the *Nicodemites*"—who go to the Lord by night, and by day remain Pharisees. We shall have to speak of this treatise.

X.

At this time,—about 1530 or 1532, it was not only the covetous or weak Nicodemites who acted like Roussel. We have mentioned the scruples and illusions of Le Fèvre; and we might name other men in whom it was rather the absence of clear notions respecting an unprecedented state of affairs. Many evidently did not know where to find the precise line between Romanism and heresy. Even to its doctors, Romanism was far from standing out, with the distinctness which the Council of Trent was about to give to all its parts. Many, therefore, at the outset, had allowed themselves to be carried on very far without suspecting that they had passed the bounds. Many, even at the period in question, had gone beyond, without deeming themselves heretics, and without thinking of ever becoming such. Besides, what they were told, was taught by the gospel, and it did not occur to them that it could be the contrary of what the Church taught. At most they supposed that it had been left in the background, to be brought forward when asked for. If, moreover, some went so far as to own to themselves that the Church positively taught errors, the dogma of infallibility was then sufficiently vague not to absolutely exclude the idea of a few corrections to be accepted, yea, voted, by herself at the request of a few pious doctors. Many priests, and some of the best, were in that position. The more they loved and venerated the Church, the less, they thought, did they depart from her true spirit by welcoming so much as seemed to be good in the new ideas.

A curious fact may be thus explained—the reception given by the clergy at Angoulême to Calvin, when driven from Paris. They knew him to be under sentence of imprisonment for the rash things sown broadcast in the rector's address, but still they trusted him three times to pronounce that which it was customary to deliver in the church of St. Peter at the synodal assemblies.

Ræmond, who relates the fact, does not tell us what these discourses were, nor are we better informed as to what was contained in those models of sermons and “Christian remonstrances” which Du Tillet asked of him for the neighbouring curates; but we learn from other details that he was less than ever disposed to dissemble. Numerous conversions, decidedly evangelical, sufficiently show that he was the same as he had been at Paris.

As we have already said, he resided with Du Tillet, a canon of the cathedral, and in the village of Claix, of which Du Tillet was the curate. This ecclesiastic had travelled much. Three or four thousand volumes, an enormous number for the times, composed his library. No one was better fitted than Calvin to appreciate such treasures, and he enjoyed them so much as to make his friend both happy and proud. Calvin acknowledged his hospitality by teaching him Greek,—another way of teaching him the gospel. According to Ræmond, it was in the canon’s library that Calvin, “in order to entrap Christendom, first wove the web of his ‘Christian Institutes,’ which we may call the Koran, or rather the Talmud of heresy.” The fact is not proved. The Reformer may have even before conceived the idea of his book. It does not appear that he was employed upon it at that period. Ræmond adds that “he was held in good esteem and reputation, and loved by all who loved letters.” The man of letters and the man of learning decidedly experienced some difficulty in suffering an eclipse in order that thereafter the preacher and Reformer only might appear. In the library of the canon he probably had more than once sighed after the repose which it might have afforded him. More than once was he tempted no longer to lend an ear to appeals from without, and above all to hear no longer that which resounded in his conscience. Another journey to Noyon must find its place in this period. The documents collected by Le Vasseur show us Calvin signing, on the 4th of May 1534, his definitive renunciation of his two benefices, one of which he resigned in favour of Antoine de la Marlière, the other in favour of a relative. It is unnecessary to remark here how completely this public return to his native town, and especially his free and public renunciation of his two offices, as recorded by Le Vasseur, might serve to deprive of every shadow of probability and plausibleness the shameful motives which some have dared to ascribe to his first departure.

Shortly after, we find him again at Paris. Queen Marguerite had obtained of the king, her brother, that the affair of the address should be allowed to drop. She had also obtained that the obscure *Lutherans*, the *poor deceived people* of Pasquier, should be left a little more tranquil. But a vigilant eye was kept over them. Persecution was only waiting as was presently seen, for an opportunity, and Jean Morin was burning for revenge.

It was at Paris, on the same journey, that Calvin first met with a man whom, unhappily, he was to meet for the second time at Geneva—Michael

Servetus, the Spaniard, the adventurous theologian who seemed in quest of the stake. His book upon the Trinity, which had just appeared at Hagenau, might have passed for a philosophical speculation only, far from orthodox, assuredly, but lost in scholastic mists. The Church had long been generally very indulgent to opinions which did not encroach upon its power. But the author made it a point that there should be no mistake as to the tendency of his book. He repaired to Basle, and sustained his thesis against Œcolampadius. He repaired to Paris, and there he declared that he would sustain it against Calvin. This was tantamount to saying that he intended to go beyond the boldest, and that, if the Reformers attacked the Church only on certain dogmas of the Church, he aimed at the very heart and soul of the Christian system. Calvin accepted the challenge. The dispute was to take place in a house in the suburb of St. Antoine; but Servetus, it was never known why, did not appear. No matter, we shall not forget, when the time comes, the position into which the Spanish theologian had just thrust the leaders of the Reformation, and Calvin in particular. By selecting him for his adversary on the question of the Trinity, upon which no variance existed between Romanism and the Reformation, he, in a measure, constituted him the guardian of that doctrine, and rendered him responsible for it before all Christendom. It was this responsibility which, nineteen years afterwards, kindled the pile of Servetus.

XI.

Meanwhile, however, many other faggots were to be lighted. The reformed, as we have said, had been left for some time in peace, but on condition that they should become invisible—a condition scarcely acceptable in times of fervour and expansion. Speech being nearly interdicted, they wrote; and every morning Paris beheld little tracts in the form of handbills, posted up in the streets, on the doors of the churches, and even on the doors of the Sorbonne. Some of them were very gentle appeals to the gospel, others very violent, though it would be unfair to judge them by our more polished habits. Beza, in his “Ecclesiastical History,” expressed his lively regret for such imprudence; but there is great reason to doubt if he was right when he adds: “It appeareth that, little by little, the king himself had begun to relish some portions of the truth.” The king had had time to taste, not only “some portions,” but the whole of the truth, and, if he had not done so, it was because there was in him that which has ever been the most difficult for truth to subdue—levity, which cares not for it, and vice, which repels it. A wit, and a brilliant representative of the vainer aspects of his age, he might find a certain intellectual and philosophical pleasure in hearing new things propounded and old things demolished, but if those old things had lost their hold on his mind,

they were still rooted in his heart, which was too corrupt to receive an efficacious and regenerating doctrine. The clergy, whom he had taken pleasure in alarming by humming Marot's Psalms, and by talking of sending for Melancthon—the Church, whom he had frequently shown how little he esteemed either her or her ministers, was needed by him that he might continue to slumber on the pillow of easy piety and cheap pardons. Hence his hatred of those who had removed the novelty out of the regions of wit and fancy, receiving and preaching it as a serious, living, and potent reality. He might, indeed, still listen to the intercession of a beloved sister; but pitiless counsellors soon renewed their attack, and the royal wit was again a persecutor.

They experienced no difficulty, therefore, in irritating him against the placards, so multiplied that the name of *year of the placards* long designated that year. These penetrated even into the king's palace, and to the very door of his cabinet, placed there, perhaps, by a hand which was hostile to the reformers; and the king took this bravado very ill. At last, one day, the 18th of October 1534, Paris awoke inundated with "True articles on the horrible and great abuses of the Papal mass." They were only the ordinary objections against the real presence, but expressed in terms which it was easy to represent to the king as so many blasphemies. The author, who has never been known, had freely used those lively phrases, the effect of which can only be to irritate those whom they fail to convince. His principal thesis is, that the true profaners of the body of Jesus Christ, those who ought to be burned, are those who place that body in a bit of dough, the food, perhaps, "of spiders and of mice." Some reflections followed, not less blunt, but very just, upon "the fruit of the mass"—that is to say, upon the pernicious results of that concentration of Christianity into a single act, which was an inexhaustible round of ceremonies, and a perpetual encouragement to formality. It was, therefore, the Church herself who, by giving to the mass such immense prominence, drew upon it the principal attacks; but that immense and consecrated prominence, on the other hand, facilitated and justified the accusation of sacrilege brought against all those who dared to disapprove.

The king might therefore think, with some fairness, that the Divine Majesty had to be defended and avenged. From the Divine to the royal majesty, the passage, as always happens, had been easy, and his counsellors had not wanted reasons. How should he, a mere king, a mere man, pretend to be still respected, if he allowed the King of kings to be outraged? The vengeance of the King of kings was assigned to Jean Morin. All who were suspected of any ardour for the new ideas were arrested, and in a few days the prisons were overflowing. But a solemn expiation was also required, and the king was persuaded into presiding over it.

On the 29th of January 1535, a splendid procession issued from the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. That host which the Reformers outraged

by persisting in calling it bread, was carried under a canopy, borne by the four chief dignitaries of the realm, the Dauphin, and the Dukes of Orleans, Vendôme and Angoulême. The king walked behind, bareheaded, with a torch in his hand, as if to make expiation for the kingdom. After mass, which was magnificently celebrated at St. Geneviève's, the king repaired to the episcopal palace, seated himself upon a throne prepared in the great hall, and, surrounded by the clergy, and the nobility and parliament in their red robes, declared his intention of granting neither peace nor truce to him who should separate from the religion of the State. He had seen, he said, "the offence committed against the King of kings by the pestilent wickedness of those who would molest and destroy the French monarchy." He was above all indignant that his good city of Paris, "from time immemorial the head and pattern of all good Christians," had not been sheltered from that pestilence, and, said he, "it would be very absurd in us if we did not confound and extirpate these malignants, as far as in us lies." He enjoined upon all to denounce whoever should belong to the malignants, even though a relative or a brother. Finally: "As for me who am your king, if I knew that one of my members was tainted or infected with this detestable error, not only would I give it you to lop it off, but if I were to perceive one of my children infected, I would sacrifice him myself."—Philip II., therefore, who later on was to say as much, did but repeat Francis I. And the same day, by way of beginning, six fires, in six different parts of the town, consumed six men taken almost indiscriminately from amongst those whom the king had just devoted to death. One only was decidedly more guilty than the rest, Antoine de la Forge, the host and friend of Calvin. But the stake was not enough—must not the punishment, like the solemnity, be novel and extraordinary? The condemned, fastened to a long swinging beam, were to be plunged into the flames, then withdrawn, then plunged again, and then withdrawn once more. The King of France, like the ferocious Roman Emperor, had wished that his victims should feel themselves die, and, moreover, he had determined to behold their tortures with his own eyes. As he returned to the Louvre, he passed the six fires in succession. Six times he saw the abominable swing at work, but he did not succeed in detecting any weakness or regret in the martyrs.

Thus that gloomy period was opened in which, by the arm of a king sunk in debauchery, the Church was about to wreak her vengeance. Whilst you read these atrocious details, you have difficulty in believing yourself in France or in Europe. You ask yourself if history has not lied in placing in that same century, and at that same epoch, a revival of learning, and a rejuvenescence of civilization. See what the sight of these cruelties extorted from an enemy of the Reformation, the same Ræmond from whose works so many have learned to detest it:—"The fires were lighted everywhere, and as, on the one hand, the just severity of the law restrained the people within their

duty, on the other, the obstinate resolution of those who were dragged to the gibbet astonished many. For they saw weak and delicate women seeking for torments in order to prove their faith, and on their way to death exclaiming, ‘only Christ, the Saviour,’ and singing some psalm; young maidens, walking more gaily to execution than to the bridal-chamber; men rejoicing to behold the terrible preparations and instruments of death, and, half-burnt and roasted, remaining like rocks against the waves of pain. These sad and constant sights excited some perturbation, not only in the souls of the simple but of the great, who were not able to persuade themselves that truth was not on the side of such as maintained it with so much resolution at the cost of their life. Others had compassion on them, being grieved to see them thus persecuted; and contemplating in the public places their grimy corpses hanging in the air by shameful chains, the relics of tortures,—they could not refrain from tears; and their hearts wept as well as their eyes.”

XII.

Calvin, who was forced to keep silence before this dreadful onslaught, resolved to seek an asylum where he might at least enlighten and strengthen from afar those whom he could not aid when nigh. He repaired, however, again to Angoulême to take leave of Du Tillet, and Du Tillet determined to accompany him.

They stopped at Poitiers, and scarcely was the presence of Calvin known than he saw “flocking to him,” as at Bourges, all “who manifested any desire for pure doctrine,” and Poitiers counted many such. Near the town is a grotto, which to this day bears the name of Calvin’s grotto. There, the tradition is, he assembled his friends, and Ræmond relates that he often interrupted himself, to kneel down and implore the Divine blessing on them, on him, and on France. It is pleasant to mention these impulses, of too rare occurrence in his life, and to see him figure with more emotion than usual, in those scenes which so vividly recall the first ages, the holy beginnings of Christianity and the Church. This grotto witnessed the celebration of the first evangelical communion. A fragment of rock served for a table. Almost all the communicants were eventually to be eminent preachers of the Reformed faith. Vernou, at Poitiers; Babinot, at Toulouse; Véron in Saintonge, were the first to take the field, and others soon followed. Thus in obscurity were laid the foundations of that immense influence which Calvin was soon to exert. The most illustrious labourers in the French Reformation gloried in proceeding from him, and some who had not been converted by his presence and his word, were converted after his departure by the distant fascination of his renown. But in France, and everywhere else, his reputation was going to be still more that of the great Christian than that of the man. “Calvin succeeded,” M. Renan says, “because he was the most Christian man of his age.” Though from

a pen far from Calvinistic, not to say far from Christian, this explanation appears to us profoundly just. Calvin's contemporaries may have equalled or surpassed him in piety and in devotedness; but none, not even Luther, equalled him as the complete, and, in a measure, the official representative of evangelical Christianity.

The mysteries of the grotto had at length transpired, and Calvin was warned that he was no longer safe at Poitiers. He therefore set out again, but stopped at Orleans to publish a book, his *Psychopannychia*, which afterwards appeared in French, under the title of: "A *Treatise by which it is proved that souls are awake after they leave the body, against the error of some ignorant men who think that they sleep till the Judgment Day.*" *Some ignorant men!* This is the tone which too often spoils Calvin's finest passages. When he refutes, there is always a little anger, a little contempt, and sometimes a great deal; always that assurance which will not allow him to admit it possible for one to differ from him without being a dolt, a dunce, or a traitor. The *ignorant* here are not the Anabaptists only, though specially intended by Calvin, but several of the Fathers, Origen, amongst others, who admitted the hypothesis of a sleep between death and the resurrection. The hypothesis may be of no value, but the names of those who framed it deserved more consideration. For the rest, Calvin owns that there are in this treatise "some things rather sharply, or even harshly, said," but great qualities are there also, richness, strength, originality, a tone which is serious and full of conviction. As for the motives of that publication, they are scarcely more apparent than those of the Commentary on Seneca. Why this new treatise, which ignores the questions of the times? Would the author deceive his enemies by seeming occupied with anything rather than anti-papal controversy? We do not pause to discuss the point.

Calvin and Du Tillet set out for Strasburg accompanied by two servants, one of whom absconded near Metz with a horse and the baggage. They reached Strasburg, possessed of only ten crowns. But Strasburg was the haven. There, for the first time, Calvin breathed a friendly atmosphere. Strasburg had now for thirteen years belonged to the Reformed Faith. Drawn in at first by the great Lutheran movement, but, at some distance from the centre, and exposed to divers influences, it had passed through hard times. Bucer was labouring zealously to give it a regular church, wisely and prudently active. Calvin, who had long been in correspondence with Bucer, met in his house with a hospitality full of charms. The future framer of the Republic of Geneva probably gave Bucer much good counsel, not without profiting in turn by Bucer's experience.

Not, however, that he entertained as yet the remotest thought of ever acting such a part. He was sighing after rest, and hoping to find it more easily at Basle than at Strasburg, he started for Basle. There Ecolampadius had just

expired; there Capito and Simon Grynseus were labouring in peace; and there Erasmus was growing old. Erasmus was a man for rest at any price, but Calvin never sacrificed to repose either principle or duty.

At Basle, as everywhere, fearful tidings were arriving from the country which he had left. He heard, on the side of France, what seemed to be a ceaseless din of groans and cries. An echo from Germany taught him what evangelical France now expected from him.

Francis I. was in need of the Protestants of Germany, like himself, in arms against Charles V. Ever ready to lie when it suited his interests, he endeavoured to persuade the Lutheran Princes that those he was having burned in France were Anabaptists,—just such as Germany had been obliged to get rid of by fire and sword. What he, the king, punished in them was not their religious opinions, but their social doctrines, their revolt against all order and authority.

This calumny was also propagated in France by “certain wretched little books full of lies,”¹ fabricated by the clergy who were protected by the king.

XIII.

A great cause was therefore to be pleaded before Europe, and Calvin felt himself called of God to undertake it.

There were two ways of doing this,—by a simple apology for the Protestants of France, or by an exposition of their doctrines. The first might lead more speedily to the desired end, the second might achieve a more important and a nobler result,—the justification—not of the Reformed alone, but of the Reformation, the construction and consolidation of the edifice of which the materials only were as yet prepared.

Calvin chose the second task, and it is from that moment that the Calvin of history, the Reformer, stands out well-defined before us.

The man of genius, in fact, is not always the man who begins the work; it is sometimes he who continues and methodises it. It might even be said that it is always the latter; for, in fact, if you examine well, you will find out predecessors even of those who seem to have first discovered and entered upon the way. Luther, with his vigorous power to initiate, was, nevertheless, but the continuator of the obscure labour which had long been carried on in men’s minds and consciences. His genius seized it as a whole, and it is his glory to have given it shape. The glory of Calvin is not, therefore, so different as even his friends have sometimes thought. The difference lies at bottom but in the diverse nature of the two movements they personified—the German movement in Luther, and the French movement in Calvin. For the rest, whether we be friends or foes of these two men, we all recognize it by always

¹ Calvin. Preface to the “Commentary on the Psalm.”

connecting their two names. Even those Romanists of our own day, who, in order to depreciate the French Reformer, go so far as to pretend affection for the German Reformer, do not and will not any the less continue to speak with the multitude, and to say, “Luther and Calvin,—Calvin and Luther.”

The monument which Calvin was about to erect, and on which his name was to shine for ever, is his *Institutes of the Christian religion*, commonly called the *Christian Institutes*.

The “*Christian Institutes*” published at first at Basle, in 1535 or 1536, was to be work for Calvin’s whole life, for he never ceased revising and completing it. During twenty-four years, the book increased in every edition, not as an edifice to which additions are made, but as a tree which develops itself freely, naturally, and without the compromise of its unity for a moment. The early history of this book is not free from obscurity. The French preface, addressed to Francis I., is dated the 1st August 1535, and yet the first edition known is that of 1536, and in Latin. Hence the much debated question:—Is the edition of 1536 the first, or had there been a French edition the year before? Although the latter, if ever it existed, has totally disappeared, its publication is now generally admitted. The first French edition with a date is of 1540; but at that period the work was already much augmented.

What was then the *Christian Institutes* in 1536? It was, as the author will himself say later;¹ “not the present thick and elaborate work, but only a brief manual in which was attested the faith of those whom I beheld defamed.”

This *brief manual* was an 8vo. volume of about 500 pages. It contained only six chapters, entitled as follows :—

I. *Of the Law* (the explanation of the Decalogue).

II. *Of Faith* (the explanation of the Apostles’ creed).

III. *Of Prayer* (the explanation of the Lord’s Prayer).

IV. *Of the Sacraments* (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper).

V. *Of the Sacraments* (the falsity of the five which the Romish Church has added).

VI. *Of Christian Liberty* (ecclesiastical power, civil administration, Ac).

It was, therefore, after all, but a catechism; but that catechism contained all the elements of the important part which the *Christian Institutes* was to play in the Church. In the first place, it supplied a general want. The idea of such a book seems so simple now, that people are astonished that it had to be written, and that Luther especially had not undertaken the task. The *Loci Communes* of Melancthon, published in 1521, and afterward translated into French by Calvin himself, still belong to the schools. The new life is fundamentally there, indeed, but the method is essentially mediaeval, and scarcely modified by the piety and unction of the author. The book of Zwingle, his

¹ Preface to the “Commentary on the Psalms.”

Commentarius de vera et falsa Religions, had appeared in 1525, and though freed from the method of the *Loci*, the author is still far from a complete system of dogmatic divinity, at once precise and living. No one, however, had thought of reproaching him with it, any more than Melanchthon or Luther. It was necessary that the need of such a system should first be felt in men's hearts and minds; then they would ask for it, and would go forth with joy to meet him who should be the donor.

This movement had progressed more rapidly in France than in Germany. Whether calumniated or not, whether called or not to say what they believed, the Reformed of France wished to be able to say it to themselves, not only article by article, which many could have done, but under the more satisfactory and solid form of a system, and as a whole. Not one of them had yet done or been able to do this. The success of the *Institutes* in every Protestant country soon showed that the same need was felt everywhere, even where the faith was already officially settled. They wanted something more and something better than a Confession of Faith. They expected a book which should be a Confession, but be accompanied by all that would be necessary to understand and defend it. The *Institutes* was that book. It gave to the new Church the definitive feeling of its lawfulness, its rights, and its strength. By that clear and concise exposition of apostolic Christianity, that vigorous appeal to Scripture, and that haughty firmness in tracing the limits between human traditions and revealed truths, Calvin, in some sort, sealed with God's seal all that the Reformed faith had done, and started it in its new confidence towards the conquests which offered themselves to its zeal.

We do not judge, we narrate. If we judged, remarks might have to be made on the sovereign authority arrogated by the Reformer. But he was the man required; and when we see the Reformation adopt and admire him, is it for us, three centuries after, to come and coldly calculate if she was right or wrong in giving up all for a time in his hands? The correspondence of the period would furnish many a proof of the universal favour which greeted the *Institutes*, and which, in despite of the dryness of the book, soon kindled into enthusiasm. Listen, in 1537, to the professor of Poitiers, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, who deploras "that the voice of Calvin, the *Institutes*" cannot freely resound in the kingdom. "Happy Germany," adds he, "to possess the treasure which is refused to us!" Hear the magistrate of the Paris Parliament, a man who is to perish in the St. Bartholomew massacre, Pierre de la Place: "There is no one in the world," he writes to Calvin, "to whom I owe more than to thee, and I see not how I should repay thee in this mortal life for the immortality which I have found in thy book."

XIV.

The first edition, then, contained six chapters only. The second Latin edition, published at Strasburg in 1539, numbered seventeen; that of 1543, again revised, has twenty-one; that of 1559, the last and final revision, as many as eighty-four. As to the intermediate editions, their number is unknown. Although Latin was still received everywhere as the language of theology, it was, during this same period, translated into every European tongue. The French editions had followed the Latin editions step by step; and the definitive French text belongs, like the Latin, to 1559. A short preface, dated the 1st of August, as in that of 1535, initiates us into this persevering elaboration. After having observed how inconsiderable the book was at first, and how it had been successively augmented, he says: "Though I had no cause to be displeased with my labour in the matter, nevertheless I do confess that I had no satisfaction in it till I had digested it in its present order, which I hope you will approve." Having been menaced with death the winter before, he adds, "I spared myself all the less till I had completed the book, which, surviving after my death, might show how desirous I was to satisfy those who had already found profit in it. . . . I had wished to do it sooner; but it will be soon enough if well enough; and, for myself, it will suffice me that it hath borne fruit to the Church of God."

A complete analysis of this book would carry us too far; it would be a book in itself. We must, however, give more than the few details which precede, some quite general, and others purely bibliographical. The *Christian Institutes* is more than a book; it is an important part of Calvin's life, or, still better, a part, if not the whole, of Calvin himself. Let us therefore endeavour to give at least an idea of the work.

XV.

The design of the book, or the problem to be solved was this:—"Regularly to apply to dogmatic theology the principle of justification by faith, brought anew to light by Luther, and recognized as the sole true and possible basis of a *reformation* of the Church, in the largest sense of the word."

This solution Calvin has sought and found in a complete development of the doctrine of salvation, from the stand-point of the human conscience placed in the presence of each of the four divine manifestations which are to act upon it, revelation in the Father, in the Son, in the Holy Ghost, and in the Communion of the Church.

Hence there are four parts which were confused in the first editions, but which became more and more distinct, and ended by forming the four *books* of the work:—The knowledge of God and of his creative work; of Jesus Christ and of his redeeming work; of the Holy Ghost and of his regenerating

work; and, finally, of the Church, the *Body of Christ*, as the Apostle says, the depositary of the means of grace and salvation, but not so that she can save any one unless there be the new heart, regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

The first book treats therefore of the knowledge of God “*in his title and quality of Creator and sovereign Ruler of the world.*” But from the very first lines the author places himself and us under the eye of conscience. The summary of true religious science is, “that in knowing God, each of us knows himself also,” and no one, on the other hand, will know himself till he has contemplated the face of God, and, from regarding that, descends to regard himself.” But what is it to know God? It is not to fathom his nature, but to adore, love, and fear him. The light of nature would have sufficed for this, but sin has extinguished it. A revelation was therefore necessary. A book contains it, for it was also necessary that God “should have His authentic registers to write in them His truth, in order that it should not perish.” What testimony will these *registers* have of their divine origin? The Church? No, but the Holy Ghost Himself bearing witness in each of us to the truth of His work. “There is no true faith but that which the Holy Ghost seals in our hearts.” Such is the basis of Calvin’s dogmatic theology.

Seven chapters are devoted to these preliminaries. In the eighth the apologetic proofs of the truth of the Bible are placed, and in those which follow, the questions of the spirituality of God, of worship in the Spirit, of the Trinity, of the creation in general, of the creation of man, of his original faculties, and of his primitive state. Three chapters upon Providence terminate this first book, and lay, as they proceed, the foundations of the doctrine of election such as it will be developed in the second book.

The title of the second book is: *Of the Knowledge of God, in so far as He has showed Himself a Redeemer in Jesus Christ.*

Five chapters on sin hold the first place, for in Christian theology all depends upon the manner in which that question is considered. Calvin teaches the absolute incapacity of man to do of himself any good thing; but he teaches us, at the same time, not to draw the consequences which a selfish logic might infer therefrom. Incapable of raising himself up, man possesses in Jesus Christ an admirable means of restoration and salvation. It is to prepare him to accept this means that God gives him a moral law, a law which he will never observe so well that it will not convince him of sin. The design of this law, the exposition of the commandments which it contains, the connexion of the two covenants, their “similitude” and their differences, occupy five chapters. The five following are a complete Christology. Jesus, very man, very God, prophet, priest and king, has accomplished by His death the work of our salvation. The last chapter gathers together all the scriptural declarations which assert and guarantee the accomplishment of that work.

Salvation is now accomplished, but out of us; hitherto it is but an historical though divine fact, and a fact to which we might remain indefinitely strangers. How is it to be accomplished in each of us? This forms the subject of the third book, entitled: *Of the means of participating in the grace of Jesus Christ; of the fruits which accrue to us therefrom; and of the effects which follow thereupon.*

This “*means*” is faith. But if Calvin stopped there, the question would only be thrown back:—Does there exist a real and efficient connexion between faith and the work of salvation performed by Jesus Christ externally to us? No. There must be an agent to bring the two into contact; that agent is the Holy Ghost. It is therefore his part to create in us the ability to acquire something very different from the abstract and historical notion of salvation, and thus the soul is brought into connexion and contact, or rather into fellowship of life, with Jesus himself, the Author of salvation. Thus the soul appropriates to itself, not the idea, but the very substance of salvation.

Behold then at once both theory and precept. Salvation is life in Christ, and there is no salvation for him who does not live in Christ. But if faith, without the operation of the Holy Ghost, leads to nothing, it is nevertheless necessary to the work of the Holy Spirit in us, that faith should prevent, or meet, that almighty acting, or rather that the Holy Ghost should transform that faith into a force and a life. It is only then that it is truly *faith*. Till then it is merely a *belief*.

It is by the same working of the Holy Ghost that repentance brings forth fruit. Without this, it would be compunction only; a merely human affection. It must become regeneration: a thing divine. From faith and repentance thus rendered fruitful, the Christian life results. How does it develop itself? Calvin shows this in five chapters, which would suffice to prove how true and how deep this life was in him, in spite of the seeming aridity of his theology and of his heart

This being said, and so well said, the doctrine of justification by faith is fully laid down, and Calvin has only to explain it. He does so in eight chapters, not without showing, when required by his subject, how his theory answers by anticipation every objection. He goes over it again with reference to prayer, which is one of the principal manifestations of Christian life. This chapter is one of the richest, and is sealed with the clearest impress of Christian experience.

XVI.

At length comes the tremendous doctrine which was about to fall like a veil, and, in the eyes of many at the present day, almost like a shroud, upon the whole Calvinistic theology—the doctrine of predestination.

The existence of evil; the salvation of some, the condemnation of others; the circumstances which place one in the way to salvation, and another on the road to condemnation—these are facts which have ever been a problem. How shall the prescience of a just God be conciliated with the responsibility of a being whom that God knew would sin and be lost, and whom He consequently might either not have created, or might have created without the possibility of sinning? Reason can reply nought; the Scriptures, according as you press more or less some or others of their declarations, will make you lean more or less towards divine sovereignty, or towards free will, the only logical source of responsibility. Most theologians admitted an *election of grace*, which it was difficult not to see clearly taught in many of these declarations; but the greater part did not deem that this election of grace, the free and special manifestation of the divine goodness, implied election of death for those who were not its objects. They resigned themselves, therefore, to seek no farther, and left with God the eventual conciliation of all things.

According to Calvin, that conciliation is neither to be sought nor to be found, for it does not exist, nor ever will exist, and it is an attack on divine sovereignty to suppose God occupying Himself about it. God, in the fulness of His sovereignty, by “His eternal and immutable counsel,” has decreed some to salvation, others to damnation, and as He owed nothing to either, the elect have to bless Him everlastingly, and the reprobate have no right to complain. Calvin acknowledges, or nearly so, that there is no explicit statement to that effect in Holy Writ: it is sufficient for him that it is a logical deduction. “Those whom God in election passes over,” he will say, “God reprobates.” To admit the election of grace, and reject the election of death, is “puerile,” is “stupid folly.” Human ideas, human justice, and human pity, must be banished from these questions. “The honour of God” demands it.

Calvin forgets one thing only, which is, that logic is also human. Logic is reason, and even reason arrogating to itself the right of judging alone, supremely, and without appeal “The honour of God,” therefore, imperatively demands, also, that we should at times silence it, and that we should not presume to impose upon God our conclusions, however unanswerable, however clear they may seem to our intellect. When Calvin deems that predestination is proved by the sole fact of there being no other logical solution, his method, at bottom, is only that of the infidel establishing *logically* the impossibility of a supernatural revelation, or of the Romanist establishing, not less logically, that, a revelation being granted, God *must* have instituted a visible authority entrusted with its interpretation. All this supposes that God cannot find any solutions but such as appear, to us, the only possible ones: all this logic, consequently, is illogical, when the question relates to God, His designs, His wisdom, His goodness, and His power.

But having frankly made these observations, there are others which we have now the right to offer.

It has been customary to allow all the dislike which attaches to this doctrine to weigh upon Calvin.—An error and an act of injustice. The first who positively taught predestination was Augustine. It may seem to be milder in his writings, but there it is, and in its plenitude.

It has also become customary to condemn it in Calvin, by isolating it from all with which he surrounded it; and by representing it as the Alpha and Omega of his system.—Another error and act of injustice. What is true, and only true, is that the Reformer seems, on the contrary, to have exhausted his logic in setting forth the idea, so that none remains for the development of consequences. There is not a trace either in his theology, his ethics, or his life, of that practical fatalism which ought logically to result from the terrible dogma he taught. Never did a man more energetically preach responsibility, activity, duty, and Christian progress—never did a man more sternly preach all these things to himself. What we say of him we could say of his disciples. To them, as to himself, the doctrine of predestination remained a dead letter. It is contended that the Calvinist must necessarily have said: “Either I am one of the elect, and, if so, I shall be saved, do what I may; or, I am not one of the elect, and if so, do what I may, I am lost.” Logic still; but when and where, in fact, did Calvin’s error produce such fruits? And if it never has produced them, is it not a proof that it was not really what it appears to be in our day? It is for history, therefore, to judge it, rather than for reason, for sentiment, or for theology. It must be considered not in itself, but along with the whole work of Calvin, whether in his lifetime or after his death. Instead of being a basis, as it might unhappily have been, it has never been other than an appendix; and instead of destroying activity, courage, morality, and hope, it seems, on the contrary, to have given the soul a more vigorous temper, and to have made it face more boldly the severest duties and trials. All the martyrs who went to the stake, encouraged and comforted by some pious epistle from him who had taught them, believed in predestination. Neither disciples nor master, therefore, thought of doubting that the incorruptible crown was for every one who died with courage and with joy.

A writer, who certainly is no Calvinist, nor unhappily even a believer, is struck like ourselves by this moral, heroic aspect of the question. “Geneva,” says Michelet, “endured by its moral strength. It had no territory, no army,—nothing for space, time, or matter; it was the city of the mind, *built of Stoicism on the rock of predestination*. Against the immense and gloomy net into which, when abandoned by France, Europe fell, nothing less was necessary than that heroic seminary. To every people in peril Sparta, for an army, sent a Spartan. It was thus with Geneva . . . and now the combat commences! Below, let Loyola excavate his mines; above, let the gold of Spain, and the

sword of the Guises, dazzle or pervert! In that narrow enclosure, the gloomy garden of God, blood-red roses bloom under Calvin's hand for the preservation of the liberties of the soul. If in any part of Europe blood and tortures are required, a man to be burnt, or to be broken on the wheel that man is at Geneva, ready to depart, giving thanks to God and singing psalms to Him."

XVII.

The subject of the fourth and last book is the *Church*. Of the twenty chapters which it contains, the author devotes twelve to the question of the Church itself (its constitution, administration, discipline, &c.,) one to monastic vows, six to the Sacraments, and one to civil government, considered in its connection with the Church and Church government. We could only analyse this book in detail; besides, we shall have to resume several of the questions it broaches. The legislator of Geneva did but throw into the form of laws the ideas which are developed in this part of the work.

We have not spoken of polemics. They are everywhere, but always in their place, for they always follow upon direct teaching, and are called forth and justified by all that precedes. Calvin does not demolish for the sake of demolishing; he does not even demolish in order to build up on the same spot; he begins by building, tracing his lines, digging his foundation, raising, in short, all the time, the whole edifice of the teaching which occupies him, without caring for what he destroys or subverts. It is only after its completion that he retraces his steps, showing that what has fallen required to fall, and that what has not yet fallen must fall in like manner. It is easy to understand the authority which this gives him. His cause is almost always gained before hand. Every one of his ideas, before entering upon the conflict with those which are adverse to them, is become in some sort a fact achieved, admitted, and invulnerable. There is ability in this, doubtless, but there is also something more and better. Calvin is scarcely ever subtle, which is great praise for a theologian brought up amid the subtleties of old scholasticism; if he binds his opponents, it is with mighty cords, and never with the miserable threads which the schools had so long gloried in weaving. His ability, in a word, is that of genius, and his strength is that of faith. Armed with the Bible, he does not admit that he can be vanquished; accordingly, even when he employs the divine weapon amiss, we are obliged to allow that never man employed it with firmer conviction or with more profound respect.

Yet there is too frequently one thing which mars the enjoyment of all these lofty qualities. We have said elsewhere that it is the tone which the author assumes towards those whom he deems it his duty to combat. All the impatience and all the indignation which can be inspired by a false idea, Calvin thinks himself entitled to pour out upon all who teach or even accept that

idea. Though it is not in the “Christian Institutes” that he has the oftenest and the most fully merited this reproach, it is there, above all, that we regret to have to blame him. We would fain give ourselves up unreservedly to him; and it is painful to see him suddenly turn from the most pious thoughts, and the noblest forms of expression, to hurl at the prostrate foe some epithet not only abusive, but trivial and perhaps pitifully facetious. You ask yourself how he came not to understand that, in default of charity, the very interest and dignity of his cause forbade him to defend it thus.

The answer to this question is, in a certain measure, however, contained in the question itself and in the painful astonishment which calls it forth in our day. Calvin wrote for his own age not for ours. He was to blame, it is true; for a great author ought to write for every age; but he was writing for his own, and if he was absolved by it, or rather if it did not even occur to it that absolution was needed, so natural then did harsh polemics appear,—why, we must either also absolve him, or keep our reproaches for those who absolved, approved, encouraged and admired him. Let us wonder, if we will, that those blemishes did not endanger the success of the *Institutes*; but if the author in so many successive editions did not make them disappear, it evidently is because they had excited no animadversion. Let us regret them, but on our own account: to visit upon Calvin all the annoyance which they inflict upon us, would be to be guilty of injustice to him like that for which we blame him, for we also should then magnify into serious faults what are such only from our point of view, and according to our impressions.

And besides, how many beauties there are in the book to make you forget the blemishes! How many pages in which there is nothing to find fault with, and in which the author is not only free from the coarseness of his age, but almost in full possession of all the qualities which the French language was to assume after the progress of another hundred years! He knows and observes rules in grammar which as yet had not been framed; his genius discerns them in the genius of the tongue, and when at a later day they are fixed, it will only be the sanction of his Work. Yet what he does is purely instinctive; there is not a trace of solicitude about grammar, not a trace of care taken with the style or with the form of his matter. His thought moves freely and at large—phrases and periods arrange themselves without his seeming to think about it—and certainly without his thinking about it—and you feel that it would be almost wronging him to study separately his style, art, and calling. The writer and the Reformer are but one. Whether pen in hand, or labouring otherwise at his work, he is always the man for his work, always Calvin, all Calvin, and never was style more truly the man, and the whole of the man.

“Calvin’s style is simple, correct, elegant, clear, ingenious, animated, and varied in form and tone. Less learned, elaborate, and ornate than that of

Rabelais, but more ready, flexible, and skilful in expressing all the shades of thought and feeling. Less ingenious, agreeable, and rich than that of Amyot, but keener and more imposing. Less highly-coloured and engaging than that of Montaigne, but more concise and serious, and more French.”¹ “The *Christian Institutes* is the first work in the French tongue which offers a methodical plan, well arranged matter, and exact composition. Calvin not only perfected the language in general by enriching it, he created a peculiar form of language, of which the dements have been very diversely applied, but have not ceased to be the best, because they were from the beginning the most conformable to the genius of our country. It is the style of serious discussion, more habitually nervous than highly coloured. The formidable instrument by which French society was about to effect one advance after another. Calvin treats every question of Christian philosophy as a great writer. He equals the most sublime in his grand thoughts upon God, the expression of which was equalled but not surpassed by Bossuet”²

We have said enough upon this book, and we were not able to say less of it. The chronological order has been rather disturbed, for we were only in 1535, and the book then was scarcely more than a sketch of the one which we have been analysing. Yet, as we have already said, this sketch was the whole book; all that Calvin was going to put into it during twenty-four years, was already in his mind, and would be reproduced by him in all his teaching and in all his acts. There has been, therefore, no real anachronism in what we have just been saying of it. The definitive *Institutes* of 1559 and the primitive *Institutes* of 1535 are, under two forms, one and the same, the programme of the life which we have undertaken to narrate.

XVIII.

The preface of the book was, as it were, the first great public act of that life. Boldly addressed to the sorry prince whose follies and frenzies we have seen, it was an eloquent demand that he should at least hear before he struck.

“It hath seemed to me expedient,” says the author, “to make this present book serve both for instruction to those whom I had designed to teach, and for a confession of faith to you, whereby you may know what the doctrine is against which they are enflamed with so much rage, who trouble your kingdom with fire and sword. . . . I know well with what terrible reports they have filled your ears and heart . . . namely, that it tends only to the destruction of all rule and policy, the disturbance of peace, and the abolition of law. . . . I do not ask without reason, therefore, that you should please to take entire cognisance of this cause. . . . And think not that I essay here to treat

¹ Paul Lacroix (the Bibliophile Jacob).

² Nisard. “History of French Literature.”

my private defence with a view to obtain my return to the land of my birth. . . . I undertake the common cause of all the faithful, and even that of Christ, the which is now so utterly rent and trodden under foot in your kingdom, that its case appears to be desperate. For the might of God's adversaries hath obtained that the truth of Christ should . . . be hidden and buried as a shameful thing; and that the poor Church should be either consumed by cruel death, or expelled by banishments, or so confounded by menaces and terrors that she dare not utter a word. . . . And yet, no one cometh forth to oppose himself against such fury. And if there be some who would seem very much to favour the truth, they say that the imprudence and ignorance of simple people must be pardoned. For it is thus they speak, calling the very certain truth of God imprudence and ignorance."

Observe what we have already pointed out. The *poor crushed Church* asks for no toleration; she will not live by the favour of a pity which would entreat indulgence for the ignorance or imprudence of the *simple people* who belong to her. Those simple people, by the mouth of Calvin, speak in the name of *the truth of God*; they call upon the king to hear them, not that he may pardon them, but he himself converted to that truth which cannot but become clear to him who listens to it. If he does not listen, woe unto him, for "a man deceiveth himself if he expects long prosperity in a reign which is not governed by the sceptre of God, that is, by His holy Word. Will the King reject it because they who preach it to him are poor and despised?" Poor they are, indeed, and miserable, but it is before God, as all men and sinners are; and it is on this account that they cling to the doctrine which is their strength, their riches, and their joy—salvation by faith; a doctrine, adds Calvin, which "is not ours, but is that of the living God and of His Christ."

A rapid exposition of the Reformed and only Christian doctrine follows. It is summed up, he says, in one single point: Salvation by Jesus, and Jesus *alone*. The Reformed have rejected only that which could not agree with this great dogma, and it is not their fault if, in the process of sorting, they have had to set aside so many things. After all, therefore, the only crime of a people so cruelly treated, is their sincere return to the fundamental idea of Christianity and the Church.

And who are they who accuse them? Who are those who urge the King to exterminate them? Hitherto, Calvin has restrained himself; but here he breaks out. The clergy, so ardent in soliciting tortures, are animated and excused by no true zeal; their interests and authority are indeed their gods. The most flagrant immorality moves them but little; but they are moved by the slightest attack upon the rubbish on which they live, and which "makes their kitchen fat." The words are coarse; but the thing was only too real; and, while we grant that Calvin would have done better to allow a few exceptions, it must be owned that exceptions were rare. Few, very few, amongst the

principal enemies of the Reformation deserved that respect which cannot be refused even to an enemy with strong convictions, true piety, and purity of life. Calvin, before he was their adversary, had been their colleague, and was naturally indignant at seeing them display for the persecution of the Reformed faith, a zeal which they had been so far from showing for the welfare of the Church by the discharge of their duty. As yet, the Reformation had produced in the Romish clergy none of the improvement for which they had eventually to thank her; on the contrary, she had deprived them of many of their most learned and pious members, and it was with all their vices and ignorance that they were advancing to crush her.

After having shown what his adversaries are, Calvin passes in review what they say.

They say that the doctrine is new. Yes, for those to whom the gospel is new.

They say that it rests upon nothing. Yes, if the gospel is nothing.

They ask by what miracles it is authorised. Why! by all which in times past served to confirm the divinity of the gospel. If the Romish Church cares to be able to quote others, it is because she needs them to support her novelties. We do not feel that need. Besides, it is well known what Popish miracles and miracle-mongers are worth.

They say that we despise the Fathers. They respect them, forsooth, after a singular fashion. "Either they do not perceive, or they dissemble, or they pervert" what the Fathers have said in conformity with the gospel; and what the Fathers have said contrary to the gospel, they "adore," as "good sons," and make the most of it, finding authority in the smallest error arrogantly to teach the greatest. But it is false that we despise the Fathers. Despise them! They are our best friends! And Calvin enumerates all the points in which the Reformation has everything to gain by invoking the Fathers. "He was a Father who said that it was an abomination to see an image in Christian temples. . . . He was a Father who denied that the body of Christ was concealed under the bread in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. . . . He was a Father who maintains that Christian people must not be denied the blood of their Lord, to confess whom they are to shed their blood. . . . He was a Father who affirmed that it is presumptuous to decide anything obscure without the clear and evident testimony of Scripture. . . . He was a Father who maintained that marriage ought not to be forbidden to the ministers of the Church. He was a Father, and one of the oldest, who wrote that one Christ alone must be listened to, and that no heed should be paid to what others have said or done before us, but only to what Christ the first of all has commanded." The names come thronging into the marginal notes; and Calvin leaves off by saying; that "months and years would be taken up with the repetition," if he were to

“enumerate” how often the authority of the Fathers is boldly rejected, in fact, by their pretended “obedient children.”

Then comes the great question of the Church, which it was so important to explain to the king. Had he not been armed against the Reformation by being shown in every religious revolt a political one? Calvin, therefore, lays down, as a principle, that an accusation of revolt can only come after a clear demonstration of the rights of the authority attacked. They would make us own, he says, either that we attack the Church, the true and legitimate Church, or that this Church had disappeared till we came, which would be contrary to the formal promises of our Saviour. “Certainly,” he replies, “the Church of Christ has lived, and will live, so long as Christ reigneth at the right hand of His Father.” But has it been, and will it always be visible and recognisable by the number of its adherents, and the strength of its organisation? “This is the point in dispute.” Our adversaries “are not satisfied if the Church cannot always be pointed out. But how often did it happen that she was so deformed among the Jews that no appearance of her remained? How often since the advent of Christ has she been hidden and without form? How often hath she been so oppressed by wars, seditions, and heresies, as to be visible nowhere?” And he quotes numberless occasions in which the true Church was only, as we should now say, an insignificant minority. “You stop at the walls, seeking the Church of God in the beauty of the edifice. . . . The mountains and woods, and lakes, and prisons, and deserts, and caverns are to me more safe and trustworthy.” Then follows another picture of what, under the great parade of hierarchy and unity, the representatives of the Romish Church really are. The king knows their morals; will he persist in believing them to be the representatives of the gospel? Will he persist in not choosing to learn what they are and teach, against whom these excite him?

They reproach the Reformed with the troubles of which their doctrine has been the occasion; but “it is peculiar to God’s Word that it never comes forth but Satan awakes and opposes.” It is even a certain mark by which to discern it from false and lying doctrines, “which are willingly received by all, and satisfy everybody.” The prophets and apostles were subjected to the same accusation; and Jesus was crucified for sedition. It is true that seditions have arisen out of the Reformation in some countries; but the Reformation condemned them from the first, and is not more responsible for them than Christianity is for all the follies committed in its name. See even under the apostles how many errors pretended to be authorised by the gospel. They also ought, therefore, “to have renounced that gospel, which they saw to be the seed of so much strife, and the occasion of so much offence.” It was as St Paul says; they knew it to be “the savour of death in them that perish,” while it was “the savour of life in them that are saved,” and “armed with this confidence, they boldly passed on, and walked through all the dangers of tumults and

offences.” This is the confidence of the Reformers. They will be no more be shaken by the extravagances of the Anabaptists, for instance, than by the fury of their enemies.

“But,” continues Calvin, “I return to you, Sire. You ought not to be moved by those false reports. . . . Is it probable that we, from whom a seditious word was never heard when we lived under you, should plot the subversion of kingdoms? And, what is more, who now, after being expelled from our houses, cease not, nevertheless, to pray to God for your prosperity and that of your kingdom And still more, thanks be to God, we have not profited so little by the Gospel, that our life cannot be to our detractors an example of chastity, liberality, mercy, temperance, patience, modesty, and every other virtue. . . . And the very mouth of the envious has been constrained to bear witness to the innocence, before men, of some of us who were put to death on that account alone.” Let the king, then, deign at least to read the book which the author presents to him, and his wrath will subside. “But if, on the contrary, the detractions of the malignant do so stop your ears that the accused have no means of defending themselves; and if those impetuous furies, without your preventing it, still practise cruelties by prisons and scourges, by racking and cutting, and burning, we certainly, like sheep devoted to slaughter, shall be reduced to the last extremity, nevertheless, in our patience, will we possess our souls, and wait for the arm of the Lord, which will doubtless be revealed in due season, and appear to deliver the poor in their affliction, and to punish the despisers who now so boldly rejoice. The Lord, the King of kings, establish your throne in righteousness, and your seat in equity!”

XIX.

Such is this famous preface, which, it is thought, Francis I. did not even take the trouble to read, but which was read everywhere, and revealed in Calvin the Luther of France. It has often been quoted as the first piece of literary eloquence possessed by the French tongue; but to the Reformed, it was not only the most eloquent pleading till then written in their behalf, it was the model, and, as it were, the programme of all the apologies they would have to write, and, in fact, even at the present day, the order followed by Calvin is that to which recourse is constantly had.

The author’s name was soon in every mouth, and unanimous testimonies of gratitude and admiration sought him out in his retreat at Basle. The *Institutes* had the success of every book called forth by serious aspirations, giving a local habitation and a name to the thoughts which people the air, saying what everybody thinks; such a book is everybody’s work, and everybody is ready to praise it as his own. Many, nevertheless, were alarmed at having

thought all this, and at being in their consciences accountable for a revolution so radically complete. Logically, they could object nothing; it was what indeed flowed from principle, and no one could think of resisting the indomitable reasoner. But, and that is what was done by some timid ones, they could abandon the principle itself, they could proclaim themselves enlightened by the enormity of the consequences, and returned corrected into the old Romish track. But if the *Institutes* had this result in some, they became to many others the torch which came to illumine their thick darkness, the banner under which they were about to march, blessing God for having at last granted them to know where they were, and whither they were going.

XX.

Amongst those who joyfully gave themselves up to this last impression, we find the duchess of Ferrara, Renée of France.

The daughter of Louis XII. who left no son, Renée, but for the Salic law, would have been Queen of France, and if the Queen of France had had the sentiments of the duchess of Ferrara, what a change might there not have been in the destinies of the realm! But let us leave the notes of interrogation which, in spite of us, range themselves by the side of an irrevocable past. It is to interrogate God; it is almost to reproach Him with not having arranged all as we could have wished.

She who failed to be a queen, almost became an empress; she was not three years of age when she was betrothed to Charles of Austria, the future Charles V. Politics broke off the match. Subsequently betrothed to Henry VIII., and then to the marquis of Brandenburg, Francis I. at last bestowed her on a petty Italian prince, Hercules d'Este, the duke of Ferrara, and son of Lucretia Borgia.

Renée was seventeen years of age, and though but little favoured as to personal charms, she was otherwise admirably gifted. She had learned Latin, Greek, and mathematics; but the pedantry which might, in a female, have easily resulted from studies of such a nature, was effaced by her perfect gracefulness. She was, says Brantôme, a "very good and clever princess, for her mind was one of the best and most acute that could be." As a child of the Renaissance, the love of the arts occupied a large place in her heart.

Her tastes happened to be those of her husband. Like her, he loved the arts, and letters; but he was a total stranger to the more serious aspect of the modern movement. As for her, she had lived with Marguerite of Valois, and arrived imbued with the new ideas, already matured in her heart under the influence of a pure life and true piety. The duke might think at first that she would not step beyond that purely intellectual and poetical atmosphere, which, in Italy, circumscribed the new religious wants of some superior

minds. He allowed her to correspond with them, and even to attract them to his court. He saw her without too much apprehension welcome the poet Marot, banished from France after the affair of the "placards," but too volatile, apparently at least, to be considered as anything but a wit and rhymist. Other Frenchmen, more openly Protestants, and who, like him, had sought an asylum at Ferrara, compelled the duke to see more clearly what his wife's sentiments were. At last, one day, Charles d'Espeville arrived, and the duke was doubtless not unaware that Charles d'Espeville was John Calvin of Noyon, the author of the *Christian Institutes*, in all probability invited by the princess.

Unhappily we possess but few details about this part of his life, which, though less important, since it was to leave no trace, was certainly, not uninteresting. What were Calvin's impressions at the sight of Italy, of its religion, and worship, its clergy, and monks, its skies, and its arts? Some have regretted as respects the latter, that Calvin's sojourn in Italy was not longer. Italy, they say, would have given flexibility to his soul and quickened his imagination; he would no longer have been that *gloomy genius*, as Bossuet terms him, disdaining all that is not reason and doctrine, austere and rigid truth. It may be so, but would he have retained his strength? Would Calvin, as a child of Italy, have still been Calvin? Let us not amuse ourselves with remaking great men, by modifying on paper the elements of their greatness; the probability always will be, that they were what they were to be, and that modified, they would have been lesser men. Moreover, although Calvin was only twenty-seven years of age, his education was at an end. He had not come into Italy, like Luther, to see, to gain information, or to seek the solution of certain doubts; and by the way, the solution which Luther took home was very different from what he had expected; Calvin knew already what to think of Romanism and of the Church, and of popes, both as to form and substance. Italy could neither send him back, like Luther, less Romish, since he had wholly ceased to be such; nor, still less, win him back to Romanism. It was not seeing the papacy more closely which could make him regret his condemnation of it; nor could the splendid puerilities of Italian worship make him fear that he had gone too far in proscribing images, ceremonies, and practices.

It is probable, on the contrary, that what he saw appeared to him to be the best commentary on his book, as it still is, and will be, so long as Italy does not return to the Gospel. With the help of this commentary, he had little difficulty in winning to the Reformed Faith several persons as yet but partially shaken in their old convictions, and who, like the duchess, awaited his victorious impulse. Madame de Soubise, formerly the governess of the duchess, Jean de Parthenay, Lord of Soubise, Anne de Parthenay, his wife, Antoine de Pons, and the Baron de Mirambeau, are specially named. And what did he do with Marot? It is impossible to say exactly; but it appears that, in spite

of his poetry and levity, he too was captivated by his severe eloquence, or at least, he did not repel its influence. It was shortly after having met with Calvin, that he addressed the King of France a decidedly courageous epistle, the tone of which is in some parts very different from mere wit. "The ignorant Sorbonne," he says, "would do me harm. . . ."

"Their court and they, absent or to my face,
'Gainst me have often time used sore menace,
Of which the mildest was as felon wight
To slay me. O that please the Lord it might,
For His most desolated people's good,
To glut their savage longings for my blood,
If but each foul abuse and wicked deed
Were thus made clear and punishment decreed!
O four, nay five times blessed were that death,
How cruelly soe'er it stopped my breath,
By which alone a million lives should be
From such abuses set for ever free!"

Martyrdom! that was saying a great deal, and we may doubt whether Marot would really have braved it; but a breath of life has passed over these lines, and that breath is Calvin's. Besides, we should never accept too hastily doubts of such a nature. There are times in which martyrs are recruited with a facility which runs the risk of being deemed fabulous by other times; the poet would perhaps have kept his word, as well as some others who might also have seemed incapable of keeping it, but who, when the hour was come, knew how to die. It is not true, to begin with, that Marot purchased his return to France by abjuring the Reformed Faith at Lyons; this is an invention of his enemies, but one which proves that he was looked upon then as won over by the Reformer. When banished anew, seven years later, he took refuge at Geneva. Calvin *welcomed* him as a friend, and Calvin was not one to welcome from mere policy, a refugee whom he did not know to be a brother, still less would he have patronized and recommended by a preface the fifty Psalms which Marot then collected and published. Only, as Beza relates, "having always been trained in a very bad school, and not being able to subject his life to the reformation of the Gospel," he left Geneva shortly after. A whole romance of accusations has been constructed upon this, representing Marot as having led a scandalous life at Geneva. Not a trace of any such narration is to be found in the registers of the Council or of the Consistory; one fact alone is true,—the poet of the Valois could not conform to the Calvinistic discipline. The Protestant was little or nothing to Calvin; he would have the *convert*, in the strict sense of the word,—the Christian, the new and regenerate man. But the new man, is one whom man cannot create in us, it is the work of God.

XXI.

What, we may ask, was at this period the position of her who had welcomed both Marot and Calvin?

We have conjectures only, but they are supported by very significant facts. Marot, in some verses addressed to the Queen of Navarre, relates the vexations heaped upon Renée of France.

“Seeing her handled in that way,
From France she’s banish’d, I should say,
As much as I. . .

Her husband, in fact, wished to compel her to dismiss all who surrounded her, including Madame de Soubise, whom she loved as a daughter; and after much resistance, she was obliged to yield. Politics, it is true, had contributed to alarm Hercules d’Este. He had just thrown himself into Charles V.’s arms, and he feared lest the presence of so many French at Ferrara should disturb the King of France’s enemy, and all the more so that Renée had received some military men, the wreck of the French army in Italy. On the first reproaches which were addressed to her, “How can I help it?” she said; “they are poor people of my nation, who, if God had given me a beard, would have now been my subjects, and even as it is, they would have been, but for that bad Salic law.” But the duke was urgent. To the fear of offending Charles V. was added that of offending the Pope, who might take Ferrara from him, and whose eyes were never off that nest of Frenchmen and of heretics. All had to depart. Marot withdrew to Venice, Calvin returned to Basle, and till his deathbed, we find him corresponding with the princess. To her he addressed the last letter we have of him in French, dated the 4th of April 1564. “Madam,” he writes to her, “I pray you will pardon me if I write by my brother’s hand, on account of the weak state I am in, and the pains which I suffer. . . . I pray you also to excuse me if this letter is short compared with yours. . . .” He then exculpates himself from having placed amongst the reprobate the duke of Guise, the son-in-law of the princess; he has, he says, declared, on the contrary, that “those are too bold, who declare men damned, because such is their opinion,” and he adds, “so far from hating and abhorring you as the mother-in-law of the late Monsieur de Guise, good men have the more loved and honoured you, seeing that it did not deter you from making a straight-forward profession of Christianity, not with your lips only, but by deeds most notable. . . .” He then congratulates her that the duchess of Savoy, her niece, “is so well disposed as to have decided on declaring herself frankly.” But the young princess “has always been timid, so much so that it is to be feared lest her good inclination should remain hanging as it were on

the hook, unless she be entreated. Now, Madam, I deem that there is not a creature in this world who hath more authority over her than yourself; therefore I would beg you in the name of God not to spare lively and pressing exhortations that you may encourage her to take further steps. And in this, I feel assured that you will do all your duty according to the zeal you have that God should be honoured and served more and more.” And he concludes by commending himself to the kind remembrance of the princess, supplicating “our heavenly Father to keep you in His protection, to rule you always by His Spirit, and to maintain you in prosperity.”

This letter is not only interesting for its date; it helps us to understand the sentiments and the position of a woman thrown into the midst of so many complications, and is, in that respect, a curious page of the history of French Protestantism, as well as of Calvin’s life. Long a Protestant, the Duchess of Ferrara had been induced to give her daughter to the Duke of Guise, the head of the Romish party. Guise, after having done the greatest harm to the Protestants, was killed; but Guise was her daughter’s husband, and she could not endure the thought that Calvin should think him damned. Yet it was that same Guise, who, two years before, had signified to her in the king’s name that she must be converted with all speed, under penalty of being shut up in a convent, and it was he, who seeing her immovable, had sent troops against her castle of Montargis. She declared that she would mount the breach to see if they dare kill the daughter of Louis XII.; but, in the meantime, Poltrot’s bullet delivered her from the son-in-law to whom she now hoped that God had shown mercy.

Thus had passed, or nearly so, her whole life, the unity of which appears less in her, strong and courageous woman as she was, and exposed to the most fearful trials, than in him who guided her from afar through so many shoals and storms. It is sometimes astonishing to learn of what instructions and exhortations she was still in need. Thus, in 1541, five years after his journey to Ferrara, Calvin was obliged to speak to her about the mass, one of her chaplains having succeeded in persuading her that she might be present at it without sinning, or lying to her conscience. Evidently the poor woman had been happy to give way on this point to her husband’s solicitations, and the exigencies of her official position in a Romish town. But one of her maids of honour had been firmer; she had resisted Master François, and that resistance had made the princess reflect. Calvin, who is informed of it by Madame de Pons, the daughter of Madame de Soubise, takes up his pen. He begins by excusing himself for writing without having been requested; but soon, forgetting oratorical precaution, he declares that the higher people are placed in this world, the greater right a minister of the gospel has to call them back to their duty; “so much so that I should deem myself accursed if I were to let slip opportunities of serving you, and of being profitable unto you.”

Then follows a portrait, by no means flattering, of Master François, who was always oscillating between Romanism and the Reformed faith, always seeking accommodations, always the first to make use of them on his own account. Now, continues Calvin, "I make no such war upon any as upon those who, under the shadow of religion, make a show of devotion towards princes, keeping them always enveloped in some cloud without leading them straight to the goal." He therefore wishes to conduct her thither, and, leaving persons, comes to facts. If the princess believes truly in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the one perfect sacrifice, as the apostle says, how can she doubt whether the mass is a sacrifice which the priest pretends to offer up anew? How would she persuade herself that to kneel before the host is not completely idolatrous? For in idolatry there are no degrees. But, says the complaisant chaplain, to refuse to hear mass is to offend "the weak" who cannot give it up. Calvin replies by setting out a whole system of "offences," complete, yet brief, and, above all, true. He shows how many cowardly fears would shelter themselves behind fear; he adjures the princess to do nothing to prolong, even by a day, the reign of error; and he concludes by commending her to Him who alone can give perseverance and courage.

She was soon to need them greatly. The duke continued to importune her, now entreating, and now menacing her. Himself menaced by the pope, he ended by appealing to the king of France, Henry II., and requesting him, as King of France and head of the royal house, to exercise his authority over the princess, without pity, though she was no longer French. Henry confided the matter to the famous inquisitor Ortiz, who was skilful in seducing and pitiless in punishing. The instructions which he received on his departure for Italy, have been found. He was to begin with exhortations and remonstrances. If the princess showed herself "headstrong and pertinacious," persisting in her "accursed and damnable errors," the duke was to be begged to deprive her of her children and to shut her up in a convent.

Renée was "headstrong and pertinacious," and the sentence was executed; only, instead of a convent, the old castle of Este became her prison. The education of her children had been her sole consolation, and her sole joy. She saw them no more, and, to the grief of not seeing them, was added that of leaving them to those who would teach them to hate her and the faith which she had taught them.

She resisted long; but at length she yielded. We know neither how nor how far; but in November 1554, Calvin wrote sadly to Farel: "It is but too certain that the duchess has succumbed, overcome by menaces and violence. What shall I say to this, if not that fortitude is a thing rare amongst the great?" But he wrote shortly after to the duchess herself. A delicate kindness made him veil the reproaches which will only be the more penetrating, and the exhortations which will only be the more powerful. He knows nothing, he

says, but he cannot help guessing. "It is a bad sign, madam, that those who made so harassing a war against you to turn you away from God's service, now leave you in peace. The devil has so triumphed because of it, that we have been constrained to groan, and hang down our heads, without inquiring farther." But if he will not inquire what has taken place, neither will he inquire as to the present state of the feelings of the princess, for he does not admit that she can do otherwise than weep for having yielded. He does not stay, therefore, to preach repentance; he does not even mention it. She has sinned; *therefore* she repents, and only needs to be comforted. "As the good Lord is always ready to receive us favourably, and, when we have fallen, holdeth out His hand to us, I pray you will take courage. . . . When you reflect, Madam, that God, who humbles His people, would not have them confounded always, it will revive your hope in Him, that you may bestir yourself the more in future. . . . Call upon Him, therefore, in the confidence that He is sufficient to succour our frailties. . . ."

But in proportion to his indulgence for a passing weakness, will be his severity when the princess appears to him to have entered voluntarily upon a course of relaxation and feebleness.

Left a widow, she was, in 1560, preparing to return to France, where her son-in-law, the Duke of Guise, offered her a share in the government. Again Calvin had no difficulty in guessing that these offers must have been accompanied by certain conditions. What conditions? He knows not; but the princess has evidently consented to sacrifice, more or less, all that might displease the Guises, and nothing is, of course, more displeasing to them than her evangelical opinions. Calvin goes straight to the fact. However hard, he says, her captivity at Ferrara may have been, liberty to humble herself to such accommodations and weaknesses would only be to fall from one abyss into a worse and lower. The Guises care little, very little, for the good which she might do by aiding them with her counsel; they only want to shelter themselves under her name, "in order to cherish the evil which can no longer be endured." "To thrust oneself," therefore, "into such confusion, is to tempt God. If worldly height and grandeur," he continues, "prevent you from coming to God, I should be a traitor to you, to persuade you that black is white. If you were resolved to behave frankly, and with more magnanimity than hitherto, I would pray Him to advance you very soon to a greater administration than is offered to you; but if it is to say amen to all that is condemned by God and man, I know not what to say, except that you take care lest a worse evil befall you." Is she then not to profit by the liberty which her husband's death has restored her? Yes; but let it be "to serve God in good earnest, and aim at the right mark. Be that as it may, it is to linger on too long, madam; and, if you do not take pity on yourself, it is to be feared that you will seek too late the remedy for your ill. Beside what God hath long shown to you by

His word, advancing age warns you to reflect that your inheritance is not here below, and Jesus Christ might well make you forget both France and Ferrara.”

These words were not thrown away. She returned to France, but very different from what the Guises had expected, and it was from this epoch that she pressed decidedly toward “the right mark.” In 1561, she asked of Geneva a minister, and François Morel was sent her. In 1562, she was besieged, as we have seen, at Montargis. In January 1564, three months before this last letter, we find from Calvin’s austere pen a few lines almost verging upon pleasantry: “I will speak, madam, of something else. I have long cherished a strong desire to make you a present of a piece of gold. Tell me if I am venturesome. . . . I have given it to the bearer in order that he may show it you, and if it be a new thing to you, may it please you to keep it. It is the handsomest new year’s gift which I can offer you.” That *new year’s gift* was the gold medal which Louis XII., the princess’s father, had had struck when he was at variance with the pope. Good Romanist as he was, Rome had forced him to revolt like so many others, against her tyrannical exactions, and the medal threatened nothing less than the destruction of a power, which had become odious to good princes as well as to bad. *Perdam Babylonia nomen*,¹ said the inscription. Renée received with joy this seemingly political and religious testament of the king, her father. “As for the present and new year’s gift which you have sent me, I assure you that I saw and accepted it willingly, and never had its like; and I praised God that the late king, my father, had taken such a motto. If God did not grant him grace to carry it out, perhaps He reserveth some one of his descendants to accomplish it.”

She survived Calvin, and was more and more faithful to his exhortations. Montargis was one of the citadels of French Protestantism, a refuge for all the persecuted, and Calvin, in 1563, could already write to the lady of the castle: “I well know that a princess, who should consider the world only, would be ashamed, and almost take it as an affront, that her castle should be called a hospital.² But I cannot do you a greater honour than to speak thus . . . and I have often thought, Madam, that God hath reserved for you such trials in your old age to pay to Himself the arrears which you owed Him on account of your timidity in times past.” In a journey she took to the south of France, she visited the churches of Dauphiny and Languedoc, assembling the clergy together and encouraging them. She was at Paris on St Bartholomew’s day (1572). She witnessed the massacre, and went away broken-hearted to open her castle, in spite of the menaces of the court, to those who escaped

¹ I will destroy the name of Babylon.

² “Hôtel-Dieu.”

that fatal day. She died there three years after, and her last will is one of the finest pages which can be quoted in the history of Protestant piety.

XXII.

We are now very far from 1536, and from the Charles d'Espeville of twenty-seven years of age, who came to Ferrara or went back to Basle. If we have followed Renée of France to the close of her correspondence with Calvin, it has been much less from the desire not to have to recur to it, than to give, with some unity, from the very beginning, an idea of the manner in which Calvin dealt with the great. It seems to us that it would be difficult to unite more of firmness with greater respect for propriety. Calvin knows what is due to the great, and he knows also how to stop just at the point where complaisance would begin; he knows how to have consideration for the difficulties of their position, and yet, after all, he excuses nothing. He does not drive them along, but he leads them, and is not that the true duty of the minister of the gospel, both towards small and great?

We ought also, perhaps, to finish the very different story of his connexion with Canon du Tillet who followed him out of France.

Du Tillet had thought himself a convert to the gospel, and it appears that he was, except in one point. He would gladly follow Jesus Christ, but not bear His cross. In such a convert, scruples speedily arise—those convenient scruples, we mean, which colour and shelter a retreat. Du Tillet did not believe any more than Calvin in the teachings of Romanism, but he began to think about the Church, and to ask himself if the Church, though erring and corrupt, was not still the Church, the mother of the faithful, and the spouse of Christ. After all, did she prevent him from being pious? Would she, if he returned to the great external unity, prevent him from keeping in his heart the evangelical opinions upon which he had fed with Calvin? Calvin—when at Geneva, in the course of 1537, gradually perceived that Du Tillet was no longer the same. He was sad; he was doubtless sighing after his native land, his comfortable parsonage of Claix, and his beloved library. Calvin, who had left behind him nothing of the kind, and who, if he had left far more would not have allowed a thought of it to soften his heart, repeated to him, rather harshly, perhaps, the severe words of our Saviour, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” One day, in fact, Du Tillet disappeared, and, shortly after, a letter from him informed Calvin that he had returned to Romanism.

Calvin answered, but without any bitterness. One thing only tormented him, he said, which was, that perhaps he had contributed to Du Tillet's resolve, by some want of consideration, and if so, he entreated his forgiveness. As for the reasons which Du Tillet brought forward upon the vague ground

of the notion of a Church, Calvin declared that he would answer only one word—the Romish Church execrates himself, with whom Du Tillet was, and still is, fully one in sentiment upon so many points. How does Du Tillet reconcile this in his mind and heart? Was he sure that in these scruples, which arise after the lapse of three years, no human element, no calculation, voluntary or involuntary, creeps in? Let him look well to it! “The wet sackcloth with which we cover ourselves before men will not endure the heat of God’s judgment.”

The canon, in his answer, does not approach the question, although the only important one; he only speaks of the anguish of mind he felt till he had put an end to its cause. Calvin answers again, but to say that he abides by his former letter; and, as if forgetting that Du Tillet is no longer, as before, his friend, he relates to him his sorrows at Geneva, his exile at Basle and at Strasburg, where, he says, he is waiting to see what the Lord will do with him. With awkward charity Du Tillet lays hold of these disclosures, and says that, since Calvin’s affairs prosper so ill, is it not haply a providential chastisement destined to bring him back? “I think you have to consider, on your part, whether our Lord would not thereby warn you to reflect whether there has been nothing to blame in your administration, and to humble yourself before Him, that, by this means, the great gifts and graces which our Lord hath bestowed upon you may be employed aright for His glory and the salvation of His elect.” Calvin’s answer is humble and firm. Distinguishing between the reformer and the man, he begins by declaring that the man has long since examined himself before God, acknowledging his faults, beseeching God to grant him an ever clearer view of them, and an ever truer repentance. But the reformer has an entire, immovable faith in his mission and in his work. Obstacles and reverses have not induced in him a moment’s hesitation, and if he has failed to repress the bad passions which finally drove him from Geneva, it is only one proof among a thousand, that there is enmity, between the world and the gospel, if the gospel is faithfully preached. “I think you have considered our affliction sufficient to cast me into extreme perplexity. . . . It is true that I have been greatly afflicted, but not so as to say, ‘I know not where the ways of the Lord are.’” “For the rest,” he continues, “God will judge. One of my companions¹ is now before God to render an account of the cause which he had in common with us. . . . It is to Him that I appeal from the sentence of all wise men.”

Du Tillet remained among the *wise men*, Calvin persisted in the glorious foolishness of those who see, in this world, none but their duty and their God.

XXIII.

¹ The minister Corault, banished from Geneva with Calvin. He had just died at Orbe.

We left Calvin as he went from Ferrara. Policy drove him thence as a Frenchman; the Church, as a heretic. Muratori affirms that the Church did more; that the Reformer was seized in his dwelling by the side of the ducal palace, and that he had been already conducted to Bologna, where his case was to be heard, when he was carried off, like Luther, by a masked horseman, and restored to liberty. Is it a fact! Muratori declares that it was told him by one who said he had read the reports of the Inquisition. If new researches should adduce new proofs there will be reason to admire once more the reserve of the man who kept silence respecting details of his life so important and so dramatic.

Other details, also, of which he never spoke, have been collected concerning this journey, some of which are certainly authentic, others less so.¹ It is supposed that at Modena he visited the Castelvetro family, whom Geneva was eventually to receive. The demolition of their ancient villa, near Modena, has recently brought to light a closet concealed in the wall, and containing several of his works. Arrived in Piedmont, he found there numerous friends of the Reformed faith, and we see him preaching in the valley of Grana, near Coni. Some women of Caragliano, stirred up by the priests, drove him away with stones. He was as unsuccessful at Saluzzo. Hunted from place to place, he was obliged to have a double share of courage, for Du Tillet, as may be readily imagined, had no taste for this rough apostleship. Thus they reach Pignerol. Why did not Calvin go and see the Waldenses? His passage through their valleys would have become one of the great facts treasured in their memories, and an important page in their venerable history. They had joined themselves to the great movement of the age. Their Synod of Angrogna had received with delight Farel and Saunier, the delegates of evangelical Switzerland; they expected, perhaps, him whose name, already greater, had surely reached them. But whether he was in haste to return to Switzerland, or whether he had learned on his way what was passing in the Val d'Aoste, it was thitherwards he suddenly bent his steps.

The Val d'Aoste was, in fact, deeply agitated by the Reformed faith. The despatches of Ami Parral, the Genevese ambassador at Berne, certify it. "The duke," he wrote in 1535, "has much to do beyond the mountains, partly on account of the gospel, for the gospel is spreading all over the country. It must needs be that it should go forward in spite of princes, since it is of God." And in another despatch, written in the month of December—"The Aostans," he said, "are at variance with their bishop, on account of the excommunications, which they cannot abide." Serious tidings had lately come to encourage them in that course. The Bernese, marching to the relief of Geneva, had conquered, on their way, Vaud, Gex, and the Chablais; and all these districts, which were

¹ See the Essay of M. Jules Bonnet: "Calvin in the Val d'Aoste."

ripe for the Reformed faith, had joyfully surrendered to the victors, who brought it to them.

Hence the ardent hopes of all those who, in the Val d'Aoste, had opened their eyes to the gospel, and hence their joy at Calvin's arrival. He did not enter the town, which was too well guarded; he went to a farm close by, and to this day known by the name of *Calvin's Farm*, where the noble family of Vaudan offered him an asylum. He was to see once more verified there, what we have already heard him say,—that every retreat was to him as the “public schools.” People came thronging to him; they spoke of nothing less than of appealing to the powerful republic which had delivered Geneva, and of asking from it a like deliverance. It was political as well as religious revolt; but, after all, whose was the fault? Was it not in that same city of Aoste that the duke, when solicited the year before by the Bernese ambassador to permit the Genevese to “keep the gospel,” had answered, that he never would? There was no hope, therefore, of ever professing evangelical Christianity so long as they remained his subjects.

But Romanism had in the bishop of Aoste, Peter Gazzini, a feared and formidable defender. Already in 1528, twelve nobles of the land had been denounced by him as Lutherans and decapitated; and shortly after, four col-porteurs who came from Geneva had been tortured and then executed. Powerfully seconded by the count de Chalans, the marshal of Aoste, he established in the city a religious police, to which nothing was wanting but the name of Inquisition; and when, in February 1536, the assembly of the Provincial States was opened, every measure was taken to crush the bold minority which had hoped to proclaim there the principles of the Reformation. It is not known whether this minority had the courage or the power to make its wishes heard; but Calvin remained at his post till all hope was lost. Warned, at length, that he was about to be arrested, he fled, the 8th of March, with those of his adherents who were most compromised, ecclesiastics and laymen. But the St Bernard was guarded. They had to take by-paths, to cross torrents, and to scale precipices; but even there they were still in danger, for “the count of Chalans,” says an old narrative, “gave chase to Calvin and pursued him with a drawn sword to the very bottom of the mountains.” But Calvin and his companions at length get beyond the defile of the Duranda, one of the lofty entrances of the Valais, and still designated by the name of *Calvin's Window*.

The prison and the stake made short work with the adherents of the Reformation who remained in the country, and in 1541 there was engraved on the pedestal of a commemorative cross, erected in the centre of the city, an inscription recording the flight of Calvin and the deliverance of Aoste. This inscription, effaced by time, was replaced in 1841 upon the restored monument, by those who wished the country to bless for ever the day which

thrust it back beneath the yoke of Rome, and plunged it once more into darkness.

XXIII.

Shortly after, Calvin was again at Noyon. His journey is a positive fact, but many points require elucidation, and we have no clue to the missing explanation. How could Calvin return in 1536 to France whence he had been obliged to flee towards the close of 1534, and before he had published the “Christian Institutes?” We have seen him in his preface, considering himself as finally banished—not, indeed, by any sentence pronounced, but by the evident force of circumstances; circumstances not having changed, how could he return; and how, if he returned, could he remain unmolested? Nothing indicates that he even had to conceal himself. He completed his domestic arrangements, and gained some new adherents—in particular, a judge, M. de Normandie, whom we shall meet with again at Geneva. He then started for Basle with his sister, Marie, and his only remaining brother, Antoine. Antoine was to be the obscure, but devoted companion of his whole life. He too renounced the pleasant quietude which the Church would have offered him, for he had succeeded his brother as chaplain of the Gésine, and the Church would not have failed to recompense largely the loyalty of a brother of the heresiarch. He never even sought compensation by seeking to become in some degree conspicuous. He would jocularly boast that he *worked* on all his brother’s writings; he spoke truly, for he had turned bookbinder. It was he who wrote, as we have seen, at Calvin’s dictation, the letter to the duchess of Ferrara.

They left Noyon in August 1536. Their intention had been to visit Basle by way of Germany, but war had just broken out again between Francis I. and Charles V., and there was no passing through Lorraine, which was full of soldiers. Calvin, therefore, retraced his steps through France, and arrived at Geneva on one of the last days of the month.

BOOK THE SECOND.

(1530–1541.)

SUMMARY.

- I. God in history.
- II. Episcopal Geneva—Arducius—Fabri—The bishops of the house of Savoy— Despotism—Scandals.
- III. Diverse causes of the Reformation—Internal and purely intellectual causes—Luther—Mixed causes—Geneva.
- IV. Farel and Viret—They endeavour to make the religious element predominate—Obstacles—Immorality; its causes—Infidelity; its causes—They make the people swear to take the Gospel for their sole rule of conduct, and of faith—Many break their promise—Farel in the pulpit; his eloquence and courage—He begins to despair.
- V. He learns that Calvin is at Geneva—He goes to seek him, and adjures him in God's name, to stay—Calvin resists, then yields—What the remembrance of that scene always was to him.
- VI. Calvin at Geneva—God gave her to him, but she had to be conquered—Simple lectures, at first, upon the Scriptures—Success and a crowd—Murmurs—The people will not understand that reformation of manners must follow that of faith—They think they have done everything by devoting themselves for their country.
- VII. Confession of faith of 1536—Analysis—Everywhere practice goes along with doctrine—With this confession the laws requisite to secure its dominion are in principle voted.
- VIII. The Christian state—Discussion of the principle—How we blame Calvin, and how he might blame us—What must not be lost sight of in judging Calvin's laws—Laws upon games, dances, &c.—Sumptuary laws—Laws of religious police.
- IX. First application of the ordinances—Divers chastisements—Public teaching remodelled and rendered obligatory—Activity communicated to men's minds by the Reformation—Calvin's catechism—An idea of his method—Analysis of the four parts of the book.
- X. Growing opposition—Two Anabaptists received out of hatred to Farel and Calvin—Corault—The *Libertines*—They understand nought of the new destinies of Geneva—The Government paralysed—The opposition triumphs.
- XI. Disorder first diminishes and then increases—The reformers attack it from the pulpit—Exile of Corault—The unleavened bread question—The *Libertines* employ it against Farel and Calvin—The Synod of Lausanne—The reformers persist—Legal question; moral question—Scandalous conduct before Easter—Farel and Calvin refuse to give the Communion—They are banished—Bonivard and his predictions.
- XII. Calvin and the Reformed of France—Letter to Roussel, who has become a bishop.
- XIII. Calvin and Farel at Berne—Berne demands their recall; the *Libertines* refuse—Farel called to Neuchâtel, and Calvin to Strasburg—Their correspondence; their unalterable friendship—Calvin, pastor of the French Church—Destitution and disinterestedness—His position improves—Renown and tranquillity.
- XIV. He still looks towards Geneva—Letter to the believers of Geneva—Perseverance and charity counselled.
- XV. Disorganization of Church and school—On the way through disorder to the yoke of Rome.

- XVI. Hope and joy of Popery—The Lyons committee—Cardinal Sadolet—His character—His letter to the Genevese—Flatteries—Sophistries—Unskilful skill—Words and deeds—Impression produced at Geneva—Fear because Sadolet had thought matters so far advanced—Who shall answer?—All think of Calvin—His letter to Sadolet—Personal apology—Apology for the Reformation—Rapid review of all the Romish errors—Lofty eloquence.
- XVII. Joy at Geneva—Treason and death of Jean Philippe, the chief of Calvin's enemies—Viret called—The recall of the two exiles begins to be talked of—First overtures.
- XVIII. His life at Strasburg—His travels in Germany—His *Hymn to Christ the Conqueror*—It is to be wished that he had seen Luther—His esteem and friendship for Melancthon—He wished to see him bolder and more firm—His *Treatise on the Lord's Supper*—He pursues, by means of Melancthon, the idea of accommodation with Luther—His admiration for the leader of the German Reform—Letter which he writes, and which Melancthon dare not send.
- XIX. His Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans—His version of the Bible—Divers struggles—Qualities and defects which become marked in him.
- XX. His friends seek to have him married—His honorable and Christian difficulties—Idelette de Bure—Marriage.
- XXI. Negotiations with the Council of Geneva—Hesitations and fears of Calvin—His friends use their influence—He yields—His return—He goes to Neuchâtel to re-establish peace—His ideas respecting the fraternal authority of each Church in relation to the rest—The *Company of Pastors*.
- XXII. Arrival at Geneva—Reorganization of the Church—The Consistory.
- XXIII. The position made for Calvin—His place of residence—Calvin and nature—A walk with Viret—Idelette at Geneva—The Christian wife and mother—Three children removed in infancy—"Have I not tens of thousands of children in the Christian world?"—Laughter and tears—Calvin the man for his task and for the Christian world.

I.

IN history, the finger of God is everywhere; everywhere does He reveal it to him who has eyes to see. But there are passages in history in which it is so evident that, unless a man be blind, he must see it; the following is one of those passages:—

That stranger and exile who has no other design than to rest a day or two from the fatigues of a long journey, is to be for nearly thirty years the law-giver and master of the city, whither nothing has called him, and where, it seems to him, nothing can detain him. Not only will that city own him for its master, but he will make it the capital of one of the greatest empires under the sun; the metropolis of an idea, as an historian has said. He has that idea in his head, and has already filled a book with it; but whatever trust or faith he may repose in it, he suspects not as yet what it will achieve through him, as the generative idea of a people, of a church, and of an age. He is in haste to be again with his books in his old and studious Basle. If he has thrown himself here and there into the thick of the fight, and if he has been courageous, it has been unconsciously: the idea that he has such a part to play has not suggested itself. That he may be clearly revealed to be what God has made him, unknown to himself, he must first be revealed to himself by the force of events. But the revelation once made, the tardier he has been to understand how and in what he was to be mighty, the mightier he will be. The ambitious man builds to himself a lofty pedestal in vain; he knows that he erected it, and therefore he mistrusts it. Calvin achieved greatness without having sought, and without having wished to be great. The pedestal was at Geneva, but it was raised before him, and without him, and by the hand of God.

The history of Geneva is therefore henceforth to be closely linked with that of Calvin; for nearly thirty years the records will form but one, and that of the Reformer will continue in that of Geneva when he is dead. We must therefore rapidly sketch events farther back, assembling and grouping all that we may afterwards need, in order to be well understood.

II.

Religion, or, to speak more correctly, the Church, had at all times played an important part at Geneva. An imperial city, the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne had left it in an isolation of which its bishops took advantage to seize upon the temporal power, which, however, still remained partly in the hands of the people. One of them, Arducius, the contemporary and friend of St Bernard, obtained from Frederic Barbarossa the regular confirmation of this state of things, and Geneva, menaced by the counts of Savoy, gladly accepted the solution, and for a long time blessed Arducius as the true founder

of its independence. Several of his successors walked in his steps. Adhémar Fabri, bishop in 1385, wishing farther to consolidate the happy compromise between the rights of the bishop and those of the city, had a code drawn up which took the name of *Franchises*. He swore solemnly to observe it, and recognised the right of the citizens to exact the same oath from his successors. Romish historians have exaggerated, especially in our day, the bearing of these facts. They have represented Geneva as indebted for all its liberties to the power which it afterwards proscribed; inasmuch as its bishops, made the concession of the “Franchises” as a gift. Even had this been the case, we might still ask whence they had derived the power of granting them a right, which evidently, could only be explained by some preceding usurpation. But the transaction had not been understood in this way in the time of Arducius and Fabri. They only recognised with praiseworthy uprightness, liberties which had been long established, and rights which were older than their own.

For the rest, if some of the bishops deserved the gratitude of Geneva, others were to come who deserved it little enough

The counts, subsequently dukes, of Savoy, had not ceased to claim Geneva as a part of their inheritance, and many a time it had been necessary to recognise in them, virtually, at least, a certain authority. Hence perpetual conflicts between the prince and the bishop, or the prince and the city, the latter often obliged to grant the bishop, in order to be secure from the prince, a power which always endangered the “Franchises.” In the beginning of the fifteenth century, Rome found out how to terminate these conflicts, which often were very embarrassing to her. She seized the right of electing the bishop which belonged to the clergy and was to be confirmed by the people; and the diocese of Geneva was made a sort of heirloom for the younger sons of the house of Savoy. This was to decree that the bishop should henceforward only be the duke’s representative, and the duke the sole and true sovereign.

No trouble was taken to save appearances. In 1451, Amadeus VIII. caused the see to be given to prince Pierre, his grandson, who was ten years of age. Pierre’s vicegerent, Thomas de Sur, openly violated the “Franchises,” and would have dismissed the *syndics*, the lay chiefs of the city, but for the most energetic resistance. The young bishop died, and was succeeded by another prince of Savoy, twelve years of age. In 1484, François of Savoy held it; in 1495, Philippe of Savoy; and in 1513, Jean of Savoy, the worst of all, who ceded his temporal jurisdiction to the duke, opened to him the gates of Geneva, and helped him to drown in the blood of the citizens the remains of the Franchises sworn to by his predecessors. Then died, amongst others, that *great despiser of death*, as Bonivard says in his chronicles, Philibert Berthelier. Then also died Lévrier, for having said in the council that the duke was not the sovereign of Geneva. Then was immured in the castle of La Grolée

in Bugey, that same Bonivard, who was later on to pass six years, and for the same cause, in the underground dungeons of Chillon. This is what the episcopate had become, politically, to Geneva and the Genevese.

Religiously it was still worse, for violence comes to an end, but corruption abides. Geneva, like all countries with an ecclesiastical government, had witnessed an extraordinary development of all the abuses and vices with which the clergy were then reproached. Some pious bishops had endeavoured to stem the torrent; the ordinances of Antoine Champion, in 1493, show us a man who loved what was good, but, at the same time, reveal to us the incredible height to which the evil had risen. Those ordinances, like so many other attempts at reformation in the Church, had no result; the episcopate of Champion was only a parenthesis of five years in a series of prelates who set an example in every kind of disorder. With such superiors, what could be expected of a numerous, idle, rich, and ignorant clergy? Accordingly, long before there was any talk either of a Reformed faith or of reformers, the people complained of the corruption of the priests, and the magistrates, at their request, endeavoured to obtain at least some modification of their scandalous conduct. The magisterial registers have preserved details which one would refuse to admit, if their authenticity were in the smallest degree doubtful; it would seem impossible that depravity could ever have dared to show itself so unblushingly. Thoroughly despised, even by those who were nearly as bad as themselves, the clergy in Geneva had no roots which could resist the first breath of new ideas.

III.

We are not called to relate minutely how and under what form these ideas entered the ancient episcopal city. Moreover, it would not be easy to assign a date to the first beginning; several of the facts mentioned as having marked at Geneva the rise of the Reformation, presuppose an anterior movement, a dawn already far advanced. The state of the country, its struggles against episcopal power, the natural activity of the Genevese mind, and the connexion of Geneva with Germany, have induced the belief that from the very beginning the Reformed faith found an echo on the shores of the Lemman.

But an idea necessarily becomes impregnated with the atmosphere in which it is developed, and, according to the locality, it may appear more or less different from itself. What then did the idea of the Reformation become at Geneva in the atmosphere which we have described?

Superficial historians, whether Romanists or Protestants, have seen the whole reformation in a single cause, the indignation excited by scandals and abuses. They are mistaken. Not only was that not the sole cause, but in several countries, it was only the apparent cause, or the occasion. The deeper

the research, in our day, into the history of the times anterior to the Reformation, the stronger the conviction that the inward and first cause was a religious work slowly accomplished in men's minds and consciences. If you would have a living and complete representation of that work of several centuries, take the youth of Luther. Long before the dispute on indulgences, you behold him agitated and tormented: he would shudder at the thought of abandoning Romanism, or, to speak more correctly, such a thought does not, and cannot, occur to him: and yet he feels that Romanism no longer satisfies him, that it no longer can, and never will satisfy him. His soul darts through the thick darkness into the presence of the light of which he has a presentiment rather than a glimpse. The indulgences will only open his eyes, and fix the direction of his hitherto uncertain gaze. Thus it was in France, and in England too, with several of the first preachers of the Reformed faith. Abuses and scandals only furnished them with the opportunity of accounting to themselves for the evil, and then of speaking out and preaching that which meditation, inward anguish, and above all the Bible, had already accomplished in their souls.

But that preliminary work had not been equally deep everywhere,—the history of episcopal Geneva offers but few traces of it. If some men of those times knew the anguish of a Luther and the vaguer aspirations of some of his forerunners, they either held their peace or were silenced. A monk, named Baptiste, who had dared to lift up his voice, was delivered to the bishop by the duke, who came for that purpose to Geneva, and the stake awarded his deserts to the forerunner of Savonarola. This was about 1430. The Church was sufficiently powerful to stifle any show of resistance, and moreover so corrupt, that no evangelical idea, no need of a Christian life and a pure faith could be felt in her bosom at Geneva. This is why, when the Church was attacked in earnest, it was less upon religious grounds than upon that of abuses and corruptions: of matters, in a word, about which men can be very indignant without being themselves godly or caring to be so.

Add, in fine, the political elements, which, at Geneva, necessarily complicated the question. How could men in their attacks separate the temporal prince from the spiritual prince? How could they fail to use temporal attacks against the spiritual oppressor, or spiritual attacks against the temporal oppressor? It may doubtless be regretted that the movement should not have been, as in some other countries, purely religious: but it would be unjust not to acknowledge that under a bishop-prince, matters could not at the outset take another course. It would be equally unjust to generalize too much what we have just said. If some of the Genevese saw mainly a question of politics in the Reformation; others immediately recognized and joyfully embraced its religious aspect, and were living proofs that God can educe good from any beginning whatever. But the first made more noise, demolished more

publicly the old form of worship, and that which happens in every revolution took place in this:—history has spoken much of the violent, little of the others, though the latter were the representatives, the true, and serious representatives of the idea which was carried out.

IV.

It is important to note all these facts in order to determine aright what part the reformers would have to play and did play at Geneva.

We say *reformers*; for Viret and Farel, on Calvin's arrival, had already entered upon the course in which he was to encounter so many obstacles and gain so many victories.

We know Farel: we have already seen him display, as Le Fèvre's disciple, equal eloquence and zeal, and, shortly after, when specially marked out for persecution, take leave of France. That was in 1523. Scarcely arrived at Basle, he solicits a public conference with the priests: and although the victor, he is driven from the city, not without carrying away the assurance that Basle is won over to the Reformation. The following year he conquers the principality of Montbéliard: then we see him successively at Berne, at Lausanne, at Morat, and at Orbe, where he converts Viret: at Neuchâtel, moreover, which he attacks several times, and which he finally snatches, by superhuman exertions, from the papal dominion. No less strength and courage were requisite for him at Geneva, and without him the great act of 1535 might have been long delayed.

Viret had experienced some difficulty in turning to the gospel, but, once decided, it was soon seen that his hesitation had proceeded neither from indifference nor fear. Orbe, Granson, and Payerne, heard him preach: and his life was endangered by a blow from a sword. After he was come to Geneva with Farel, a dose of poison showed him death still nearer. He none the less remained, like Farel, in the thickest of the fight, and the victory belonged to him as well as to his friend.

But the victory had now to be organised and disciplined: this was a second victory, and one yet more difficult to gain. They had, therefore, immediately proclaimed two things—one, that the Reformation was above all to be a matter of religion: the other, that it never would be real, or deserving of its name, if there were not a moral as well as a doctrinal reformation.

This was cutting short all misunderstandings and illusions; it was taking all excuse from those who, voluntarily or involuntarily, might cherish those illusions, or take pleasure in those misunderstandings. Now, such men were numerous: and such men, let us add, need not be in a majority,—evil in this sad world always contrives to be mighty.

Geneva, then, was legally and officially of the Reformed faith from the month of August 1535, but it had yet far to go before so being of it as Farel understood the word: and, unhappily, many others understood not that she would so enter it. The fall of Romanism had put an end to certain evils, but, at the same time, had been the beginning or aggravation of certain others.

Immorality, in the first place.

That of the clergy, though profound, had not so destroyed the moral authority of the Church that this authority was not still some sort of restraint: but when that was removed, those who had not immediately imposed upon themselves another—that of the gospel, could only become worse. For such, the abolition of the confessional had been the abolition of all control: the exile of the priests had only freed them from the official representatives,—bad, no doubt, yet still official, and the only ones they knew,—of order, rule, and duty. It is the inevitable effect of the Romish system. All is calculated so that men should not be able to do without it. Instead of forming your conscience, it teaches you to deposit it out of yourself, and in a man who is to be to you the incarnation of the divine law, so that, when you deny that man, there is always great danger lest the law itself should be found in fact exiled and denied with him. And thus it was with numbers at Geneva.

To immorality was joined infidelity.

For exactly the same reason. When faith, ceasing to be a personal matter, is embodied for you in certain men, a rupture with these men will always run the risk of being a rupture with faith. Romanism, moreover, provides infidelity with many means of hiding itself, and not only of hiding, but of ignoring itself: the fall of Romanism, therefore, only brings it to light.

Such was the case at Geneva with a certain number. Nay, infidelity was carried in some to a degree which is not generally thought to have been attained at that period. The coarsest, and most brutish materialism was paraded in their speech as well as in their conduct. We shall have abundant proofs of this when we relate the last straggles of Calvin with the last representatives of these deplorable tendencies.

Farel and his colleague, then, had courageously put their hand to the plough, and, if history had preserved for us only the laws which they carried, we might fancy that, from the very first the Genevan republic was truly regenerated in the Christian sense of the word. It was a grand and beautiful sight when, on the 21st of May 1536, in the church of St. Peter, the assembled citizens swore to take the gospel for their sole rule of life, as they had already sworn to take it for their sole rule of faith. This solemn vow included all the laws made, or to be made, as emanating from the Christian law. But laws prove little: indeed, it has often happened that they are voted with the greater eagerness the less intention there is to submit to them: men think that their debt is paid by homage to the principle, and they trample under foot, without

scruple, the obligations which result from it. Had not the same clergy, whose vices had just facilitated the subversion of its Church, been seen many a time proclaiming, in its councils, the wisest, the severest laws?

Many of those who had shown so much indignation against it were willing to do thus. But Farel intended that what had been voted should not prove a dead letter. Now, speaking to the people, he charges them to obey; and anon, speaking to the magistrates, he charges them to exact complete obedience, menacing them with all the wrath of God if they allow any infraction of the laws which are, at bottom, but the law of God. The magistrates, generally well disposed, do their best: they publish some additional regulations, and inflict some exemplary chastisements. Amongst the people, those who are good support Farel, and others not so good, in the end also support him: but the bad, in proportion as their numbers diminish, become worse and worse.

What further complicated the task was the heroic unanimity of all, good or bad, in making the sacrifices required for their country's defence.

The proclamation of the Reformed faith had been instantly followed by the resumption of hostilities against the city. As early as the 24th of September 1535, an attack by night had almost succeeded in placing it in the hands of the duke and the bishop. At the end of November, closely beleaguered on all sides, Geneva beheld famine advancing: and her three suburbs, which had been destroyed to facilitate her defence, gave her five or six thousand more mouths to feed. In December, a French envoy made his appearance. The king offered his protection to the Genevese, but on condition that they should give to him the temporal jurisdiction of the expelled bishop. One of the Syndics conducted the ambassador round the fortifications, at which men, women, and children were working in spite of the snow, and asked him if they seemed like a people disposed to accept his offer. The 13th of January, a new attack was made on four several points at once. The 24th, there was a battle at a quarter of a league from the town. In February the Bernese army arrived, and some prospect of security appeared.

Such was the city, or rather the camp, which Farel wished to subject to all the strictness of gospel morality. Obstacles multiplied: but Farel did not lose courage: he felt himself bound to struggle on to the last, and if the work of God was to go down at Geneva before the obstinacy of man, it was the duty of the minister of God to uphold it until the very last moment. Small of stature and in aspect mean,—*contemptible*, as St. Paul said of himself,—before the rebels he rose to the height of indignation and faith. Their eyes were abased before him: and though murmurs attended him, it was from afar, and they were to be hushed again the moment he turned round. In the pulpit he was unsparing. His word rolled like thunder: and his invectives were showered down upon those who despised the gospel. He was rich in those

expressions which would now be called scarcely evangelical, but which we might more justly call simply unpolished, for nothing is more evangelical at bottom than the indignation that armed him.

But he felt his strength diminishing, and he was beginning to ask himself if Geneva was decidedly going to be unworthy of the part which he had hoped for her.

V.

At last—we have said that it was in 1536, towards the end of August—he learned one day that the author of the *Christian Institutes* had alighted at a hostelry, but was to start again the morrow. Was not this the man whom he was expecting? For Farel, alike humble and courageous, had often asked himself if another would not succeed better than he, and a sort of presentiment had bidden him wait in hope of such a man.

So he hastened to the hostelry. What was his first impression on seeing Calvin? Did he persist in thinking that this was the man he expected, or was he for a moment disconcerted by the pallor, meagreness, and sickly mien of him to whom he had come to offer such a burden? We know not: but the offer was made to Calvin, who at first rejected it. He was not made, he said, for such an office. He was willing to be a labourer in the great harvest which was ripening, or to be a soldier of the Lord, if needful, in the great battle, as he had already been many a time: but to clear a portion of the field, to accept the guardianship of a fixed post,—this he is convinced is not his task. If he had already rendered some service, it was by means of a book, the fruit of silence and of study. Let him go, then, where he might write others. Farel is urgent. The book is written: and no other book could equal the commentary which the author might add to it by embodying it in a Church, on which the eyes of the world should be fastened. And, moreover, when the trumpet sounds on every side, who has the right to say that he is not a man of action, that his task is to study and to write? The proof that God expected other things from Calvin was, that here was Farel in his path, asking his co-operation in the name of God. Calvin adduced fresh reasons, and it seemed as though he wanted to deter Farel by exhibiting to him the defects of his future colleague. He knew himself, he said: he was tenacious and obstinate. Once more he asked that he might go and busy himself in studies; for it was only thus that he could be of any value. Then Farel broke out: “Thy studies,” exclaimed he, “are a pretext! I tell thee, that if thou refusest to associate thyself with my work, God will curse thee for having sought thyself and not Christ.”¹

Calvin yielded, but as a man of his stamp would yield, with the profound conviction that he was yielding to God and not to man. But the man ever

¹ Beza's “Life of Calvin.”

remained dear and venerable in his eyes. He loved to recall that scene, “that fearful adjuration,” he would say, “as if God from on high had stretched out His hand to stop me.”¹ He recalled it in woe, taking courage from the thought of that hand “stretched out from on high” to lay hold of and support him; he recalled it in weal, to thank God for having chosen and sustained him; he recalled it, doubtless, when the aged Farel came for the last time to see him—who, though younger by so many years, was worn out before his time. Farel did not come that day “to stop him,” but to envy him the happiness of his final departure, and the bliss of his final repose.

VI.

From this time, then, Calvin belonged to Geneva, and Geneva to Calvin. God indeed knows how to make use of all things and of all men! It was the future apostate from the Reformed faith, Du Tillet, who had informed Farel of Calvin’s presence, and had advised him to go and see him.

God, we have said, had given Geneva to him, but had given it to him to conquer. It is that conquest which we have now to relate.

Calvin did not assume the attitude of a conqueror. He could not if he had wished; for the official conquest had already been made, and he found the other, the true and inner one, begun in every direction by Farel. Far from wishing to step into the place of the latter, he would not be, at first, even his colleague in the pastoral ministry; his office, which was not well defined, was for a time something between a professorship and preaching. It appears that he had not even a fixed salary, for we read in the council-registers, under date February 13th, 1537, “Six gold crowns are given to Cauvin, or Calvin, seeing that he has hitherto scarcely received anything.” The 5th of September of the preceding year he was called “that Frenchman.” It is the first mention which is made of him in the registers.

That Frenchman then had only engaged to give lectures on the Scriptures; but those lectures were given in the cathedral, and, considering the place and the multitudes, they could not but look very much like sermons. The Genevese had much to learn in the way of religious *instruction*; but they were even still more deficient as respects religious *education*, and the preacher consequently never left a subject without having amply developed it in view of its practical and moral application. Like Farel, he would only call that Reformation which lived and grew upon the religious soil; like Farel, too, he aimed at nothing less than causing a revolution, commingled with so many impure elements, to bring forth the fruits of Christianity. Farel’s adversaries soon had cause to perceive that Calvin was only a Farel, younger, abler, and more learned,—less ardent outwardly, but in reality far stronger

¹ “Preface to the “Commentary on the Psalms.”

and mightier. It was not long, therefore, before complaints were heard. With a simplicity which showed what certain people still were, some of them complained that Calvin was wanting in his duty. "His office," they said, "is to expound the Scriptures; by what right does he set himself to do anything else,—to speak of manners and to censure? He had to show that we did well to put down mass, pope, confessional, and the rest; by what right would he restore authority which has been overthrown, in order to become, as it were, city confessor, and penitentiary?" Let us not ridicule these men; they only said what many others, who are more Christian, are often tempted to say, or at least to think. Men like to hear religion spoken of; but do not care to hear those inferences deduced from it, which impose constraint upon the old man, and urge to regeneration.

Political circumstances also kept up this feeling. The men whom Calvin, who had come to Farel's aid, wished to subject to such a yoke, were those who had so patriotically fought for their country's freedom; and as the religious struggle was closely connected with the political one, they almost thought that they had amply rendered before hand all that could reasonably be demanded of them by God and religion. Had they not poured forth their blood to conquer the right of hearing the gospel which was preached to them? If necessary, they could show their scars; could the preachers do as much? All danger, moreover, had now ceased; a proud security had succeeded those days of distress, when, in default of true piety, peril turned every heart more or less towards God. Vaud and Chablais, which had been conquered and Protestantised by the Bernese, surrounded Geneva with a rampart that seemed impregnable to every foe. After so many troublous years, triumph and prosperity had come, and prosperity, as usual, hardened all their hearts.

VII.

Calvin, however, within less than three months after his arrival at Geneva, obtained, or caused Farel to obtain, a great and encouraging success.

They had drawn up a confession of faith, in which was clearly defined, article by article, the intimate connexion which they were endeavouring to establish between faith and conduct. It summed up admirably both gospel doctrine and the errors which had been overthrown in its name, together with the moral consequences resulting either from the overthrow of these errors, or from the doctrine itself restored to its primitive purity.

We could have wished to reproduce it at length, but shall content ourselves with a rapid analysis.

I. *The Bible*, the sole "rule to be followed, without any admixture, without adding to it or taking away from it."

II. *One God only.* God is a spirit, therefore worship must be in spirit. No “ceremonies and carnal observances, as though He took pleasure in such things.” No “trust in any creature.” No images in churches, whether representing creatures, or pretending to represent God.

III. *The Law of God, one law for all.* Here already begins the moral application. “As He is the one Lord and Master, we confess that our whole life must be regulated by the commandments of His holy law, and that we ought to have no other rule of holy living, nor to invent other good works to please Him but those which are contained in it.” Then comes the Decalogue.

IV. *Man by nature.* Blind, “with a darkened understanding,” corrupt, and “perverse of heart,” of himself he cannot attain to the true knowledge of God, nor “give himself to good works.” He, therefore, needs to be “enlightened of God,” and “restored to the obedience of the righteousness of God.”

V. *Man in himself condemned.* The consequence of what precedes. Therefore man must “seek out of himself the means of his salvation.”

VI. *Salvation in Jesus.* Jesus is He “who hath been given us by the Father, in order that we may recover in Him all that we lack in ourselves.” Now, what He has done and suffered, we find summed up “in the creed which is said in church.” The apostles’ creed follows.

VII. *Righteousness in Jesus.* It is by Him that we are “reconciled and restored to favour;” it is by His bloodshedding that “we are cleansed” from all our filthiness.

VIII. *Regeneration in Jesus.* This is the work of His Spirit. Our “will is rendered conformable to that of God.” We are “delivered from the bondage of sin,” and thus only “are we made capable of good works.”

IX. *The remission of sins always necessary.* Notwithstanding regeneration, much evil and imperfection remain. Therefore “we have always need of God’s mercy,” and we must always “seek our righteousness in Jesus Christ, ascribing nought to our works.”

X. *All our goodness lies in the grace of God*—that is to say, that all the above mentioned benefits are granted to us “by His sole clemency and mercy, irrespective of any merit in our works.” Yet the works, “which we do in faith,” are “pleasing and acceptable” to Him, because, not imputing to us “the imperfection which is in them,” He sees in them only “what proceeds from His Spirit.”

XI. *Faith.* Faith is “the entrance” to all these “riches.” It consists in believing “in the gospel promises,” and in receiving Jesus Christ “as He is described in the Word of God.”

XII. *The invocation of God alone, and the intercession of Christ.* All comes to us from God through Jesus Christ; all other invocation is, therefore, superfluous or criminal.

XIII. *Prayer with understanding.* The worthlessness of all prayer which does not spring from “the affection of the heart.” The Lord’s Prayer is our model

XIV. *The Sacraments.* They are “exercises of faith,” as well to strengthen it in us as to be “its witness before men.” There are two, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. As for “what is held in the pope’s domain, about seven sacraments, we condemn it as a fable and a falsehood.”

XV. *Baptism.* An outward sign by which “God witnesseth that He is willing to receive us as His children.” And since our children “belong to such a covenant,” it is lawful and right that “the outward sign is communicated to them.”

XVI. *The Supper of the Lord.* A representation of “the true spiritual communion which we have in the body and blood of Christ”

XVII. *Human traditions.* No lawful ordinances but those which are founded upon God’s Word; therefore no pilgrimages, monasticism, differences of meats, prohibitions of marriage, confessions, and such like.”

XVIII. *The Church.* Several churches in the world, and yet but one Church, the whole body of true believers a Church “whose true mark is when the Word of God is purely preached, published, listened to, and kept”

XIX. *Excommunication.* As there are always “despisers of God and of His Word,” excommunication is “a holy and wholesome thing.” It is, therefore, “expedient that all manifest idolaters, blasphemers, murderers, thieves, seditious persons, strikers and drunkards, after they have been duly admonished, if they amend not, should be separated from the communion of the faithful, till their repentance has become apparent”

XX. *Ministers of the Word.* None are lawful pastors but “the faithful ministers of the Word of God,” who feed the sheep of Jesus Christ “by instructions, admonitions, consolations, and exhortations.” There is no authority in themselves, they are nothing but by the Word of God “by which they have power to command, forbid, promise, and threaten; and without which they neither can nor ought to attempt anything.”

XXI. *Magistrates.* Civil authority is “an ordinance of God.” It must therefore be exercised in the name of God and according to His commandments; it must be respected “in all ordinances which do not contravene the commandments of God.”

Such was the confession of faith which was presented, in November, to the Council of *Two Hundred, or Great Council*. It made a part of a body of “Articles concerning Church government,” as the register states; and these articles were adopted. It was not a complete code; the moral regulations added to the confession of faith were designed rather to consecrate the principle, and did not yet aim at following it out in all its applications.

But the principle was voted, and this was what the Reformers had wished. The government was invested by the Great Council with the right to search out and punish any infraction of the Christian law; the pastors were invested with the right of urging such regulations as they should think necessary, of informing the magistrates of delinquencies, and promoting their chastisement. The representatives of the people had just abdicated in the name of the people in favour of the heads of the Church, who were henceforward legally and with all the authority of the Gospel, and, for its support, made but one with the temporal rulers.

VIII.

It is scarcely necessary to say that we do not unreservedly approve the state of things which was then inaugurated at Geneva; still less do we present it as an ideal towards which our legislation should tend.

The ideal, which Calvin was soon to follow out to its extremest applications, was that of the *Christian* state;—Christian in the details, as well as in the general spirit of its laws, and considering itself responsible before God for all the actions of the citizens.

Thus understood, the Christian state necessarily becomes the Church-State. It rules as a sovereign faith, which is the foundation of the edifice; it rules as a sovereign all that is to be reared upon that foundation—all without exception, for there is nothing, Christianly speaking, which is not connected with faith, and which has not to be decided by faith. Faith then will occupy in the State, the place which we are all agreed in assigning it in the individual; the State will force the individual to do in virtue of the common faith all that the same individual, supposing him to be a true Christian, would do in virtue of his individual faith.

Here lies the error. Faith, even when common to all the members of a regularly constituted society, is always individual in its essence; community of faith is an external fact whence nothing can logically result, save external consequences; community of worship, ecclesiastical organization, &c. Thus, even when fixed under the form of a confession, faith must still be left, in its special consequences, to each man's own conscience. To awaken and vivify in all men, a sense of responsibility before God and men, is the task of the preachers of the Gospel,—a task which the civil power may and should facilitate; but let us leave that responsibility in its integrity to every man, and let neither State nor Church presume to take the place of conscience.

Such in our judgment is the right course. Observe, however, that this system, although we think it conformable to the spirit of Christianity and the true nature of faith, sends us like that of Calvin, in pursuit of an ideal, and that Calvin might triumphantly ask us now, what such an ideal, considered

wiser than his, becomes in practice. "As for the consciences," he would say, "to which you leave the right of deciding for themselves what the law of God permits or forbids, how many amongst them regulate themselves really and sincerely by the law of God? You reproach me with having fallen into an extreme; but are you not in the opposite extreme, you whose laws only strike that which offends them, and permit all that which offends only God? You have not solved the problem; you have only passed by its side, whilst I have resolutely confronted it. Faith being granted; I demand all the consequences of faith. I want them in the State as well as in the Church; in each of the citizens as well as in the State. I have been logical and I would have every body else logical too."

We have said elsewhere that logic may be in the wrong, and we are not more disposed to think here that it is in the right. But we could not omit altogether what was to be said in favour of the laws of Calvin, and what he might have said against ours.

Let us beware, however, in reading his laws, not to be too much influenced by the true or false indignation which certain details have excited in the mind of some of his historians.

In the first place, it has been proved that on many points, they only restored ordinances which were anterior to the Reformation. We know of four (1503, 1506, 1510, 1511), against games of chance; and four (1484, 1487, 1492, 1516) against dancing. Debauchery, drunkenness, and blasphemy, had also called forth ordinances, very badly kept, it is true, but *severe*, and we often find Calvin and his colleagues, when accused of exacting too much, asking whether what was forbidden under a corrupt Church was to be tolerated under the Gospel

And then it must not be forgotten what, at that period, certain things were which the refinement of manners has more or less modified. Every custom, and therefore much more every kind of disorder, retained the impress of preceding centuries; hence the passions easily degenerated into a brutish and uncouth cynicism. Drunkenness and revelling are now among the very lowest of the inferior classes just what they were then to many of the higher ranks. There were scarcely any innocent pleasures. The dances, for instance,—do those who reproach Calvin for having so strictly forbidden them, know what they were? They may learn it from these same registers which show us that the said dances were forbidden long before Calvin's time; they may learn it also from the registers of our courts of justice, for they not seldom degenerated into outrages on decency which no respectable government will ever tolerate.

Nor were the sumptuary laws at all extravagant for those times; and they must not be judged either by our usages, or by the complaints of those whom they interfered with. We may smile at certain details, especially at the anti-

quoted names of fashions, studs or jewels, which were permitted or forbidden: but the principle was universally admitted, and we see edicts of that kind in France, as late as Henry IV., forty years after Calvin's death. Why should it be thought strange that what that immoral prince thought it advisable to regulate in his kingdom, Calvin should have wished to be regulated in a republic?

As for the religious regulations, they emanated immediately from the principle adopted, and all that we have yet seen might be said in favour of the principle, might be said in favour of the regulations. Here again let us mistrust the impression which may be produced upon us by certain details foreign to the manners of our day; let us remember, on the other hand, how Romanism had accustomed the people to see religion regulated. A Romish historian looks as though he thought it monstrous that Calvin had ordained that the sick were never to keep their bed for three days without sending for a pastor. Now, at Rome, not in the sixteenth century, but in the nineteenth, and very recently (in January 1860) all innkeepers were enjoined, under penalty of a hundred crowns, never to wait more than three days without sending for a confessor, if any one had fallen sick in their house. If, then, we think Calvin to be blamed for such injunctions, let it be at least in the name of Christian liberty, and not on the credit of angry accusations and fictitious indignation, like that which is for the most part levelled at him in our day.

IX.

When these ordinances were made—or rather sketched, for they were as yet far from being what they eventually became—it remained to carry them into execution, and it was soon seen what can be done by a single firm, calm, and persevering will, to inspire with courage and perseverance those who otherwise perhaps would have lacked them completely. The syndics and the council¹ of Geneva seem for a time to be new men, and Calvin's adversaries are obliged to acknowledge at least the perfect impartiality which presides at the infliction of the penalties. One of the first punished is a counsellor. Ami Curtet; another a citizen of high station, Matthieu Manlich. An obstinate gambler is set in the stocks for an hour, with his playing cards hung round his neck. The author of a base masquerade is condemned to ask pardon on his knees in the cathedral. A man guilty of perjury was hoisted up on a ladder, and remained there several hours, with his right hand fastened to the top. An adulterer and his accomplice were ignominiously paraded through the town. A woman who made headdresses was condemned to two days' imprisonment

¹ The *Lesser Council*, the government, composed of twenty-five members, including the four syndics.

for having immodestly decked out a young bride. Some parents were punished for having neglected or refused to send their children to school.

This last point is one of those which Calvin had most at heart. The bishops had done nothing for public instruction; the public school, founded in 1428 by a layman, François de Versonay, had existed rather in spite of the clergy than with their help; and towards the middle of the same century, the bishop had kept back for several years his authorisation for rebuilding the class-rooms which were falling to ruins. Reorganised in 1501, but by the government, the school had at first enjoyed a few years of prosperity, but afterwards, either because of political troubles, or because of clerical hostility—justified this time by the adhesion of some of the masters to the new religious ideas—it came at length to have neither scholars nor masters. As early as 1535, Farel had asked for the establishment of a “school,” directed, as the register informs us, “by a man who understands it, and who may be paid sufficient to enable him to teach the poor without asking a fee of them; and he also asks that every one may be bound to send his children to school, and to make them learn.” The school had been founded, the humble beginning of an edifice which was to occupy so large and so fair a place in the Geneva of Calvin. He found it already provided with two under-masters besides the head-master, and frequented by no inconsiderable number of scholars. Calvin the student could not but take an interest in it; Calvin the Reformer had long understood that the Reformation must live and grow by knowledge, and called upon all its partisans to exercise really and sincerely the right, which it conferred upon them, of knowing for and by themselves the things of faith. Connected as it was with the great intellectual movement of the age, it had already everywhere created or transformed the means of instruction; in a short time it had everywhere prepared learned, able, and ardent champions, who were in their turn to prepare others. There are moments when it seems that every faculty is doubled, and that ripe fruit immediately succeeds the blossoms which were its harbingers.

But Calvin could not conceive of instruction in any degree whatever apart from religion; the child was to receive, with the first rudiments of human letters, those of that other science which henceforth belonged to all men. Calvin had written the *Institutes* for divines and adults; and he drew up a familiar summary of the *Institutes*—his *Catechism* for children.

That catechism, which was several times revised by Calvin’s pen, was destined to play an important part; it was long to be the true confession of faith for the Church of Geneva, and for all the churches in connexion with it; a living, practical confession, sufficiently strict to satisfy divines, and sufficiently simple to be understood by the simplest. Notwithstanding its brevity, it is not dry; the theological formula appears most frequently, only as the result and summary of the Christian feeling, by appealing to which the author

had begun. Observe, for instance, the beginning. Calvin does not commence by asking “What is religion?”—a question which inevitably, and, do what we will, leads to a somewhat metaphysical reply. He says:

Q. What is the chief end of human life?

A. It is to know God.¹

Q. Why dost thou say that?

A. Because He hath created and brought us into the world that He may be glorified in us. And it is reasonable that we should order our lives to His glory, because He is their source.

Q. And what is the highest good of men?

A. The same.

Q. Why dost thou call it the highest good?

A. Because without it our condition is worse than that of brute beasts.

Q. Hereby, then, we see that there is no misfortune so great as not to live to God?

A. Yes.

Q. But what is the true and right knowledge of God?

A. When He is known in order to be honoured.

Q. What is the way to honour Him aright?

A. It is that we should put our whole *trust* in Him; that we should serve Him by *obeying* His will; that we should call upon Him in all our *necessities*, seeking in Him salvation and every good thing, and that we should acknowledge, with heart and mouth, that all good proceeds from Him alone.

Here we have the order and arrangement of the catechism:—*Trust* introduces all that relates to faith; *obedience*, all that relates to works; *necessities*, all that relates to prayer; and the fourth point all that relates to grace, the means of grace, et cetera

The great question of works serves as a transition between the first and second parts. Calvin expounds it, in a few answers, with perfect clearness, and every objection is anticipated. “Faith,” he concludes, “not only does not make us remiss in good works, but is the root from which they spring.” Of predestination there is not a word. Here, then, the theologian somewhat condemns himself, for he omits here what he has taught elsewhere as being of the highest importance. The fact is, the Christian once more shows his sound, practical, and pious sense.

This same practical and pious good sense is not less to be praised in the third part, which treats of prayer. It contains eleven chapters, or eleven *Sundays*, for the book, as a whole, is a sort of *Christian year*, in which every week has its chapter. This number of eleven, more than a fifth of the whole, sufficiently indicates the importance which Calvin attached to prayer, and

¹ We quote from the edition of 1553.

many passages might be quoted to show how high he placed it. Nowhere is his Christianity more spiritual and living than in what he teaches about man's going to God in all his necessities of body and soul.

The fourth part treats of the Bible, the ministry, and the sacraments. It is rather frigid towards the close, in reference to "the order and government" to be observed in the administration of the Lord's Supper. But in the question of the rite itself, and what it is to the Christian, the author has neither forgotten nor omitted anything.

X.

Whilst the new generation was being fashioned at school in accordance with this prolific conception of evangelical Christianity, the old generation was being divided, with ever increasing distinctness, into friends and foes of the gospel. The 10th of November had not kept its promise; if it had strengthened the weak and rallied the undecided, it had irritated the violent. The Great Council, said the latter, had overstepped their rights in voting a new code; the General Council¹ ought to have been convoked. That was true; but it is doubtful whether a more regular way of proceeding would have found them more submissive. Forced to obey, they were on the watch for every opportunity of creating a disturbance, and prepared to make use of it for shaking off their yoke.²

Accordingly, they were delighted to receive, in February 1537, two of those Anabaptists, with whom Calvin had so boldly disavowed all connection in his epistle to the king of France. André Benoit and Hermann of Liege were superior, it seems, to many of their brethren; but they were none the less professors of those doctrines which had been seen to betray their true character by the most fearful disorders. The most religious, moreover, had often been the most dangerous. Fervent Christians on certain points, their mystic spiritualism was strangely associated with the grossest materialism, with the worship of brute force, and contempt for all moral and social laws. See what was represented by the two men who were come to plant themselves in the midst of Geneva, which as yet had scarcely issued out of chaos, and to defy those who had drawn it out of that chaos!

They demanded, in fact, a conference with the Reformers—a *dispute* as it was then called. The Council at first refused, fearing lest discussion should only serve to show how many friends these men possessed. Calvin requested that it might be accepted, fearing, with still more reason, lest he should be accused of fear, and lest such pretended alarm should help them to gain

¹ Composed of all the citizens.

² For the description of these struggles we are much indebted to the "History of the Church of Geneva," by M. Gaberel.

recruits. The conference was therefore held, but before the Council only. It lasted two days. Baptism, excommunication, and the nature of the soul, which was considered material by the Anabaptists, were successively discussed.

Calvin took up the last point especially; his arguments, which were an able demonstration of the spirituality and immortality of the soul, were resumed and developed by him in his *Brief instruction for arming every believer against the errors of the Anabaptists* (1544). The Council rejoiced at Calvin's victory, and the two men were expelled from the city the 19th of March; but the *Libertines*, for so they began to call the enemies of the new order of things, did not consider that they were beaten. They openly announced their intention of soon having done both with the Reformers and their laws.

Farel and Calvin, on their side, yielded nothing. They had gained an auxiliary in Corault, who was formerly a monk, and afterwards one of the queen of Navarre's preachers. He was old and blind, but full of energy, and both supported them by his courage, and aided them by his powerful though uncultivated eloquence. Many pretended that they did not consider themselves bound by the Confession of Faith; so the pastors demanded that it should be printed and sent to all the citizens, and that every one should be asked by the tithing man¹ if he intended to submit to it or not. This was accordingly done, but the measure met with a kind of opposition which had never been dreamt of—several of the malcontents refused to say either yes or no. According to our modern ideas, they were in their right to refuse; according to the ideas of that time, it was a revolt; and, moreover, from what we know of their tendencies, it is probable that the serious religious motives which would now be invoked in such a case, had no share in their opposition. Evidently it was not the doctrinal part of the Confession of Faith, but the moral part of it which excited their repugnance. They would willingly have signed the doctrine, if not as the expression of their faith, at least as the confirmation and token of their rupture with Romanism; but of the Christian consequences they would have none on any terms. This is what Corault said to them, with a harshness which soon rendered him yet more odious to them than his colleagues were.

The pastors and their friends had, however, the majority still on their side; but the minority was one of those which never submit, and always end by triumphing, at least for a time. Having succeeded in detaching from this minority a few citizens, the Council imagined that it might resolve upon the banishment of those who would not submit; but this measure was not even begun to be carried into execution, and the antagonists openly organised

¹ Dizenier, a public officer charged with the census of a quarter. Geneva was formerly divided into twelve parishes, each of which was composed of two tithings, or dizaines.

themselves in prospect of the approaching elections, which were to take place in February. Speakers were to be heard declaiming, even in the streets, against the ministers and their intolerable despotism; and, in a certain point of view, the speakers were in the right. Geneva had, under the bishops, enjoyed much more *liberty* in the sense dear to the lovers of pleasure and of disorderly living, and the Libertines could harp triumphantly upon that string. "What remained of the old franchises of the city? They had been preserved then in spite of the duke, and in spite of the bishop, but only for the Genevese to allow that, in the name of religion, laws should be imposed upon them of which the bishop had never dreamed, and which the duke would not have supported?" One thing only was forgotten, which was, that henceforward those laws, and the observance of those laws, would be the best, or rather the only safeguard both against the bishop and the duke. Before the redoubled hatred which Geneva had just excited by breaking with her religious past, she would need other ramparts than mere human patriotism, as events would soon show. Liberty, thus understood, would but have prepared the ruin of political independence, and Rome would have again seized her prey, fallen once more into the depths of ignorance and immorality. Geneva could only be equal to its new task and its new perils by being also fully and frankly new.

Government was, therefore, paralyzed. The Libertines had representatives in its bosom, who impeded every serious attempt to seek out means by which order might best be re-established; and supposing the means to be found, how were they to be employed? The pastors demanded the excommunication of some who were notoriously immoral or impious. They probably did not expect much from the sentence, and demanded it rather to establish the principle of excommunication, as laid down in the Confession of Faith, and to protest solemnly against the henceforth certain triumph of license. Government dare not comply; the Two Hundred would not. The vote—a nearly certain sign that the majority had changed,—encouraged the party of opposition; and on the 3d of February 1538, the elections were in their favour. They had the majority in the Council, and three Syndics out of the four were their adherents.

XI.

See then the Reformers in presence of a hostile government, urged on by people yet more hostile. The possession of power, however, as is always the case, induced a certain moderation in the newly-elected, who, moreover, were not among the worst. This last point is noteworthy, as it is important for the right understanding of later changes. Many at this period sided with the Libertines, and accepted power at their hands, who were not really of

their party; but honourable men, deceived or self-deceivers, who were desirous of their country's weal, and disposed to let facts teach them. Before this result had been attained, the magistrates of 1538, were, at least soon made to wish that those they had to govern were, if not Christians, at least governable; willingly would they have entered into an understanding with the pastors, if the latter would but have consented to wink at certain matters. But Calvin, besides not being the man to yield anything which he deemed right and needful, looked far beyond the dangerous truce which he was asked to grant. He beheld Geneva weakened and dishonoured; he comprehended what an enormous breach would be made in the principle of the union between moral reform and religious reform. He therefore refused to lend himself to any accommodation. Conqueror or conquered, he said to himself, he would save the principle.

Everything in the city, therefore, was confusion and menace. The Bernese had sent deputies to mediate between the parties; but the Council hastened to get rid of them by declaring that there had been exaggeration, and that all was about to be settled. The Reformers had hoped great things from the step; but they were again left alone. A few days after, they entered the Council chamber, and once more drew a lamentable picture of the disorder which appeared with impunity in the city. The magistrates were obliged to promise that they would do something. They passed a decree, in fact, against drunkenness, debauchery, and lewd songs, and had it proclaimed by sound of trumpet. But there they stopped, and all went on as before.

Then the cup overflowed, and the ministers began to speak in the pulpit, not only against profligacy, but against the magistrates who either could not or would not prevent it. Was this wise, prudent, and Christian conduct on the part of the pastors? We are aware that many will answer no, on the authority of the modern axiom, that the religious man must in no case interfere with the men of power. Let us leave the modern axiom to modern men; and before applying it to the men of the sixteenth century, let us ask what Farel and Calvin were to do. The principle of the intervention of magistrates in matters moral and religious, was admitted by everybody; disorder, moreover, had attained to such a pitch that no honourable government, even purely civil, in our own days, could refrain from interfering. The magistrates then were failing, openly and scandalously, in their duty, and who has ever pretended that the Christian pulpit, in such a case, should remain always, everywhere, and absolutely silent? Moreover, the position of Farel and Calvin was very different from that of mere pastors officiating in an organized church. Everything had to be organized and created; and so exceptional a task necessarily involved exceptional rights.

But their adversaries did not reason thus. Pastors, according to them, were only men paid by the State, and they were to keep absolute silence on

all that concerned the State. A resolution to this effect was notified to them, but Corault braved the prohibition, and was sent to prison. His colleagues, supported by numerous friends, energetically demanded his liberty. He was released, but banished from the city, and we have already seen what Calvin said of him at his death, which happened in the October of the same year.

A new embarrassment had supervened to accelerate the solution, and in such a state of things it was rather to be desired than feared.

The Bernese Reformation, less radical than that of Geneva, had retained certain customs which Geneva did not admit. Geneva communicated with common bread; Berne, with unleavened bread. Geneva had removed the baptismal fonts from the churches; Berne had left them. Geneva observed the Sunday only; Berne had retained several holidays. The Bernese asked, therefore, that on these points the Genevese should do as they did. Farel and Calvin's opposition to it was quite enough to make the Libertines of one mind with the Bernese. They still intended to receive that holy sacrament unworthily, with their customary sarcasms on their lips; but they were suddenly seized with an ardent desire to communicate with unleavened bread, and this soon became the chief thing.

A Synod was convoked at Lausanne to deliberate upon it. Farel and Calvin repaired thither. But Lausanne belonged to the Bernese, and the Bernese excelled in the art of being masters. The Synod, as was to be expected, voted according to their views. The Reformers appealed to the approaching Synod of Zurich, in which the same points were to be debated, and on their return to Geneva, begged that no innovation might take place before Whitsuntide, when the decision of Zurich would be known.

Pledging himself to submit, if Zurich should decide the same as Lausanne, was a great concession on the part of Calvin, who could not understand that after breaking with Romanism, men should wish to retain any part of it. Logic again! but this time, before we pronounce it in the wrong, we must carefully weigh the circumstances. Romanism had so ruled by means of ceremonies and forms, that it was scarcely possible to retain any of them, and especially to return to any of them, without seeming to restore it more or less, and seeking to do so altogether. Calvin, therefore, might consider that he had made a great concession in promising to submit to the decision of Zurich.

But this concession did not suit the Libertines; they wished for open resistance, in order to have an opportunity of crushing it. Easter was at hand; they asked that the communion should be administered that day according to the Bernese rite, and the Council ordered that it should be so. A letter from the Bernese government exhorted the Council of Geneva not to tolerate the pastors' resistance.

Such resistance, in itself, was contrary to the principles which the pastors had themselves laid down by getting the Confession voted; what one majority had done, another majority had incontestably the right to modify. But here arose a second point of view which Calvin had never separated from the first. The positive right existed, he allowed, but it was in connexion with the moral right; the absence of the second element annihilated the whole. A Christian majority had the right to regulate the Church; an infidel and immoral majority had not. There is much to object against such a distinction. Who shall judge whether a majority is Christian or not? Who shall decide where the measure of piety and faith requisite for a majority to have a moral right to rule the Church begins and ends? But these are modern difficulties, always less, moreover, in practice than in theory. For Calvin, they did not even exist. Strongly entrenched in his conscience, as he had boldly encouraged the majority of 1537 to consider themselves entitled to vote a Confession of Faith, so did he now declare to the majority of 1538 that they had not the right to lay a finger upon the edifice which the other had raised.

If, indeed, he had entertained any scruples, the Libertines would have removed them by their conduct as Easter drew near. That Bernese rite, for which they really cared as little as for any other, was demanded by them with fury. Bands of them ran through the streets at night vociferating and yelling. They would stop before the pastors' dwellings, crying out; "To the Rhone! to the Rhone!" and firing off their arquebuses. Even this was not enough. The Easter communion, which they were profaning beforehand by absurd violence, was deliberately profaned also by redoubled scandals, as if to state definitively that the liberty they had won, was disorder and immorality. They organized a masquerade in which scenes from the Gospel were parodied; dances, songs, excesses of every kind, yea, nothing was wanting to those deplorable days and shameful nights. We should probably be very unjust if we were to consider the whole party as sharing in these follies. Many perhaps lamented them; but to blame them publicly, would have looked like denying the cause, and there was no other protest than the painful silence of the moral and Christian party.

At length the day arrived, and the bells seemed to toll the knell of Christian Geneva, as well as of Protestant Geneva; the Romanists, who were still numerous, and no longer concealed their joy at the sight of so many evils, doubtless thought of the time when those same bells would toll anew for mass. Farel ascends the pulpit of St. Gervais, and Calvin that of St. Peter's. Farel perceived amongst the audience the most fiery and disreputable of the Libertines; they did him the honour to hate him more than Calvin, doubtless because hitherto, he had rendered greater services, and that they were indebted chiefly to him for the liberty of which they made so bad a use. He spoke, at first, only of the feelings to be brought to the Lord's Table; they

thought, for a moment, perhaps, that he would stop there, and leave to each the task of examining himself before God. But if that is what a minister had best do in ordinary times, can he and should he never act otherwise? The Libertines had courted publicity too much for it to be a usurpation to read their consciences. Farel declares, therefore, that he will not be their accomplice in the profanation which they are meditating, and that the communion will not be administered. Cries of anger interrupt him; his voice rises above the tumult, and they are forced to hear him. He resumes what he had said of the dispositions to be brought, and then contrasts the shameful picture of those which they had brought. There must be faith in order to communicate, and you blaspheme the Gospel. There must be charity, and you are come with swords and staves. There must be repentance; how did you pass the night? Hereupon they become agitated and clamorous, and at last, swords are drawn, and several furious men rush towards the pulpit. Farel holds his peace, crosses his arms and waits. But his friends, who are also numerous, surround him, make him come down and conduct him home. The like scene took place round Calvin at St. Peter's, though somewhat less violent. It was to be renewed fifteen years afterwards in the same Church, against the same man. His enemies never changed; and he, still less, and the conqueror of 1538 gloriously prepared the conqueror of 1553.

On the morrow, the Council pronounced sentence of banishment against the two ministers, and on the Tuesday it was ratified by the General Council. One would like to know by what majority the decision was taken; the register gives no details, only saying, "the greater number." Be that as it may, the two ministers were enjoined to leave the city within three days. "So be it!" said Calvin, "it is better to obey God than man." A Romish historian discovers that this answer is very old. It is as old, in fact, as the Gospel; but it will be eternally new in the mouth of every one who has bought the right to utter it by sacrificing self to duty.

Bonivard had been two years out of the dungeons of Chillon, and could see the fulfilment of what he had predicted to some of those unworthy Reformed whose exploits we have just been narrating. "You hated the priests," he said to them, "because they were too much like you; you will hate the preachers because they are too much unlike you, and you will not keep them two years, without sending them away, rewarding them for their pains with a sound beating." For the rest, Bonivard was one of those who are content with seeing right; and less grieved at evil than pleased at having foretold it, but caring little to contend against it. He never quite forgave the Reformation for having deprived him of his handsome priory of St. Victor. When Geneva, again under the influence of Calvin, returned into the paths of order, it often required all the gratitude which she owed to Bonivard, and all the admiration which he had formerly excited, to tolerate this perpetual grumbler, fault-

finder, sulker, and occasional intriguer. Bonivard was only a courageous Erasmus, and courageous merely in politics; he knew not Christian courage, and it is on that account that his outline, at first so marked and clear, is completely effaced by that of Calvin.

XII.

The courage which Calvin had been showing at Geneva, he had been preaching to his former friends of France, who were more persecuted than ever. Along with admirable instances of devotedness, there had been some failing hearts. Men whom he had known to be Protestants or nearly so, had returned to Romanism; others, without openly relapsing, dissembled, and were silent. Hence, the two *Letters* of Calvin,—one upon the obligation of avoiding any worship in which a man does not believe; the other upon what a priest must do if he has known the Gospel. This second is addressed to Gerard Roussel, who had become a bishop. “Now, every one is saying that thou art most happy, and, so to speak, the favourite of fortune, on account of the dignity which has fallen to thee; for besides the title of prelate, it brings thee a great revenue of money. . . . See what men say of thee, and perchance they make thee also to believe it. But, when I think a little of what all those things are worth on which men commonly set so much store, I have great compassion for thy calamity.” Roussel has seen and known all the abuses, and errors of Romanism—Roussel has openly and eloquently preached against them. What will he, what can he do, as bishop, to set them right? “The Lord declares that He ordains pastors in His Church, He constitutes them guardians and watchers for the defence of His people. They are called the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the angels of God, and workers with God. Preaching is called the strength and power of God. Answer me in conscience, thou superintendent and head of religion, with what fidelity dost thou labour to restore that which is fallen?” The happy, then, the truly happy, are not the Nicodemites, even under the episcopal mitre, but they are, as Jesus Christ said, those “who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”

Such is the happiness which the Reformed of France will choose. “True piety,” Calvin says to them in the other letter, begets true confession, and that must not be considered a light and vain thing which St. Paul says— ‘For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.’ “The first ages set the example; let the long chain of martyrs, to which already new links have been so gloriously added, be no longer interrupted while there are persecutors and executioners in the world. Let them remember, amongst a thousand others, the death of Cyprian, related by Augustine. To escape death he would have had but a word to say; the proconsul was moved, and offered to be satisfied with an abjuration as

vague and insignificant as possible. Cyprian persisted. Why? "When the torments were prepared before his eyes, and the executioner with malignant, traitorous, and cruel looks pressed him so closely that the edge of the sword was already on his neck, if any should marvel how that holy person nevertheless presented himself cheerfully to torments, it was because his heart was fixed on the commandment of God which called upon him to confess his religion." Thus will the Reformed do. They will understand that in these matters no accommodation is either permitted or possible.

Then comes a rapid exposition of what those ceremonies and forms really are which the timid pretend to think indifferent. Not one, according to Calvin, is so; not one in which a man may take part without denying the gospel, the spirit of which condemns them all. There are details here which would not be written in our day, and of which the jeering, timid, and even burlesque tone strangely contrasts to us with the noble eloquence of the rest. But, after all, these letters have been handed down to us, as it were, signed and sealed with the blood of the martyrs who read them, and who so often drew thence courage and strength. If they laughed at certain jeering phrases, elsewhere they wept, touched with holy emotion, and finally marched unshrinkingly to death.

XIII.

Meanwhile Farel and Calvin, having left Geneva on the day fixed by the sentence of banishment, set out for Berne. Without acknowledging the religious supremacy which that powerful city was endeavouring to secure, they wished that the Bernese government should understand the true state of things. They were at first treated far from well, but afterwards better. They drew up a memoir, in which they explained their conduct. The unleavened bread had been a pretext only. They knew, on good authority, that the project to get rid of them dated far back; that the project with some of the leaders was connected with that of restoring Romanism, and that at Lyons, for instance, goods had been delivered to certain Genevese merchants, to be paid for, said the contract, when the ministers were driven away and the old religion re-established. They protested, finally, that they had not refused the Sacrament on account of the bread-question, but on account of the open and notorious unworthiness of those who made it a pretext. These explanations very much softened men's minds at Berne, and our two exiles, setting out for Zurich, met with the most cordial reception there. They, in turn, showed themselves more disposed to make some concession, not to the Genevese rioters but to the Swiss Church. Bullinger, the friend of Calvin, requested the Synod to ask the Council of Berne to mediate with the Council of Geneva. The step was taken. Berne was favourably disposed, and sent deputies,

among whom was Viret, who had been established at Lausanne for the last eighteen months. He had not been mixed up in the Geneva quarrels, and he thought that his voice, which had long been listened to, might haply still be heard. Farel and Calvin followed him, but without entering the Genevese territory; they awaited on the frontier the result of the negotiations. The Council consented to convoke, for the 26th of May, a new General-Council; but the assembly confirmed the decree of April, and there was a sort of riot against the few citizens who durst vote the contrary way. At night, bands of men ran about the city shouting vile jests against the exiled pastors. The same men who had so bitterly reproached them with wishing to embroil the republic with Berne, were careless now about offending Berne by such a reception of her request. The Government beheld those manifestations with regret, but what can a Government do against the men who make it?

The exiles withdrew to Basle, still the peaceful city which appeared to Calvin as his refuge and his rest, and which never was to keep him more than a few months. Scarcely had he arrived there, when he received letters from Bucer, strongly persuading him to return to Strasburg. He resisted at first, but consented afterwards, and separated himself very sadly from Farel, whom so many common trials had rendered ever dearer to him. Their correspondence dates from this time. Happy or unhappy, Calvin told his friend everything. In the midst of innumerable occupations, he always found time to converse at length with Farel. Protestations of friendship are rare and brief, but they are felt to be all the more genuine, and the commentary upon them lies in the fact itself of so deep and permanent an intimacy. Calvin, though he became rapidly far his superior in fame, was more tempted to think himself the inferior of a man of so original and strongly marked individuality. Farel, on the other hand, was never tempted to be jealous of a friend whom he knew to be full of esteem for him, and devoid of every proud thought as respected him. In 1549, Calvin dedicated to Viret and to Farel his *Commentary on the Epistle to Titus*, and he does so, he says, because his own office at Geneva “resembles that which St. Paul had committed to Titus.” Farel and Viret had entrusted Geneva to him, as Paul entrusted the Cretans to his disciple. He does not seem to suspect that, notwithstanding such was the fact, it is rather himself who is Paul, the head and master. But he wishes this book to be a sort of monument of the “friendship and holy association” of all the three. “I have discharged here the pastoral office with you,” says he, “and so far from there having been any appearance of envy, it has seemed to me that you and I were one.” But it was especially with Farel that the intimacy went on increasing. In March 1553, Calvin learned that Farel was ill. He hastened to Neuchâtel, and found him at the last extremity—saw him in effect as already dead. Not without difficulty did he offer to God the painful sacrifice which God, he thought, was about to require of him. But Farel came back to

life. A month afterwards, Calvin writes: "Inasmuch as my grief buried thee before thy time, the Lord grant that thy turn may also come to bury me, and that the Church may see thee survive me! It is the good of the Church which I ask in this, and also my own advantage, for I shall the sooner be freed from this scene of warfare, and shall not have to weep over thy death."

Strasburg welcomed Calvin with joy. The Town Council authorised him to give public lectures on Holy Scripture, and afterwards to organise as a church the French refugees whom persecution had thrown into Strasburg. For the performance of religious worship they were allowed the use of the church of the Preaching Friars, now the New Church. But it appears that in furnishing him abundantly with the means of exercising his zeal, the council forgot to furnish him likewise with the means of subsistence. His letters represent him as in actual misery, and reduced to make a little money by the sale of his books which he had left at Geneva. Du Tillet, the wealthy canon, in the very letter in which he endeavoured to persuade him that his misfortunes were most probably a divine chastisement, had offered him money. Calvin did not notice the singularity of such an offer in such circumstances. He refused it, but without choosing to see in it anything but a last gleam of friendship. "You make me," he says, "an offer, for which I cannot sufficiently thank you, and am not so unmanly as not to appreciate its great kindness. But I will abstain from burthening any one, and you especially, who have been too much burthened in times past. At present my board costs me nothing. Other needs will be supplied by the money from the books, for I hope you will deign to give me others if necessary." And he resumes the thread of his vigorous answer to the sophistries of the Protestant who had again become a canon. "Du Tillet offered me money," he wrote subsequently to Farel, "but at too high an interest. Did he mean to convert me?" Farel, who was settled at Neuchâtel, had also offered him aid, but Calvin had refused it also. "Thanks to all my brethren for their charitable offers, poor souls! who would give alms to one more poor than they. But I have taken an engagement with myself to accept nothing from thee, nor from our common friends, so long as I am not absolutely constrained to do so. The books which I have left at Geneva will pay my landlord till next winter. The Lord will do the rest."¹

His life at Strasburg was divided between pastoral functions and theological labours. He was preparing the second edition of the *Christian Institutes*. As pastor he had to preach every evening; as professor he gave every morning a lecture on the gospel of St. John, and by so doing amassed the materials for the important commentary which he was not to publish till 1553. The lectures, as at Geneva, soon attracted numbers, but they were more

¹ 15th of April, 1539.—The letters of Calvin to Du Tillet are in French; those to Farel are in Latin.

accomplished, and such as could be furnished by a town already learned, whereas Geneva was to become so by means of Calvin. Moreover, France continued to send a daily quota of fugitives, eager for the Divine Word, and eager to see and hear the author of the *Institutes*. There came some also whom nothing forced to leave their country, but who were attracted by the preacher's fame; and more than one who came out of mere curiosity, returned home to brave the dangers which had driven others away. The Council rejoiced at the homage paid to the new professor. He was presented with the freedom of the city,—a privilege highly prized in old imperial Strasburg. His salary was augmented. All combined, it would seem, to leave him nothing either to regret or to desire.

XIV.

And yet he still sighed after the hard life which Geneva had made him lead. In the midst of a quiet and studious city he regretted the one which, till then, had only known how to wield the sword, and to carry into civil life all the science of war. Surrounded by the most cordial admiration, he regretted those two years in which he had been satiated with contradictions and vexations. Not that he went so far as to embody in words, or even to conceive the desire of plunging again into that chaos. On the contrary, he speaks of it in his letters only with consternation and horror. But is there a man breathing who is altogether sure of his real sentiments? Behind those which Calvin expressed with so much vivacity, there was another, full of life and deeply rooted in his conscience,—that his task was at Geneva, his place at Geneva. This, it has been said, was a mere instinct of domineering. He was at Strasburg only a workman, but at Geneva he had caught a glimpse of the possibility of being master. Be it so. But in what respect would this exclude the feeling of a great task to be fulfilled, and of a serious and supreme responsibility before God and man? There has been no great work performed in the Church which might not also be attributed to ambitious despotism. Besides, with Geneva as she then was, the feelings assigned to Calvin would rather have led him to renounce her for ever, and to seek elsewhere a people more docile and a throne less tottering.

His looks were, therefore, still turned towards Geneva; and as early as the 1st of October 1538, less than three months after having left, he addressed a long and touching epistle to his “well-beloved brethren in our Lord, who are the relics of the dispersion of the church of Geneva.” In his eyes this Church existed only in the members who remained faithful to the spirit with which he had sought to animate it. If “dispersed” like others by the blast of persecution, she had been dispersed by the blast of revolt and anarchy, which the Libertines had blown upon her. The men are still there, but bound solely

by interests and passions; the true bond, the only one which constitutes a Church—operative and sanctifying faith—has been cast off as a yoke. What will become of the “relics” of this great disaster? Calvin, in other letters, speaks severely of some of the pastors who had remained at Geneva, and who, without giving themselves up positively to the Libertines, durst not reprimand their disorders; but here, speaking to the faithful, he will not expose the ministry to their contempt, and he contents himself with keeping silence about those who fill it without courage. Let believers, then, seek their strength in themselves—that is to say, in God. In God also is the bond which still unites them, and always will unite them to their exiled pastor, for “it is not in the power of man to break such a bond.” True, it is not men who have done all this mischief; it is Satan “employing their malice as the instrument of war.” And this idea, according to Calvin, prompts a charitable counsel. “If you seek true victory, do not combat evil by like evil.” Do not hate the men who are not your true enemies; hate Satan only who leads them astray. And why has God let loose Satan? To punish you for your faults, for do not think that you were without reproach; and to make his strength manifest in your weakness. Let the faithful, then, humble themselves, and they will be strong. As for himself this is what he has done. The more he has humbled himself before God in a sense of his own misery, insufficiency, and failings, the bolder he has felt in protesting before men against the iniquity of their decrees, very sure that his innocence will one day appear like the star which heralds the day.

Let the faithful of Geneva, therefore, take courage also. The enemies of truth think themselves “at the end of their enterprise;” look well, and “you will evidently see that all their ways tend to confusion.” Yet a little while, and God will resuscitate the Church; know you not “that he bestoweth the crown of joy upon those who are in tears, that he restoreth the light to those who are in darkness, and that he bringeth back to life those who are in the shadow of death?” Watch and pray, then; as for me, I pray “the Lord of all consolation to comfort you, and support you in all patience.”

XV.

Thus did Calvin write; and the faithful of Geneva would “evidently” see, in fact, that the ways of their enemies “tended to confusion.”

The disorganisation of the Church brought on that of public instruction. An attempt was made to force the tutors to perform the pastoral office, and to administer the Lord’s Supper according to the Bernese rite. As friends of Calvin—one of them was Cordier, his old master—they refused, and were banished. The school was closed. Public disorders continued. Yet very severe ordinances had been published again, as if to show that they could be made

without Calvin; but moral strength had departed with the Reformer, and the ordinances remained once more a dead letter. Some few condemnations, at wide intervals, took place, but they were insignificant, and served, upon the whole, only to heighten the attractions of evil. All was laxity, powerlessness, and anarchy.

Repudiating virtually, therefore, all the consequences of the Reformation, the Genevese were on the way to repudiate the Reformation itself, and this inner work was already far advanced in several, and in some complete, as events were soon to show.

In March 1539, some citizens went up to the townhall, demanding to be released from the oath they had taken to the Confession of faith. They did not, however, wish to return to Romanism; they objected only to the moral part of the engagement contracted by them, and having decided not to observe it in those points, they wished no longer to feel themselves bound. This was frank enough; but this frankness enables us to indicate exactly the state of things. The Confession of faith was one. To deny the moral part of it was necessarily to deny more or less that which was dogmatic.

About the same period, liberty began to return to the priests who had remained in the city—a thing praiseworthy had it been toleration, and not mere weakness or abandonment of the gospel. The ministers expostulated. Some priests, who were known to have said mass, were sent for, but were dismissed with a few words of remonstrance, and at liberty to begin again on the morrow. Nothing could be better, we say once more, had it been true liberality, but it was only a shameful journeying towards Rome, who was more indulgent to vice, and more habituated to lending herself to accommodations between earth and heaven.

This is what the Reformer was looking at from Strasburg, trustfully awaiting the time when God would educe good from evil.

XVI.

The city, which Calvin did not lose sight of, was also watched by two other men, one nearer than he, the other farther off; these were Pierre de la Baume, the expelled bishop, and Pope Paul III.

The bishop bewailed his opulent see, which even princes had been proud to call their own. The Pope had not, perhaps, realised at first all he lost in losing Geneva; but events soon revealed to him, especially during Calvin's sojourn, what the Reformation had gained by the possession of that city. The Protestants of France had begun to see in her their religious capital, at once a citadel and a Church, a refuge in defeat, and a basis of operation when they should march onward.

With joy, therefore, did Romanism learn the exile of the leader, and the disorder to which his departure gave free play. It eagerly followed the progress of the retrograde movement which brought back to Rome some of the Genevese, bad Romanists, no doubt, after having been not less bad Protestants, but Romanists, and disposed to re-enter the great external unity, and this was all that was required of them. Rome understood, however, that it was necessary to act with prudence, and that bad Romanists, if violently startled, might, after all, become Protestants again, perhaps more thoroughly than ever. One, however, was already completely won, as was known later—the former syndic, Jean Philippe, one of those who had mainly contributed to the exile of Calvin. He went to Lyons to treat personally with the bishop, who formed one of a sort of committee principally organised with a view to the re-conquest of Geneva. In the committee were the Archbishops of Lyons, Besançon, Vienne, and Turin, and the Bishops of Lausanne, Langres, and Carpentras.

The last named, Jacques Sadolet, was one of the best men and one of the best informed in the Romish Church. As secretary of Leo X.,—but of Leo X. the wit, far more than of the Pope,—he was an enthusiast for that literary, poetical, and mythological revival of which the Pope, a true Medici, was the centre and promoter. No one had celebrated it in better verse, no one had been more poetically wroth with the absurd Reformation that had come to disturb the beautiful sky of the Rome of Leo X., the Rome which was only occupied with statues, paintings, music, and festivals. It was a sad day for the Pope's secretary, when he was told that he must go to Carpentras. He wished, at least, to be followed thither by all that might in some measure restore to him his Italy,—ancient manuscripts, works of art, and pictures. He embarked them all, and all were lost at sea. His letters upon this misfortune are touching; he does not weep for them as treasures, but as friends, and the wound was long to bleed.

For the rest, he is a singular character to study. He is learned, pious, and liberal; he professes true friendship for Melanchthon; he is constantly going to and fro on the highway of the Reformation, and always agreeably surprising the Romanists, disagreeably the Protestants, by still remaining, nevertheless, a Romanist, a bishop and a cardinal, ready to write, if need be, against those whom he has been seeming to approach.

He it was whom the Lyons committee appointed to write, not against the Genevese, but to them. He was even recommended to flatter and caress them; skilfully to ascribe all their misfortunes, not to themselves, but to the Reformation and the Reformers, and finally to depict Romanism,—the Church,—as the haven,—rest and peace in this world,—salvation in the next. This theme was the less distasteful to Sadolet, that he had evidently long since studied it on his own account. A mind, at once adventurous and timid, he

found it convenient to have at his side a Church whose authority reassured him as to his own ideas, supported him in his struggles with the ideas of others, and dispensed him from forming or from expressing an opinion on so many points more or less called in question.

His epistle “to the Senate and people of Geneva” is unique in its kind, in the sixteenth century. Such would not be the case in our day. We might even say that it has served as a model for the greater part of the Romish apologies which have been published during the last thirty years. Like him, their writers have laid aside all details to preach nothing but the Church, authority, and unity; the repose which he offered to the Genevese, they have offered in like manner to every nation, sheltering under that alluring word, another which would cause alarm—abjuration.

Sadolet, therefore, begins by flattering. “Verily,” he says, “dear friends, it is not a thing of today for me to bear good will and affection towards you. From the time when, by the will of God, I was elected Bishop of Carpentras, I began to prize and love the nobleness of your city, the order and form of your republic, the excellence of the citizens, and especially your exquisite and praiseworthy humanity towards all men. . . .” But what is become of all those elements of happiness and esteem? From the first day that Geneva seemed to lean towards the Reformation, he had perceived that she was condemning herself to anarchy and to all kinds of evil. His love for the Genevese made it a duty for him to speak. He will not proceed, however, by “subtle, arduous, and crabbed disputations, which St. Paul calls vain philosophy.” Is not Christian doctrine founded, not upon syllogisms, but “on humility, piety, and obedience to the Lord?” Then a beautiful panegyric on holy writ, then a very fine passage about Jesus Christ, the sole author of salvation, then another on justification by faith, and it is only after having seemed to lay down as his basis, the bases of Protestantism, that he ventures to build upon those of the Church and the authority of the Church. But, in fact, he does not build, and it is here especially that his tactics have been followed in our day by certain writers. He takes the edifice ready built, and poetically depicts its grandeur, beauty, and majestic unity, and asks at every step how men can persist in building, for themselves, another dwelling-place. The argument from his pen had at least the merit of being new, though at bottom even more worthless then than now. It required singular hardihood or a singular power of abstraction to come and speak poetically of a Church which was deluged with vices, and of a unity which had crumbled away at the first shock of the Reformation, and which, where it still existed, was supported only by terror and the stake. Above all, it required singular confidence in the short memory of the Genevese to whom that Church had supplied, even more than to others, motives to despise and fear her.

But Sadolet mainly reckoned on the good words which flowed from his pen, and upon that charity which he thought profound, and which, perhaps, really was so; for, though the whole epistle is but one long sophism, and a perpetual subterfuge, we are loth to think its author a hypocrite. At times, he rises to true eloquence, as in the often-quoted passage in which he represents two souls arriving before the tribunal of God, the supreme Judge: one of them had followed the old way, always safe, while the other had cast itself into the way of the Reformers. The last pages are extremely pathetic, pervaded, however, as in the beginning, by an insinuating flattery, and a humility which is decidedly too profound—it would fain cause the priest, bishop, and cardinal to be forgotten, but it all the more brings them to mind. We involuntarily remember the *servant of the servants of God*, who set his foot upon crowns, the *father* of the Christians who knew so well how to demand the extermination of his children; and, without going so far as to think that cardinal Sadolet, if an opportunity had occurred, would have been as pitiless as so many others, we cannot but read across the lines the fearful commentary with which the history of the times accompanied words so charitable, so evangelically sweet, and so honeyed. Sadolet on this point was very unlucky. His letter is dated the 18th of March 1539, and, in April, two Genevese were burned in Savoy,—one at Annecy, the other at Chambéry. The execution of the latter, Jean Lambert, the brother of a member of the Council, was marked by the most odious circumstances. Seized as a Genevese and as a Protestant, the priests did not even permit the form of a trial, and the stake was immediately prepared. They presided at the execution, and all that they could add to the martyr's sufferings by their importunities and imprecations, they added with a savage glee. Such, at a few leagues from Geneva, were the ministers of that mild and compassionate mother whose portrait Sadolet was sketching for the Genevese, conjuring them to return to her arms.

He had, therefore, overshot his mark. The effect was not that which he had hoped; nothing, at least, in contemporary documents, indicates that fresh activity was communicated to Romish tendencies; on the contrary, this period was the commencement of the Protestant reaction. All who were not already Romish in their hearts, awoke as from a dream, and began to question themselves. Had they then journeyed unawares so far on their way back towards Rome, that she should imagine she had only to invite them to re-enter? Had the gulf between her and them become so narrow that Sadolet might without difficulty throw over it a bridge hung with velvet, and strewed with flowers? The more serious Protestants asked themselves if they had struggled so much, suffered so much, on account of a mere misunderstanding, and in order to separate from a Church with which it was so easy to agree and live in peace? All felt that a great sophism lay beneath; all desired for their own instruction, and for the honour of Geneva, that the sophism should be

unmasked. But to whom assign the task? No one in the city felt himself capable of discharging it. The pastors shrunk back like the rest. Not that they did not see better what might be answered; but they also felt better the necessity of answering well, and they were none of them writers. One name only was pronounced, at first in a whisper, then aloud, and the greatest enemies of Calvin caught themselves saying, or at least thinking, that, with him, they should have been less embarrassed. He learned at Strasburg what was being thought and said, and the answer to the cardinal was not long in appearing.

Calvin, at the very beginning, shatters all the scaffolding. He begins by complimenting Sadolet, but as Sadolet, the man of letters, known for his “marvellous grace in speaking,” and “held in great admiration” by the learned. It “displeases him marvellously” to have to “touch and wound this good fame and opinion but it would be “too great cowardice” to keep silence, and he will not keep silence. Sadolet has performed the part of “a good speaker,” that is, of a skilful rhetorician; he has had for the Genevese only gentle words, and he has cast all the blame upon those “by whose means they withdrew themselves from tyranny.” He is one of those men, and he will answer for them all

It is therefore his own apology which he at first presents. Nothing can be clearer than his first pages. He defies Sadolet to prove one of his allegations; he harasses him upon every point, upon every phrase, and to his last entrenchments. Sadolet has accused him of ambition; but what has the Reformation given him, what will it ever give him, which would not have been “equalled” in the pope’s realm? Might he not have aspired to everything, and had he not already been on the road to obtain everything? Even then, he was ambitious of one thing only—to live in peace and to study. Events, the Word of God, and God Himself, had thrown him into the thick of the fight. From this general apology he passes to that of his conduct at Geneva. What has he done in that city, which ought not to be approved by every friend of order and morality, even though a Romanist? And if he has done nothing but what is good, why refuse to know the tree by its fruits? Why consider as a pestilence, that Reformation from which he, Calvin, was educating the salvation and life of regenerate Geneva?

And this leads him to the chief question. He sets aside at the outset what Sadolet had said, and well said, on what was undisputed,—eternal life, for instance; evidently Sadolet has only sought thereby “to render himself more greatly esteemed and commended by making it appear that all his thought was of that blessed life.” Why is he not, at least, as copious and complete, when he comes to real difficulties? He has eluded them all. In his theory of the Church he very well exhibits the Church guided by the Spirit of God, but he is careful not to add that she is ruled also by His Word; and when the

Word is taken away, the Spirit of God may always remain a mere word, which shall authorise whatever men will. Calvin then passes in review all that has been involved in this pregnant saying. Each point is despatched in a few lines, but keen, nervous, and falling like a hammer. One would prefer that he did not so pertinaciously address himself to Sadolet, and that he persisted with less animosity in directing against him personally all his arguments, all his figures, and all his utterances. We are somewhat pained by the perpetual tension which yields nothing and softens nothing. But we can understand that a person of his temperament would be peculiarly irritated and exasperated by the flexible polemics of the honey-tongued cardinal. Whether the man was false or not, his polemics were false, and Calvin was wrong only in pouring forth too continually upon Sadolet himself the contempt and irritation which were caused by his work.

Two points detain him longer. The one, justification by faith; and the other, the Lord's Supper. We have seen that Sadolet, in regard to the first of these, admitted the principle without hesitation. Calvin asks what the Church has done with it, and what part of it can remain among so many things which all tend to make it forgotten, or to destroy it. Sadolet had not failed to talk very loudly of the pretended annihilation of works, a singular reproach to level at Calvin driven away from Geneva for having, as respects works, been more strict and exacting than any one else. "If thou wert to look," answers Calvin, "at the catechism and instruction which I have written for those of Geneva, at the first word thou wouldest be silent." But as Calvin knows well that the objection will be often reproduced, he devotes to it five or six pages, which are the best reasoned in the letter, and, what renders them still better for us, they are almost free from personalities. As for the Lord's Supper, he refutes little, but seeks above all to establish that the spiritual presence of Christ is, in fact, for all who have true faith and piety, more impressive, more *real* than the one so unadvisedly designated by the latter term, as if the *reality* of Christ were not that of His Spirit, far more than of His body.

Then come, finally, confession, saints, the ministry, the papacy, tradition, and the irregularities of the Church. This last point leads him to a glowing reproduction, in a contrary sense, of Sadolet's prosopopæa. The soul which he ushers into the presence of God is that of one of those whom the cardinal has stigmatised as innovators and foolhardy. He is about to plead the cause of all who, like him, have thought that the evils of the Church called for and justified revolt. I saw Christ cast into oblivion, and become unprofitable; what was I to do? I saw the Gospel stifled by superstition; what was I to do? I saw the Divine Word voluntarily ignored and hidden; what was I to do? If he is not "to be reputed a traitor, who, seeing the soldiers dispersed and scattered, raises the captain's ensign, rallies them, and restores their order," am I a traitor for having raised, amid the disbanded Church, the old banner of

Jesus Christ? For it is not a new and “strange ensign that I have unfurled, but thy noble standard, O Lord!” Moreover, have not our adversaries abundantly justified us by their conduct? “Did they not most suddenly and furiously be-take themselves to the sword and to the gibbet? Did they not think that their sole resource was in arms and cruelty?” They have given us, in default of other consecration, that of tribulation and of blood. And it is they who come and ask of us our titles! They justify us again by those flattering and false pictures of the Church which we have renounced. To defend her thus, is it not to abandon the defence of her in her actual character? Is it not to own that we judged her aright? “Go now, Sadolet and call us seditious!” We know what we have done, and in whom we have believed, and “Heaven grant, Sadolet, that thou and thine” “may one day be able to say as much sincerely.

XVII.

Neither reply nor attempt at reply was made, that we know of to this answer of Calvin’s. It soon ran through Europe. Luther enjoyed it thoroughly. He realised all the power and promise of a controversy conducted with so much ease, frankness, and vivacity. “Here is a writing,” he said, “which has hands and feet I rejoice that God raises up such men. They will continue what I have begun against Antichrist and with the help of God they will finish it.” When Sadolet received the epistle, he may also have received, at the same time, some details upon the effects it had produced at Geneva.

In the first place, there was the satisfaction always felt on reading a work which says precisely what a man would have said himself, had he known how to say it; then there was the joy of the victory, for the victory over Sadolet was evident and incontestable; and, as victory always draws after it the undecided, it was the joy of all, or nearly all. In many it was easily transformed by Calvin’s friends into gratitude; they dared say publicly there was no one like him for such services. They re-perused the eloquent apology, which he made in passing, for his ministry at Geneva, and they allowed themselves to be moved by words so true and noble: “Though discharged for the present from the administration of the Church of Geneva, nevertheless this cannot deprive me of bearing towards her a paternal love and charity—towards her, I say, over whom God once ordained me, and so has obliged me for ever to keep faith and loyalty with her.”

About the same time, events began to march precipitately. The chief of his enemies, Jean Philippe, was about to perish, and his death was to give the signal for a final reaction in favour of the Reformer.

Jean Philippe’s execution was not caused, however, either by his treachery at Lyons, which was still unknown, or by any other religious affair. Charged, with two others, to negotiate with Berne respecting the sovereignty

of the territory conquered round Geneva, he abandoned his country's interests completely; and when the treaty, which was kept secret for a time, was at length produced, it was seen with indignation that the Genevese sovereignty was to be confined within the walls of the city. Now, a law of the preceding year condemned to death every citizen convicted of diminishing the sovereignty of the state. The General Council, nevertheless, showed indulgence, and Jean Philippe and his two accomplices were only condemned to be banished. But the next day Jean Philippe excited a riot. He was taken, condemned to death, and executed. This was in 1540.

The political reaction had manifested itself, at the beginning of the year, in the choice of four honourable syndics, in whose hands the ordinances had already regained some strength. The crime of Jean Philippe having led to many remarks upon the patriotism of the Libertines, the pastors judged the moment favourable for obtaining the renewal of the oath to the Confession; they asked the General Council "to replace things as they were four years ago, when every one held Geneva in great esteem, and came there to see the evangelical order which had been established." But it was too early yet, and the personal authority of the pastors was not such that they might hasten the time. It rather injured them to revive the remembrance of Calvin, though Calvin had written a letter, in which he commended them to the affection of their flock. The oath was refused. Two of them left Geneva shortly after, discouraged by the want of respect shown to them by many. The Council wrote to Viret, who was settled as pastor at Lausanne, to pray that he would come and replace them, at least for a time, and Viret replied that he would do all he could to obtain authorisation. But the call to Viret was only a step towards a recall, the necessity of which was now all but acknowledged by everybody.

At last, on the 21st of September, the Council charged Amied Perrin, one of its members, "to find means," says the register, "if he could, to bring back Master Calvin." Perrin wrote, and Farel, who was banished with Calvin, wrote also to him from Neuchâtel, to press him to accept. Before the reopening door, Calvin no longer sees anything but the formidable risks which he is asked to run, for, as he does not admit even the thought of a modification in his tendencies, nor a relaxing of his strictness, so he does not understand how the men who drove him away as too severe, can ever accommodate themselves to him. They will be intolerable to him, he writes to Farel, and he to them. All will have to be begun again, and that without the confidence which animated him the first time. And yet, God preserve him from positively refusing! If he can really do anything for the Church of Geneva, his duty is to accept.

The registers of the Council inform us almost daily of the progress of what was become the absorbing idea of the Genevese.

The 13th of October it was resolved to write a letter “to Monsieur Calvin,” to pray that “he would assist us.” The bearer of the letter is also to see the pastors of Strasburg, praying them to act upon him in the same direction.

The 19th of October, in the Council of Two Hundred, it was resolved, “in order that the honour and glory of God may be promoted,” to seek all possible means to have “Master Calvin as preacher.” The 20th of October, in the General Council, it was ordered “to send to Strasburg to fetch Master Jean Calvinus, who is very learned, to be minister in this city.”

The 21st it was ordered that councillor Amied Perrin should depart with a state herald, to go and fetch Calvin—the Strasburghers to be written to, that they may not oppose the Reformer’s departure. The 22d, the letter which is to be taken to him is drawn up. “Sir,—Our good brother and special friend, very affectionately do we commend ourselves to you, being fully informed that your desire is none other than the increase and promotion of the glory and honour of God, and of his holy Word. On the part of our Lesser, Great, and General Councils, which have much admonished us to do this, we pray you very affectionately that you would convey yourself to us, and return to your pristine place and ministry; and we hope that, by the help of God, it will be a great good and profit to the augmentation of the holy gospel, seeing that our people greatly desire you, and we will do by you in such sort that you shall have cause to be content.”

The 8th of November, Louis Dufour, the bearer of the letter, wrote from Basle that Calvin was not at Strasburg, but at Worms, where a diet was being held “for Christian reformation.”

Let us now retrace our steps a little, and resume our account of Calvin’s sojourn at Strasburg.

XVIII.

The diet of Worms, which Calvin attended in November 1540, was not the first at which he had been present; the Church of Strasburg had already sent him, in 1539, to that of Frankfort; and in the same year (1540) to that of Hagenau. It would be too long for us to relate the events connected with the convocation of these three great assemblies so immediately one after another. It is difficult in our day to have a just notion of that blending of questions so diverse, in which disputes respecting the Lord’s Supper were entangled with political debates, and when theologians held their diet by the side of that of the empire; often so as to throw the imperial into the shade. But a closer view dispels astonishment. The religious question was the first everywhere, in all, and no one would have dreamed of considering it a usurpation. And, after all, was not this as it should be? And if it is now otherwise, is it not as much,

or rather, is it not more from indifference than from a juster apprehension of what divides the two domains?

One day—it was the 1st of January 1541, and at Worms—Calvin was resolving in his mind the dire chances of a war so complicated, so protracted, and as yet so far from terminated. Christ, he entertains not a doubt, will conquer; but when? No one knows. But even when conquered, is not Christ always conqueror? Does He not triumph as gloriously in the contumely and death of His people as in their success among men? The idea lays hold of Calvin. For the first time he calls poetry to the succour of his thoughts, and it is thus we have his *Hymn to Christ the conqueror*.

A strange interest is excited by these few verses, the only ones we have of his, and probably the only ones he ever composed. He did not even publish them, and he gave away only two or three copies of them; but four years afterwards he found them marked in an index of the Toulouse inquisitors, and then it was that he published them.

Friends and foes, in judging of this piece, have, we think, abused the idea that Calvin was not born a poet True, he himself, at the close, recognises the fact. “What nature denies,” he says, “my pious zeal effects.”¹ But that pious zeal had at its service an able and practised pen, and Cicero had not so made him forget Virgil, that the good prose writer was condemned to make bad verses. And they are by no means bad, whatever may have been said to the contrary. If, as a whole, there is too much show of reasoning, the details are full of life, and reflect the original idea with all its poetry; if some lines are prosaic, others are very elegant, and even very beautiful. Amongst others, observe those in which he depicts the menaces with which Rome and the world pursue the lovers of truth. Next observe those in which he returns to the idea that the Christian may everywhere and always chant the victory, thanks to his union with Christ, the ever victorious.² Notice again, those in which he portrays Christ rushing forward, sword in hand, into the thick of the world’s battle, and with this divine sword. His word, striking the enemy, who is already overthrown by His look. We cannot, therefore, be sorry that the leisure of Worms procured for us this single poetical attempt; and in reading it, we have more than once said to ourselves, that many who have spoken of it have not perused it.

Calvin, in these different journeys, did not once meet with Luther. It is difficult not to regret it, and to refrain from speculating curiously as to what a discussion between them would have been, and what each would have been

¹ Quod natura negat, studii pius efficit ardor.

² “Sed quia mors vita est, et crux victoria Christi,
Nil diræ impediunt gaudia nostra minæ;
Ilie suū similis manet æternumque manebit,
Vincere non vinci qui patiendo solei.”

in the presence of the other. Which would have gained, which would have lost by the comparison? Perhaps neither would have gained nor lost, for they were too different for a comparison to be possible. It is not probable that Calvin would have been easily unhorsed by Luther's impetuosity. Logic, his good sword, served him also as buckler; he was not a man to be impressed by the forms, more or less lively, poetical or caustic, which an argument may assume.

He could not, however, completely escape the amiable influence of Melanchthon, who in turn accepted his, it is true, with a readiness well calculated to remove every barrier between them. Calvin, before starting for Frankfort, had explained to him, in a letter, his idea on the Lord's Supper. Melanchthon, the first time they met, declared to him that he did not think otherwise. Now, the question of that Lord's Supper was warmly debated at that moment amongst the German Protestants, some holding by Luther's opinion, which verged on Romanism, others leaning towards that of Calvin. Luther himself had gradually so spiritualized His real presence, that Melanchthon did not think he should separate himself from his old friend, by drawing near to Calvin. Ulterior discussions showed that the agreement was less complete than Melanchthon had believed it to be, or had chosen to believe; Calvin has often also to complain of the concessions which an excessive love of peace extorted from the pious German. He did not spare him reproaches, which, however, were always softened by the most respectful friendship. "Either I understand nothing in holy things," he writes to him in 1551, "or you ought not to have yielded thus to the papists. . . . Verily, it is to show ourselves avaricious of our ink if we will not write, upon paper, what so many martyrs write daily with their blood upon the scaffold. . . . I speak with all frankness, my sole desire is that nought should distress the truly divine greatness of your soul. If I appear to you vehement, you know why it is, because I would a hundred times rather die with you for the truth than see you survive the truth betrayed by you. Is this to say that I mistrust you? No; but you will never take sufficient precautions that your easiness should not furnish the impious with the opportunity which they seek of scoffing at God's truth."

Their friendship remained, therefore, undiminished, and when Luther's friend died, this is what Calvin still could write in his book against Heshusius: "O, Philip Melanchthon—for it is thou whom I address, thou who now livest at the hand of God with Christ, awaiting us on high till we are gathered with thee into blessed repose—a hundred times hast thou said to me, when wearied with toil and vexation, thou didst lean thy head upon my bosom, Would to God, would to God that I might die upon that bosom! As for me, later, a hundred times have I wished that it had been granted us to be together. Certainly thou wouldst have been bolder to face struggles, more courageous

to despise envy and calumny. Then, also, would have been suppressed the malignity of many whose audacity increased in proportion to what they called thy pusillanimity." Most certainly Melanchthon and Calvin, fused into one, would have formed an admirable character; and without going so far as to these chimerical fusions, it is probable than an association with Calvin would have done more than inure Melanchthon to battle strife; he would have been more satisfied with himself, surer of his path, and happier.

The Swiss divines believed for a moment that Calvin, gained over by Melanchthon, had made some concessions on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It was at once to reassure them, and to set forth, in a complete form, his ideas on that subject, that he wrote at Strasburg his treatise *Of the Lords Supper*. It is the most moderate of his controversial writings; the traces of Melanchthon are there. But his moderation as to the form does not make him yielding as to the point in question, and Lutheran Consubstantiation does not appear to him better founded on Scripture than the Transubstantiation of Dr. Eck, the champion of Romanism at Worms.

He had for the rest always entertained the idea of an accommodation with Luther, and he did not cease to entertain it. It in 1538, in a letter to Bucer, he complains of the German Reformer's pertinacity, it is with expressions of the highest esteem for his sincerity, piety, and genius. Calvin will yield nothing of what appears to him the truth, but he will follow with his eyes, gladly and gratefully, the slightest movements which Luther may seem to make towards him. In 1539, he joyfully registers, in a letter to Farel, the kind words which Luther has charged Bucer to transmit to him. "Bucer," he says, "has received from Luther a letter, in which are these words, Salute from me Sturm and Calvin, whose works I have read with singular pleasure." And Calvin, remembering that, in what Luther had read, more than one thing might have displeased him, adds, with no less joy, "Behold the candour of Luther! Why, then, are there people who separate from him so obstinately?" Melanchthon had also written to Bucer, and said that the French theologian was in great favour at Wittenberg. But here is what is still better. "Melanchthon," Calvin relates, "charged the bearer of the letters to tell him this: Some people, in order to irritate Dr. Martin, had indicated a passage in which, according to them, I spoke ill of him and his. He examined the passage, and saw that in fact I had had him in view. But after reflecting a while, 'I hope,' he said, 'that Calvin will one day render me justice; meanwhile, something may well be borne from so excellent a capacity.'" Calvin asks no more. "If such moderation," he says, "does not break us, verily we are rocks. As for me, I own that I am broken." But in 1544, Luther took up his pen anew against the Zwinglians, and, forgetting that he had himself recognised in the question of the Lord's Supper, how much Calvin had modified Zwinglius, he attacked indiscriminately all that was not Lutheran. Calvin keenly felt the

injustice; but Luther was not the less Luther to him, and he would have even those who had been the most violently attacked be of his way of thinking. "O Bullinger," he writes to the successor of Zwinglius, "I conjure thee never to forget how eminent a man Luther is, and with what gifts he is endowed. Think with what strength of soul, what immoveable perseverance, what potency of doctrine, he has devoted himself till now to the overthrowing of Antichrist, and the shedding far and near the doctrines of salvation. . . . As for me, I have often said, and I still repeat it, if he were to call me a devil, I should not cease to hold him in great esteem, and to acknowledge in him an illustrious servant of God." And some months after, writing to Luther himself: "Oh, if I could fly towards thee, and enjoy thy society, were it but for a few hours! . . . But since that happiness is not granted to me here, soon, I hope, it will be granted to us in the kingdom of God. Farewell, therefore, most illustrious man, eminent minister of Christ, father for ever venerable to me. May the Lord continue to direct thee by his Spirit, for the common good of his Church." Alas! this touching letter was not received by Luther. Another of Melancthon's timidities. Calvin had sent him the letter; he durst not give it Luther, fearing, he wrote to Calvin, lest his friend, irritated by so many bickerings, should take it amiss, though it did not touch upon the sacramental question. But other facts, about the same time, permitted Calvin to hope for an understanding even on that question, and after Luther's death, when the struggle recommenced, we shall find him convinced that the master would have been more accommodating than the disciples.

XIX.

But let us not get beyond 1540, at Strasburg. The same year two more works saw the light—his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, dedicated to his friend, Simon Grynæus, of Basle, and his version of the Bible. Though this version is only Olivetan's corrected, it is scarcely possible not to ask ourselves how Calvin found time to do so much, for we left him, at the close of 1538, retouching the *Institutes*, and daily discharging his office as preacher and professor. But let us not exhaust our wonder too soon; we shall hereafter have still better occasions for it.

As a pastor, Calvin had never confined himself at Strasburg strictly to the functions which he had to fulfil in the French settlement or quarter; his letters show him to us more than once endeavouring to introduce the Church of Strasburg into the path of religious and moral order, which he had imagined for Geneva. In Strasburg there was indeed none of that brutish opposition which certain Genevese had made to the gospel; if irregularities occurred, they did not present the same character of violence and design. But Calvin wished for more; he was ill at ease in a Church whose faith and conduct were

not, in his opinion, subjected to sufficiently strict discipline. Hence, in his sermons, there are some attacks upon such a state of things; hence, too, in his letters, we find some complaints against Bucer, a learned divine, a pastor full of zeal, and very capable of being indignant at evil, but less inclined to seek a remedy in proper regulations. Bucer, on his part, also complains at times of Calvin. He would have him more indulgent and gentle, he does not like to see him cherish so long the indignation which has been caused by a fault, or in the irritation excited by an error which has ventured to manifest itself before him. He speaks of it to him in a brotherly way, and, as Calvin acknowledges, not without reason. "He is made so," he says. "Of all his defects, it is the one which he has most difficulty in combating. He does not think that he has gained absolutely nothing; but he feels that he has not yet succeeded in completely taming the beast." Now, as for the *beast*, which we all bear within, it would be almost better to let it be quite free than to half-tame it. You meant to be gentle, and you are only cold; you subdue the exterior, which is something certainly, but you then run the risk of thinking that you have done all, of being persuaded that you are acting without anger, under the sole guidance of reason, and of being, after all, severer than you would have been with more apparent warmth. Is not this the history of Calvin? Less self-constrained, less master of his thoughts and passions, he would have been less satisfied with himself, but, in reality, more charitable, and doubtless also his adversaries would have been more indulgent towards him, both during his lifetime and afterwards.

XX.

An event less important to the Reformer than to the man, might now invite us to a farther study of his heart and character. When the first mission arrived from Geneva, soliciting his return, a wife had just seated herself at his till then solitary hearth.

In general, Calvin's marriage has been spared the accusations and invectives lavished on that of Luther, yet he does not escape altogether, and he is blamed for the very absence of the passions with which others are reproached as a crime. Never, is it said, did he experience any need of affection. His heart was in his head.

No; but his heart was such as must be the heart of a man devoted to so great a task, and so accustomed to think little of himself, of his pleasure and of his happiness.

He therefore left to his friends the care of finding a help-meet for him. We know not if they gave it a thought during his sojourn at Geneva; it is at Strasburg that we see them occupied about it. Farel, who did not think of marriage for himself till long after, only remotely shared in their undertaking.

Calvin, in one of his letters (May 1539), reminds him of what he had probably said more than once. "Remember what I desire above all to find in a helpmeet. I am not, thou knowest, one of those lovers who adore even the defects of the woman of whom they are enamoured. The only beauty that can please my heart is one that is gentle, chaste, modest, economical, patient, and finally, careful of her husband's health." Alas! though not yet thirty, there was too much necessity for that sad clause. Faculties such as his are not possessed with impunity; racking pains continually harassed the head already worn by thought. Another letter gives us curious details on the interference of Calvin in one of the negotiations commenced by the solicitude of his friends. "I was offered," he writes to Farel, "a lady who was young, rich, of noble birth, and whose dower much surpassed all that I can desire. Two things, however, urged me to refuse: she does not know French, and it seems to me she must be rather proud of her birth and education. Her brother, of rare piety, and blinded by his friendship so as to forget his own interests, pressed me to accept, and his wife joined her solicitations to his. What was I to do? I should have been compelled, if the Lord had not extricated me. I answer that I accept, if she will, on her part, undertake to learn our tongue. She asks for time to reflect, and I immediately commission my brother, with one of my friends, to go and ask for me the hand of another person, who will bring me, without a fortune, a dowry good enough, if her qualities answer to what is said of them. If, as I hope, my proposal is accepted, the marriage will not be delayed beyond the 10th of March (1540), and all my desire is that thou shouldst come and bless our union." This project was not realised. Some details respecting his betrothed, which came to Calvin's knowledge, obliged him to withdraw his promise, and some months afterwards he seems much discouraged. "I have not found yet," he writes to Farel. "Would it not be wiser to give up my search?"

He had therefore "not found," because he had sought as a serious and Christian man, and would not rest satisfied with what the world deemed sufficient, and even brilliant. He would have the virtuous woman of the Bible, "a crown unto her husband," as the Proverbs say, and he did not consider that riches and rank could form that crown. Not only did he refuse the wealthy match that was offered him, but he refused it without hesitation, without an effort; he sought not to bring himself to terms, and, by proposing immediately in another quarter, he deprived himself of the power of renewing the negotiation. Let us not forget that he had no property, and that his humble salary was his all.

He found at last what he sought. An Anabaptist, John Storder, who was brought back by him to the gospel, had died shortly after, leaving a widow and orphans. She was called Idelette, Idelette de Bure or van Buren, from the name of a small town of Guelderland. Bucer knew her; he had seen her

excellent and admirable qualities still further developed by the burdens and responsibilities of widowhood. He spoke of her to Calvin, and Calvin's choice was fixed. She brought him as her dower, serious piety, watchful tenderness, and a soul equal to every sacrifice.

The marriage took place in September. Deputies from the Church of Neuchâtel were present; it is not known whether Farel was of the number. Departing shortly after for Worms, Calvin left his wife to the care of his brother Antoine, and of a family of distinction named Richebourg, whose sons he had taught. But sad tidings soon followed him to Worms, and then to Ratisbon, whither the diet had been transferred. The plague was raging at Strasburg. Young Louis de Richebourg had fallen a victim, and, after him, his preceptor, Claude Ferey, the intimate friend of Calvin. Calvin trembled lest he should receive tidings yet more dreadful. A letter to a Strasburg friend (April 1541), gives us a lively idea of his anguish. "I make great efforts," he writes, "to resist my grievous anxiety. I have recourse to prayer and holy meditations, in order not to lose all courage." His prayers were granted. He had the strength to do his duty to the end, and, on his return to Strasburg, he found her who henceforth was a part of himself.

XXI.

It was to Worms that the Genevese envoys went in quest of him. He had already replied, on the 23d of October 1540, to the first overtures of the Council of Geneva. "Magnificent, noble, and honourable lords," he wrote, "I can testify to you before God that I have your Church in such commendation that I would never be wanting in its necessity, so far as I have power to aid. . . . And, for this reason, I am in marvellous perplexity, desiring to satisfy your request. . . . And, on the other hand, I cannot lightly quit the charge to which the Lord hath called me here, unless He deliver me by some good and lawful means." He added that he was about to start for Worms; that he had communicated to his colleagues the letter of the Council, and that their opinion had been that it would be best in the meanwhile to call Viret to Geneva. We have seen that the Council had already had that idea.

The 12th of November another letter was written from Worms. Calvin has received that of the 22d of October, so honourable and so pressing, and he has seen those who brought it. He does not yet pledge himself, but he very nearly does so. "Were it only for the civility and favour which you show me in every way, I could acquit myself of my duty only by complying with your request as far as in me lies However, there is yet one reason the singular love which I bear your Church. . . ." God had confided it to him once; he feels therefore "obliged for ever to seek its welfare and salvation." But he cannot yet fix any time. After leaving Worms, he will have to go to

Ratisbon. But on his return to Strasburg, he will again consult his colleagues, and they are greatly disposed “to induce him to succour Geneva.” Yet three months after, on the eve of starting for Ratisbon, he seemed rather less disposed to quit the Strasburg Church. He had learned that Viret was at Geneva, of which he expressed himself right glad, for “Master Pierre Viret is of so much prudence and fidelity, that, having him, you are not destitute.” He seemed not to know that Viret had been “lent” for six months only, and without saying that he considered himself freed from his promise, he no longer spoke positively of performing it. “I pray you to consider all the means of constituting your Church aright, that it may be governed according to the Lord’s order.”

These words, which were almost a farewell, were not accepted as such. Viret’s preaching, by bringing back men’s minds and hearts to the gospel more and more, brought them also more and more back to him whose name had become as it were the symbol of the gospel and of order at Geneva. The insinuating charity of the Lausanne pastor was at the same time softening political rancour; he obtained the recall of Jean Philippe’s children, involved, according to the cruel laws then existing, in their father’s condemnation. He was asked to use his influence with Calvin, and Calvin, in a letter written to him at the same time as his third to the Council of Geneva, gives us the key to the vagueness of tone which he had adopted in his official letter. “Thou tellest me that if I abandon Geneva, the Church is in danger. I can answer nought but what I have told thee, that there is no place which alarms me so much as Geneva.” Not that I retain any hatred against them, but I see so many difficulties, that I feel incapable of escaping from them. Whenever I call to mind the times past, my heart freezes with terror.” But Viret knew well that his fears would not go so far as to prevent him from coming, if once he clearly saw it to be a positive duty. “Master Pierre Viret,” says the register at the date of the 28th February, “hath showed that it would be very meet to write again to Master Caulvin. Ordered that he be written to.” Letters to him were at the same time promised from his friends at Basle and Zurich, and the Strasburg Council were strongly urged, in order that by positively granting him his dismissal, one of the motives of his hesitation might be removed. And if Calvin could have feared that the wishes of the magistrates were not those of the people, a letter from the pastor Bernard would have fully reassured him. Bernard related to him that one day in February, being in the pulpit, he beheld the faithful deeply moved at the thought of the destitution in which the Church was; he exhorted them to apply to the chief shepherd, Jesus Christ, beseeching Him to put an end to that sad state of things; that all then thought of Calvin, and that all afterwards pronounced his name. “As for me,” he adds, “I blessed God that the stone disallowed was made the head of the corner. Come, then, venerable father in Christ. Thou art ours, for the Lord hath given

thee to us. . . . Come: the Lord would require our blood at thy hands, for it is thou whom He hath established shepherd over the house of Israel amongst us.”

Calvin replied to all of them as he had done to Viret. The prospect of returning to Geneva filled him with fear and consternation, and when he finally said *Yes*, he said it (in a letter to Farel, dated August 1541) exclaiming: “Not what I will, O God, but what Thou wilt! I offer my heart a sacrifice to the Lord.” Long afterwards, relating his anguish at this epoch, he says, “at length the sight of my duty, which I was considering with reverence and conscientiousness, won me, and made me consent to return towards the flock from which I had been torn away; which I did with sorrow, tears, great anxiety and distress, as the Lord can bear me good witness.”

All his letters at this epoch bear, in fact, the stamp of perfect sincerity. Whether refusing or yielding, taking courage or flinching, there is not the trace of a design to excite farther solicitations, still less, to oblige his former adversaries to humble themselves before him. It was without any request or insinuation on his part that the General Council assembled on the 1st of May and solemnly revoked the sentence of banishment pronounced in April 1538. The Genevese declared that they held Farel and Calvin to be “honest and godly men.” They approved all that the Council had done to get Calvin back, and all that it might think fit to do for the future. We have already narrated the incidents of the three months which followed.

Calvin had then at last said, *Yes*. On the 19th of August, it was decided to send and fetch him. On the 22d, thirty-six crowns were allotted to “Eustache Vincent, our mounted herald, to go and fetch Master Calvin.” The 29th, it was resolved that he shall be lodged “in the house now occupied by the minister Bernard—to whom another will be given.” The 30th, a letter was written to the Council of Neuchâtel, in order that Farel might be authorized to accompany his friend as far as Geneva. The 4th of September it was resolved to lodge Calvin in the house called the Chantry, before the cathedral. The 9th, there was another change: he is to have given him “the house of the lord of Freyneville.” Two councillors are commissioned to install him there, seeing that “he is to be here this evening.” At length on the 13th, “Master Jean Calvin is arrived from Strasburg and has excused himself in detail for the long tarrying which he made.”

This “long tarrying” had already been explained in a letter written by him from Neuchâtel, a week before. “Having heard at Soleure,” he wrote, “that there was some disturbance in this Church of Neuchâtel, I have been constrained, as by the will of God, to turn aside and see if I could in any wise remedy it.” That “disturbance” at Neuchâtel, resembled in its cause, if not in its violence, those which had agitated Geneva. A lady of quality, whose conduct gave occasion for scandal, had been publicly censured by Farel. The

lady's relations accused the minister, and raising against him all the malcontents, obtained of the Burghers a decree to deprive him of his place. Calvin went therefore to defend his friend, and, with his friend, what he considered the natural and necessary rights of the evangelical ministry. He could not stay long enough to bring the matter to a successful termination; accordingly, a few days after his arrival at Geneva, he wrote a letter to the Neuchâtel government. This letter, besides the interest of the details, has an historical value; it is the first, that we know of, which was written in the name of the *pastors* of Geneva, and in which the word *company* was employed in speaking of them. "Magnificent and honourable Lords," they say, "having heard that your Church is not yet delivered out of the disturbances which have lately arisen, we have thought it belonged to our duty to send some *of our company* to tender their services, so far as comports with our calling and office, towards removing the scandal which the devil has raised amongst you. We have therefore determined on sending you our good brother and a former pastor of your Church, Pierre Viret, beseeching that of your good pleasure you would listen to what he will say to you in the name of our assembly, in accordance with the duty of our ministry, which obliges and constrains us to intervene in this cause, seeing that it is ecclesiastical, and so touches us, inasmuch as we are members of one body." Calvin, therefore, did not consider this step as forming an exception; he connected it with the great principle of the unity of the Church, which, according to him, gave to each Church the right of intervening in a friendly way in the affairs of all others. It was also the idea of the first Christian ages,—we see, in those times, all the Churches, and all the bishops considering themselves responsible for all that was passing in the Christian world, and, consequently, interfering in it without scruple. The applications of this right gradually lessened as the Churches received a more regular organisation, but when circumstances more or less analogous to those of the first centuries recurred, the right reappeared in all its integrity, and the duty also. It was not a privilege therefore which Calvin was claiming for the Church of Geneva; but soon, however, thanks to circumstances, thanks to him especially, and to his genius, the privilege became established, and all the more solidly that no hierarchical idea lay at its basis. We shall recur to this kind of brotherly papacy which the Company of Geneva was to exercise in the midst of the Protestant world, and we would here only indicate its humble beginnings. In the hand of a great man everything bears fruit.

XXII.

Calvin had lost not a moment in rendering the Church of Geneva capable anew of acting her part in a worthy manner. At his first audience in Council,

after those “excuses in detail,” which the register speaks of, Calvin “prays Messieurs that order may be established in the Church, that that order may be committed to writing, and that some of the Council may be chosen to confer together about it.” He meant that all existing regulations should be reduced to method, that such as were deemed necessary should be added, and that the whole should form a complete ecclesiastical code. This proposal could raise no debate; it was accepted beforehand by the simple fact of Calvin’s recall. Six councillors, four of the Lesser Council and two of the Greater, are elected “to confer with the preachers,” and to prepare the general ordinances, or what relates to the *Consistory*.

This last word appeared for the first time in the registry, on the 5th of April. It was resolved that a consistory be formed, “either to judge matrimonial suits, or to make remonstrances to those who live ill” Before Calvin’s return, then, one of the ideas which he had most at heart, had been taken up anew. He considered that every body of laws supposes a tribunal commissioned to punish all infractions of it; but he did not wish the council, or the government, to continue as that tribunal, and in demanding a special jurisdiction, he had two things in view; to secure the regular repression of evil, and to separate as much as was then possible, the religious from the political domain. Thus the Consistory would emanate from the State, *would be* the State, but the State organised in view of a moral and religious mandate. The separation of the two spheres would therefore be analogous to that which is established by our modern laws, between the political power, whatever its form, and the judicial power. The judge emanates from the sovereign, pronounces in the sovereign’s name, and yet pronounces sovereignly. He is sovereign in the sphere assigned to him by the sovereign.

Since the month of April, however, nothing had been done towards putting the idea into execution. After a few tentatives it had been decided to wait for Calvin, and we have just seen what took place the very first day.

XXIII.

We have seen that before his arrival, the dwelling to be assigned him had occupied their attention. Other details have been found in the registers. Thus, on the 20th of September: “Ordered, that cloth be bought to make him a gown;” and a few days after: “The treasurer was ordered to disburse for Master Calvin’s gown, including cloth and fur, eight crowns.” On the 4th of October: “Salary of Master Calvin, who is a man of great learning, and favourable to the restoration of the Christian Churches, and is exposed to heavy expenses from strangers who come this way.¹ Whereupon it was resolved that he should have for wages yearly, five hundred florins, twelve measures

¹ Supporte grande charge de passants.

of wheat, and two casks of wine.” Five hundred florins represented then about three thousand francs, or a hundred and twenty pounds at the present day.

But to return to the subject of the dwelling. Some details on this matter, will perhaps not be devoid of interest.

The house of the Lord of Freyneville, was a house which had been formerly sold by the State to that nobleman, who was originally from Picardy. Having left Geneva, he was desirous of selling it, and the Council had decided on repurchasing it. Calvin, however, for what reasons we know not, did not enter it till two years afterwards, and was located during those two years, in a house close by, formerly the property of the Abbot of Bonmont, Aimé de Gingins. Both were in the Rue des Chanoines, and corresponded, one to the present number eleven, the other to number thirteen. Smaller than the houses which have replaced them, each of them had a small garden at the back; on the same side, the view extended over the terraced roofs of the city, which rose one above another, like the steps of a ladder, and included in the far distance the lake and its shores, the district of Vaud, and the wooded slopes of the Jura.

Such was the spot where Calvin was to live; and where, at the end of twenty-three years, he was to breathe his last. That lake, those mountains, the distant scenes at once so smiling and so grand,—who is there that would not like to know whether they charmed his eyes, or whether at times his soul sought in them repose, and his mind relaxation? Luther would not have left us in uncertainty. The blue Leman would have been reflected in more than one of his pages; the Jura would have furnished him with more than one graceful image; the Alps, with more than one awful figure; and the whole landscape, with more than one prayer to the Author of all those marvels. Yet, because Calvin has said nothing, let us not hastily conclude that he saw nothing; on the contrary, so far as we know him, he may have much enjoyed it, though he said nothing of it. A letter to Monsieur de Falais, in February 1547, is not that of a man who sets no value on small gardens and fine prospects. Commissioned by his friend to hire him a house at Geneva, he describes the one which he has chosen. “You will have a garden in front; and behind, another garden. A large chamber, with as fair a prospect as you could wish for the summer. . . .” He says this without employing epithets, for he cannot endure them; but this is precisely why, a single word, from him, is full of meaning. How much there is, therefore in this other, very brief letter, which he writes to Viret in 1550! He has learned that the pastor of Lausanne intends to pay him a visit, and here he is building upon the tidings the whole plan of a charming week, during which he will take, what seldom happens to him,—a holiday. Viret will manage to be at Geneva on Sunday. He will preach in the morning in the city; Calvin is to preach at Jussy, at the foot of the

Mountain; and Viret will join him after dinner. They will then walk to Monsieur de Falais at Veigy. The next day they will cross the lake, and will go and “*rusticate*” till Thursday, on the smiling hills of Vaud, at the seats of the lords of Pommier and of L’Isle. On Friday there is to be an excursion to Pregny or to Bellerive. In all this there are no fine phrases, but we feel, that, under these few simple words there beats a heart which is alike open to the charms of nature, and to the sweets of friendship.

There are many other questions that one would like to put to the humble house in which John Calvin lived and died.

His wife joined him there in October. The Council had given orders, as early as the 16th of September, to a messenger to go and fetch her from Strasburg, her and “her effects;” and the register mentions, a month later, the twenty-two days’ pay to the messenger for going and returning; then the sale by auction of the carriage and three horses which the Republic had bought for the journey, a long one for those times. But the “effects,” which were of the humblest description, were insufficient for the house, and accordingly, the very day after that on which it had been resolved to send for them, the register mentions “one hundred and twenty-one florins and two sous,” voted to pay for “the household furniture given to Master Jean Calvin,” of which we find an inventory, at least so far as respects the wooden furniture, bearing date the 12th of December 1547; and yet another inventory after Calvin’s death, the 25th of September 1564, the day on which the State resumed possession. The inventory states that, at that date, “a cupboard, without a lock,” was wanting, but, on the other hand, a dozen stools, which the old inventory called “good as well as bad,” are designated as new in the later one. Both mention “a high-backed walnut chair of joiner’s work,” and this chair, long preserved in the pulpit of the Hospital Chapel, is now in that of St. Peter’s. There is, at least, no reason for doubting the truth of the tradition which affirms it.

But one would like to animate with living details the humble home, of which it is easy to fancy the material aspect, especially during the few years that Idelette de Bure was its centre. Here we perceive, unhappily, under one of its severest forms, the contrast that constantly strikes us between the genius of the German Reformer and that of the French Reformer. “Just as Luther is prodigal of those familiar effusions which initiate us into the events, happy or unhappy, of his life,¹ whether praising in merry terms his dear Ketha, weeping over his little Magdalen’s bier, or describing poetically to his son the joys of Paradise, just so is Calvin restrained and quiet upon those details of domestic life which shed a gentle radiance around the family

¹ We borrow these lines from Monsieur Jules Bonnet, “Bulletin of the Society for the History of French Protestantism.”

hearth. His soul, absorbed by the tragical emotions of the struggle which he had to sustain at Geneva, and by the toils of his immense propaganda abroad, seems to dread effusion as a weakness, and overflows but rarely in brief, rapid words, and in flashes of sensibility which reveal unknown depths, but without completely unveiling them. Living, so to speak, in the shadow of the Reformer, Idelette appears to us in a mysterious twilight. Some traits, however, may be determined and assembled.

“These traits, scattered over the correspondence of Calvin and his friends, are those of the Christian woman devoted to all the duties of her calling. To visit the poor, to comfort the afflicted, to receive the strangers who came knocking at the Reformer’s door, to watch by his bed-side during the days of sickness, or when, ‘well disposed in all the rest of the body,’ he was ‘tormented by a pain which suffered him to do scarcely anything,’ so that he was ‘almost ashamed of living thus useless,’ to support him in the hours of discouragement and sadness, and, finally, to pray all alone in her chamber when revolt was raging in the streets, and cries of “Death to the ministers!” were being raised:—such were the occupations of Idelette. Her chief pleasures were to listen to holy admonitions, to exercise Christian hospitality towards Calvin’s friends—Farel, Viret, Beza—to accompany him in his rare walks to Coligny or to Bellerive, and to visit at Lausanne, Viret’s wife, the pious Elizabeth Turtaz, whom she loved as a sister, and whose loss she had too soon to deplore. It was with her that Idelette spent a few days in May 1545, when Calvin went to Zurich to plead the cause of the Provençal Waldenses, and to suspend, by the solemn intervention of the Cantons, the frightful massacre of Cabrières and of Mérindol. She returned for the last time to Lausanne in June 1548, anxious not to inconvenience her hosts, and pained at being unable to serve them in any way in return for all their kind care.

“Idelette appears to us in a yet more touching aspect in her sorrows as a mother. In the second year of her marriage, in July 1542, she had a son; but her child was soon snatched from her. She was, however, supported under the trial by the tokens of sympathy which were lavished upon her by the Churches of Geneva and Lausanne. A letter from the Reformer to Viret initiates us into his own and his wife’s grief. ‘Salute all the brethren,’ he says; ‘salute also thy wife, to whom mine sends her thanks for the sweet and holy consolation which she has received from her. She would wish to acknowledge them with her own hand, but she has not even the strength to dictate a few words. In that He hath taken away our son, the Lord hath stricken us right sorely; but He is our Father—He knoweth what is meet for His children.’ Two years afterwards, the heart of Idelette was torn by a new trial—the loss of an infant daughter which, for a few days, had cheered her solitude. A third babe, of which Monsieur de Falais was to be sponsor, was also taken

away. Idelette wept; and the Reformer, so often smitten in his tenderest affections, could find consolation only in the spiritual fatherhood which inspired him later to write this eloquent rejoinder to one of his adversaries, Baudoin: "The Lord gave me a son, the Lord hath taken him away. Let my enemies see obloquy for me in the trial. Have I not tens of thousands of children in the Christian world?"

Here lies the excuse, if excuse be necessary, for the extreme reserve of details upon all that concerns his family, his affections, and himself. He is the man of his work, the man of the Church, the man of the Christian world; the time taken up in speaking of his family according to the flesh, he would deem stolen from that other family which God had given him—those "tens of thousands" who acknowledged him as their father. He was mistaken, doubtless. The time thus taken up would not have been lost either to the tens of thousands, or to his task in the midst of them. Had he been more of the *man*, and even weaker as man at certain times, he would have been, like Luther, all the stronger in many others. But his error was one of self-denial, of duty, of conscience, and, what was better—as might be proved by many of his letters—of deep and unalterable piety. Luther, not less pious, and, on great occasions, not less serious, could laugh, and loved to laugh; the agony of his youth had not destroyed his fund of joyous and impetuous vivacity. Calvin suffered less in mind and conscience; but all things here below conspired, one might say, to show him none but their grave aspects, and it is not easy to see when sentiments of a different nature could have been developed in him. In his whole correspondence, once only does he speak of laughing, and then it is the more meritorious, because he has just been obliged to hand the pen to his secretary, the rheumatism having "taken him so rudely by the shoulders," that he could no longer "make a stroke with his pen." But Monsieur de Falais, to whom he was writing, had just received a son, and the father's joy had poured itself forth, it seems, in a letter interspersed with pleasantries. Calvin would not be outdone. His mirth, however, is but a flash; the laughter gushes forth from his gravity, and in an instant all is grave again. "I pray our Lord that it may please Him to have you in His holy keeping, and to preserve to you the blessing He hath given you till you see the fruit thereof, and receive from it more ample comfort and joy. It vexeth me that I cannot be there with you for half a day at the least, to laugh with you till we make the little babe to laugh, which cries and weeps. For this is the first note we have to strike at the beginning of this life, that we may laugh in good earnest when we are out of it." According to him, then, the first note of life, the keynote, is weeping. Laughter is a discord, to be permitted, it is true, but only on condition of being promptly resolved into the first, the normal key, which will not change till we stand upon the threshold of eternal bliss.

Let us not wonder, therefore, if he cared so little to preserve for us the details either of his joys or of his sorrows. Sorrows and joys before eternity are nought, and it is in the presence of eternity and not of prosperity that he ever places himself. Let us not too much regret that we have so few traits of his private life to weave into his story; our narrative all the more faithfully reproduces his life, as he understood it with a view to the end. If, in the preceding pages, we have gathered together some such traits—encroaching, by a few years, upon the period we have now to traverse—it has been only in order that we might all the longer only contemplate the Reformer at his work, the workman at his task. We shall pause again but twice—the first time before the death-bed of Idelette; and the second at the death-bed of Calvin.

BOOK THE THIRD.

SUMMARY.

- I. *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* drawn up and passed.
- II. Spirit of the code—Analysis—Four orders in the Church—The pastors and the pastoral ministry—The Consistory; its functions and its rights—Excommunication—Matrimonial causes—Deacons—How Calvin understood the union of Church and State.
- III. Order and peace appear to be assured—The name of Christ in the arms of the city of Geneva—The Liturgy—Preaching—Psalmody—The Psalter—Religious instruction—Calvin is desirous that faith, as regulated by the Church-formularies, should be, nevertheless to every one, rational, real, and personal—Different measures to secure this—Some unworthy pastors expelled—The work advances; the true Reformation takes deeper root—The syndic, Porral.
- IV. State of Geneva—Geneva, in spite of her severe laws, everywhere considered as the free city.
- V. Calvin on his way to Metz—Sad state of Europe—The plague at Geneva—Characteristics of Calvin's devotedness—His colleagues in 1542.
- VI. His works during this period—Satirical writing against the Faculty of Theology of Paris—The *Exhortation* to Charles V.—*Of the servitude and enfranchisement of the human will*—Treatise on the divinity of Jesus Christ—*Scholia on the admonition of Paul III. to the Emperor*—The *Excuse to the Nicodemites*—*Admonition* touching relics—Several of these writings recall the style of Luther.
- VII. Publications against the Libertines who called themselves *Spirituals*—Their system—The Genevese Libertines adopt this, at least in fact, and as a weapon against the Calvinistic legislation.
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- IX. The case of Benoit Ameaux—Gruet's trial—Amied Perrin's part—First debates on Excommunication—Perrin in open rebellion—Perrin arrested as a traitor—Scene at the Town House—Courage of Calvin—Reconciliation.
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- XV. Servetus at Paris, Lyons, and Vienne—His correspondence with Calvin—His pantheistic audacity—Is it true that Calvin denounced him at Vienne?—Impossible for the Reformation, and for Geneva especially, to show indulgence towards Servetus—Had she done so, what would have been said?
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- XVII. Servetus believes himself on the eve of victory—His victory would bring on the exile of Calvin, and the fall of the whole Calvinistic establishment, doctrine, and discipline—Anxiety of Calvin—Farel reassures and encourages him—Servetus demands that an accusation should be brought against Calvin—He changes his tone—His sufferings in prison.
- XVIII. The Swiss Churches are consulted, and pronounce unanimously against Servetus—The Governments, likewise consulted, are not less unanimous—Geneva can no longer fail to condemn him—Last efforts of the Libertines in favour of Servetus—Condemnation—Calvin had not asked for the stake, and he demands that the sword be substituted for the fire.
- XIX. Last interview with Servetus—Farel—Sad details—The execution.
- XX. A last glance at the whole—Various calumnies—The intolerance of Calvin, and Romish intolerance—His treatise, *Of the punishment of Heretics*—The elevated and heroic side of severities which are revolting to us.

I.

BEHOLD, then, Calvin again at Geneva, and, as Beza tells us, “received with so extraordinary affection by that poor people famishing to hear their faithful pastor, that they took no rest till he was fixed there for ever for the Council of Strasburg had at first refused to do more than lend him to the Genevese. Strasburg, however, yielded at last, but not without difficulty, to the solicitations of Geneva. Calvin retained his right of citizenship, but he refused his salary as professor, which they had wished to continue to him.

At his first audience in council, as we have seen, he requested that the ordinances should be drawn up without delay. The commission which was appointed, set to work on the 16th of September, and by the 28th, we find the council convoked to examine the draught which had been prepared. But, says the register of that day, “several lords-councillors have been disobedient in not appearing to advise upon the ordinances touching religion.” Was this already a beginning of opposition? Was it a dread of the difficulties of the work, and perhaps also of the obstacles which they would meet with in carrying it out? We know not. The next day, in a session to which the absent of the preceding day were convoked “under oath,” that is to say, under pain of being admonished, if they are wanting, as unfaithful to their oath as councillors, the examination is begun and continues till the 27th of October. The project was definitely amended and submitted, on the 9th of November, to the Council of the Two Hundred, and on the 20th to the General Council. Though voted, the ordinances underwent further remodelling, and the final vote took place the 2d January, 1542. It is from that day that the Calvinistic republic legally dates.

II.

In the code Calvin places himself resolutely and absolutely on the ground of the Gospel. All that he can borrow from the primitive Church he takes, and whatever that Church does not afford him he creates; but rigidly adheres to its traditions and its spirit. This spirit he desires to see reflected by public and private manners, as well as by institutions. He is convinced, moreover, that it cannot be injured by being emphasized, and that the most strict of the lawgivers of antiquity may serve as guides to the Christian legislator. The triumph of the Gospel will be to obtain even more than they did; the rights of the Christian state cannot possibly be less than those of the Pagan state. The state, consequently, can and ought to make, in the name of God, all the laws which appear to it likely to concur to the establishment and maintenance of the kingdom of God on earth. The temporal and spiritual will be sufficiently separated in Calvin’s view, by the fact that the cognisance of offences and the application of penalties, will be the work of a special body.

But this body, though an important part of the Church, will not be its head. “There are,” says the ordinance, “four orders or kinds of office instituted by our Lord for the general government of His Church,—namely, pastors, then doctors, then elders or presbyters,¹ and fourthly, deacons.” The consistory is only the body of presbyters, the third order, to which Calvin adds the pastors, considered *in this case*, according to the language and custom of the first centuries, as presbyters.

The ordinance treats first, then, of pastors, “whom the Scripture names also sometimes overseers or bishops, presbyters, and ministers.” Their office is to announce the Word of God, to teach, admonish, and reprove both in public and in private, to administer the sacraments, and, with the presbyters, to pronounce the ecclesiastical censures.” That nothing “may be done without order in the Church,” every candidate for the ministry must first be examined by the pastors, and the examination will bear principally upon doctrine, “that is to say, whether the candidate’s knowledge of Scripture be good and wholesome; secondly, whether he be fit and sufficient to communicate it to the people; thirdly, whether his morals be good, and his life irreproachable.” This done, they lay hands on him, according to the apostolic custom, and he can now be elected pastor. It is the Company that elects; but the election is immediately communicated to the Council, who send some of their number to hear the candidate “discourse upon Scripture in the assembly of ministers.” The following Sunday it is announced in all the churches “that such a one has been elected and approved in the accustomed way,” and that if any one has observations to make, he is to communicate them to one of the syndics before the next Sunday. That day come, if no valid objection has been made, the pastor is publicly installed. The officiating pastor will “declare and set forth to him the office to which he is ordained,” with “prayers and supplications that the Lord would grant him grace to acquit himself of it.” Then follows the form of oath to be taken by him before the Council.

The ministry is now organised. The next articles treat of the “good government” to be established for keeping the pastors to their duty; and as their duty is, above all things, to make steady progress in the knowledge of Holy Writ, they will assemble one day in the week in a church,² to listen to a biblical exposition, to be delivered by all in turn, “both those of the town and those of the country.” They will assemble afterwards in the customary place of meeting, and deliberate on what they have heard. “Should any difference as to doctrine arise,” let them treat of it at first together;” if that suffice not, “let them call the elders; and if that suffice not, let the cause be brought before the magistrate to be set right.” A strange article truly! It is probable that

¹ Anciens.

² Temple.

Calvin, in the magistrate, saw himself supremely influencing the decision to be taken. It can, however, scarcely be supposed that he did not see the dangers of the principle, still less, that he knowingly sacrificed the dignity of the Church to the wish to display an influence which he was not certain to possess. Let us therefore view in it rather the necessities of the moment, the need of consolidating at any cost an edifice that was to be assailed by so many storms. Perhaps also it is not just to attribute this article to Calvin. The Council had at some length re-revised the ordinances, and its registers prove that it was not always in accordance with the views of the pastors.

If a pastor commits a fault punishable in civil law, it is for the civil power to judge and punish him, and every such condemnation involves deposition. Faults, the investigation of which belongs, in common law, to the consistory, are to be punished by the consistory; those which touch, more specially, the ministry, are to be under the cognizance of the Company of Pastors, which shall not have recourse to the consistory, till it has exhausted its own means of action and correction. Before every communion, the pastors are “to take special heed amongst themselves, to remedy defects by right censures.” The country churches are to be visited every three years by one delegate of the Company, and one delegate of the Council This is the old episcopal visitation, from time immemorial customary in the Church.

Baptism can be administered only by a pastor. Every god-father is to be refused who is notoriously not in a state to promise to the Church that he will be spiritually a father to the child.

The Lord’s Supper is to be celebrated in the churches only. It is to take place four times a year—at Easter, at Whitsuntide, the first Sunday in September, and “the Sunday nearest to Christmas-day,” for the Sunday only is of divine institution, and Calvin admits no other holyday, not even Christmas-day.

The singing, “both before and after the sermon,” is to be that of the Psalms.

Every child is regularly to attend catechising till, when sufficiently taught, he is admitted, “in presence of the Church, to make profession of his Christianity.” It is absolutely forbidden to approach the Lord’s table before this.

But many of the faithful have not passed through this primary teaching, and all need to be reminded of it. It is, therefore, ordered that a yearly visitation should be made from house to house, to examine every one simply as to his faith, in order that no one may come to the Lord’s Supper without knowing what is the foundation of his salvation. The visit is to be made in each parish, before Easter, by the pastor, accompanied by an elder and by the tithing-man of the quarter. The pastor is to visit, all the year through, all the sick, in order “that no one may die without admonition or instruction, which

is then more necessary than ever to a man.” A weekly visit is also to be paid to the prisoners by a pastor.

Here terminates what relates to pastors. In spite of a few changes, some good, others less so, this part of the ordinances may be said to be still in full force at Geneva.

Another has ceased to be so for a considerable time—the Consistory has scarcely anything but the name in common with that instituted by Calvin. It is now the administrative body of the Church; under Calvin it was the guardian of the Ordinances, and especially a tribunal of morals.

Calvin composes it of the pastors and twelve laymen; these twelve laymen are named by the Council upon the recommendation of the pastors, and confirmed subsequently by the Council of Two Hundred. Their names are published on a Sunday, and the people have till the Thursday to communicate to a syndic the objections that any of them might call forth. They swear before the Council that they will report to the Consistory all that seems to them blameworthy; that they will do it “without hatred or favour, but only that the Church may be maintained in good order, and in the fear of God.” The elders are elected for a year, but it will be desirable to re-elect all who appear worthy of re-election. The Consistory assembles every Thursday to see if there be any disorder in the Church. Now, the Church means, and is, all that live in the land. The Consistory may, therefore, cite any one before it, but it has the disposal of no power, either to constrain the people to appear, or to carry out its sentences; it “gives notice” to the Council, and the Council “sees to it.” Every open fault belongs by right to the jurisdiction of the Consistory; as to secret faults, let no one bring his neighbour before the Consistory before he has tried, according to the command of Jesus Christ, to bring him in secret to repentance. If the government alone has the disposal of material force, the Consistory alone has the right to excommunicate—another important point in which Calvin laid down the separation between the two powers. But we shall shortly see to what debates this point gave rise.

He is to be excommunicated, even for a secret fault, who obstinately refuses to own his guilt, and to amend. He is to be excommunicated, for a longer or shorter time, who has committed a fault involving heavy chastisement. Every one shall be excommunicated who “shall dogmatize against the received doctrine,” refusing “to conform.” He is to be excommunicated who, after several warnings, persists in absenting himself from the religious assemblies; he also is to be excommunicated who voluntarily keeps away from the Lord’s Supper, or who, when required to abstain for a time, shall take no steps to be readmitted. If he persists for six months longer, let him be banished the country for a year. A similar punishment is for him who, after having promised to communicate, persists in keeping away.

Without approving of all these articles, we must recall what we have said elsewhere—they must not be read under the impression of the odious sense which the rigour of the Romish Church has attached to the term excommunication. Calvin associates with it no mystical idea of reprobation or condemnation; he takes it in its primitive and apostolic sense; to *excommunicate* was to cut off from the communion of the faithful, and, as the visible sign of the severance, to prohibit the Lord's Supper. Neither does Calvin add any temporal chastisement as the result of excommunication; if he speaks of banishment, it is not for the excommunicated in general, but for those whom excommunication has failed to subdue; and, in fact, it was requisite that power should remain with the law. In short, if the principle was once admitted, it could scarcely be applied with greater moderation and prudence.

The Consistory was also a tribunal for matrimonial causes, and therefore the articles which follow form a code upon that subject. The paternal authority in marriage is first endorsed and then limited; next comes all that relates to age, to widowers, to widows, to the degrees of relationship, to promises of marriage, to betrothals, to weddings, to difficulties before or after marriage, and, at last, to divorce—for Calvin admits of divorce, considering it allowed in principle in the words in which Jesus Christ forbids it, "*except it be for the cause of fornication.*" But he surrounds it with all the precautions that can secure the sanctity and indissolubleness of marriage; and, in fact, never was marriage holier and more indissoluble than at Geneva under the Ordinances of Calvin.

After the elders and the Consistory, come the deacons, "the fourth order of ecclesiastical polity. Calvin divides these into two classes—those who are to receive and administer the property of the poor, and those who are to occupy themselves with the poor, by helping them, tending them, &c. The latter are to be called *Hospitalers*;¹ the former *Providers*.² The ordinance confirms a measure which had been taken immediately after the Reformation—a single charitable establishment—the *General Hospital*,³ will receive all the alms and administer all the relief. No poor person will run the risk of being abandoned, and therefore mendicity is forbidden.

A last article orders that "these ordinances shall be published and read in the General Council every five years, and that nothing therein shall be changed by any one, unless it has been previously proposed and agreed to by the Lesser, Great, and General Councils."

The more this legislation has been studied, the more has it been seen to contain things which were then new, and to indicate undeniable progress in advance of all anterior systems of legislation. The form, sometimes, surprises

¹ Hospitaliers.

² Procureurs.

³ Hôpital Général.

us a little by its quaint simplicity, so remote from the language which the law now speaks; and by those petty details which are mixed up with important regulations. These may sometimes tempt a smile, but the grandeur of the whole is not the less evident to those who seek it; and this was about to manifest itself in the history of the humble nation to whom this legislation was to give so glorious a place in the intellectual, as well as in the religious world.

The sequel was likewise to show how skilfully the Reformer had guarded the independence of the Church, though sacrificed, as it seemed, in some articles, and compromised as a whole, by the very fact of the strict union between Church and State. More fortunate than her sisters of German Switzerland, who had and still have for their bishop the civil government, the Church of Geneva always had her own bishop—the Company of Pastors. Her independence was cramped, here and there it is true, by inevitable contact with the political power, but it was ever recognized and respected in its general features as an indestructible tradition. Neither absorbing nor degrading the State, the Church maintained herself at its side, always free, so far as the Reformer had intended her to be so.

This was, indeed, an important, an indispensable element of her influence abroad. A church visibly in the power of the magistrates of so small a State, would have been hearkened to by none. Rather such a Church could not have even entertained the thought of being anything to those who were at a distance. But the Church of Geneva had been put into possession of a free and living individuality. Henceforth, it mattered little whether numerically she were small or great, or whether she was at home, under the shelter of a small or of a mighty State. She was the Church of Geneva, the heiress of Calvin. None in Europe, friend or foe, thought of asking more.

III.

The Reformer had obtained what he desired; but far from being completed, his task was only to begin again more seriously. All his perseverance had been required to succeed, at the end of five years, in getting the instrument of the regeneration of Geneva placed in his hands; the question now was to make it act. Perseverance and courage were shortly to be as necessary to him as ever.

At first, all was peaceful. The reaction which had brought back Calvin was not one of those caprices that destroy on the morrow the favourite of the preceding day; neither was it, as we have seen, a factitious movement, prepared by ringleaders, and borne by a blind multitude. The people and the magistrates had been insensibly won back by Calvin when absent, but felt to be necessary, nay indispensable; hence both people and magistrates felt themselves bound to enter firmly and honestly into his views. The ideal of a

Christian republic was beginning to be understood, and, for those who were decidedly incapable of understanding it, the dislocation of all things during Calvin's exile had, at least, made them recognize that order and strength were in him. But order and strength proceeded, according to him, from a greater than he. He had not waited for the ordinances to be voted, to ask of the Council that the monogram of Christ, I.H.S., should be inscribed on the public buildings, on the coin, and on the standards. Calvin will not have the cross, which has unhappily become the symbol of a Church in which salvation by the cross is overlaid by forms and works, and in which the sign scarcely serves but to veil the absence of the thing signified; he will have the name of Jesus Christ, the spiritual, unalterable symbol which perpetually evokes the thought of all that Jesus is and must be, above all, the Saviour of souls, but also the Saviour of nations. The Council accedes to this desire, and the monogram of Christ will seal the forehead of the new Rome.

Hostile as he was to all superfluous forms in Divine Worship, Calvin did not go so far as to reject them all indiscriminately; regularity, though at the risk of leading to formalism, appeared indispensable to him in order that the public services might be worthy of God and the Church. The regulation of the liturgies was therefore one of his first cares. He placed under contribution those of Strasburg, and others; the Scripture especially was his guide, both as to matter and manner. The Baptismal service, drawn up by him at Strasburg, bore the traces of his conflicts with the Anabaptists; and the communion service could scarcely have kept silence as to Romish errors on that head.

Preaching also assumed more regular forms. Calvin set the example of choosing, for each sermon, a well-defined subject; hitherto, whether connected with the subject or not, anything and everything was frequently treated of. This was natural and right so long as the sole aim was to move men's minds, but inimical to deeper researches. Whilst he recommended preachers to feed upon the Scripture, and to feed their sermons with it, Calvin condemned accumulations of texts. He considered it as a disastrous step towards leaving the spirit for the letter, and he knew, besides, that it is often the means of making the Bible say what we wish. He did not even approve that two texts should be taken for the same sermon. If the two say the same thing, why take two? If one is to modify the other, what is to prevent its being quoted, in the course of the sermon, by way of elucidation and commentary? Calvin's respect for Scripture always bears the impress of this spirit. It is not the respect of enthusiasm, which is sometimes far from respectful, but that of reason and conscience.

Neither will Calvin allow the preacher, under pretence that his word is the Word of God, force himself for too long a time on the attention of his congregation. "There is one thing of which I would speak to thee," he writes one day to Farel. "It is said that the length of the sermons is a subject of

complaint. Thou hast told me thyself more than once that thou wouldst take heed thereto; forget it not, I pray thee. And since it is not for our own edification that the Lord calls upon us to ascend the pulpit but for that of the people, it is incumbent on thee to moderate thyself in such sort that the Word of God may not have to suffer because thou hast wearied them.” The same observation is made upon the prayers, though Farel, according to all his contemporaries, prayed admirably.” “It is better,” Calvin writes to him, “to pray at length in private and briefly in the assemblies. If thou expectest from all an ardour equal to thine own, thou art mistaken.”

Every preacher had at first been appointed to his own special temple. In August 1542 Calvin decided that they should all preach in turn, in all the city pulpits, “in order that the people might be better edified and might profit by all the ministers.” It was also in more strict conformity to the great apostolic principle of the equality of the pastors—a principle which was tenaciously held in all things by Calvin, beginning with what concerned himself. Neither title nor official privilege ever distinguished him from his colleagues.

The apostolic Church was also to be imitated in respect to “the Service of Song.”

Rome had confiscated sacred melody like everything else; the congregation had no part to perform in the Church service, which was exclusively reserved to ecclesiastics, priests, chanters, &c. The resurrection of the Church as the body of believers, would necessarily lead to that of singing; accordingly psalm-singing had become a kind of profession of faith: *psalm-singer* and *Reformed* were synonymous words in France. The effect was less generally apparent at Geneva; Calvin had almost to create psalm-singing, and the importance he attached to its creation should, perhaps, modify a little what has been said of his coldness and contempt of all æsthetic means. As early as 1537, in a memoir on the organisation of the Church, he says—“Certes, as we perform them, the devotions of believers are so cold that it ought to be a shame and confusion to us. Psalms might incite us to raise our hearts to God and move us to fervour, both in calling upon Him and in exalting, by praises, the glory of His name.” Luther would not have spoken better. But how shall this end be attained? “The way to proceed,” continued Calvin, “would be for some children, who have beforehand been made to repeat an unpretending sacred song, to sing it in the church in a loud and distinct voice, the people giving all heed, and following in their hearts what is being sung with the lips, till little by little all are accustomed to sing in common.”

This is the plan that was followed. Calvin had some of Marot’s psalms printed, accompanied by very simple musical notation. A master, who was paid, by the state, gave three lessons weekly to choirs of children, and, when a psalm was sufficiently prepared, it was performed “at the next sermon.” The Psalter was augmented in 1548, by other psalms translated by Theodore

Beza. But Calvin insisted upon having the exact prose translation of the Hebrew text printed at the foot of the page; he did not wish to have attributed to the psalmist what resulted perhaps from the exigencies of versification.

Religious instruction was very deficient; many persons, even of those well-disposed towards the gospel, were almost totally devoid of any positive acquaintance with sacred history and doctrines. The people felt but little the necessity of knowing more; they would fain have had faith in the ministers as they formerly had in the priests, leaving religion to the clergymen, and contenting themselves with adhering, by wholesale, to official teaching. But Calvin knew that a change of principles would involve a change in its consequences, and that faith, like responsibility, would be individual. Not that he granted to the individual, as the sequel showed but too well the right of framing for himself a creed which was not that of the Church, but he wished the creed of the Church to become individual in every man by a real acceptance, and an intelligent and reasonable appropriation. When in geometry, you teach the properties of the triangle or circle, you do not admit that any one can understand them otherwise than you do; you demand, however, that your pupil should not rest satisfied with your enunciation of them, and you wish each proposition to become, by examination, his real opinion and personal conviction. It was thus that Calvin acted in religion. The right to believe differently from the Church and from himself he did not grant; the right of appropriating the common creed, after examination, he not only granted, but he intended and demanded that it should be exercised by every one.

Hence resulted measures which can scarcely find favour with our more enlarged ideas, but which, seen from their own point of view, may be explained, if not justified. Calvin supposed it to be quite natural that the ignorant should be constrained to go to Church, as children are constrained to go to school; the pastor, responsible for their religious knowledge, was to be empowered to oblige them to come in quest of what they lacked, and the Christian state might as naturally impose sermons and catechizing, as the warlike state imposed military services. There were, of course, people who saw in this only the continuation of the Romish system, and a vexatious resemblance between the sermon and the mass; the country people, especially, had some difficulty in understanding that when the mass was abolished, it was still necessary to be assiduous in attending the house of God. Material constraint, however, was rarely employed. Country pastors would often go through their villages on Sunday mornings to press their parishioners to go to church. Calvin himself more than once did so in the suburban localities of Eaux-Vives and Petite Sacconex. Nothing seemed beneath him, provided that the work was done, that the Christian army was recruited, and that Geneva gradually became the citadel of which he dreamed. Himself the slave

of this glorious ideal, let us not wonder if, when necessary, he sacrificed the liberty of others.

In this laborious production of Protestant Rome, one of the great cares of the Reformer was, that he had not in all his colleagues labourers worthy of the task. Shortly after his return, we see him congratulating himself on two elections that have just been made; Blanchet and De Geneston, he writes to Farel, promise to be excellent pastors, and are liked by the people. Some others, especially Cop and Des Gallars, support him with no less zeal and success. Others, however, were incapable or unworthy. From 1542 to 1546, five had to be dismissed. Calvin had made every effort to retain Viret, and to bring back Farel. But Farel had been forced to remain at Neuchâtel, and Viret to return to Lausanne. It was the will of God that Calvin should have the sole responsibility of the work

The work was in progress. It was being carried on in the mass and in the whole body; it was reduced to order and shape, but was also sometimes wounded, and sometimes quickened. It was being carried on also in the secret recesses of conscience, which, though disciplined by man, was regenerated by the Spirit of God. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth," says the Scripture. It blew full of life and power, through laws and means which would, at the present day, seem rather the expedients of a weak, exhausted, and dying Church. Those peasants of Gex and Chablais, who were still so far, it would seem, like the Genevese peasantry, from the mere comprehension of what was in question—persecution was to find a few years later, immovable in their faith, and ready to suffer anything rather than abandon the assemblies to which, at first, they had been conducted almost by force. The same progress, and the same transformation, took place at Geneva. Those grave and handsome countenances are beginning to appear, which, at a later day, were to be so numerous among the magistracy and clergy, and all other ranks in the new city.

One of these men was especially dear to Calvin,—the syndic, Ami Portal. Converted to the gospel among the first, in 1532, he had contributed more than any one else to its triumph; it was also, thanks to him in great part, that Geneva had obtained from the Bernese, in 1536, the help which saved her independence. No one in the republic had better understood than he what Geneva might expect from the Reformation, consistently carried out; and no one had better sustained Calvin in his efforts to make it so understood by all. God, however, did not permit him to see the fruits of his zeal; he died in June 1542, and Calvin relates his death: "We spoke to him in a few words," he writes to Farel, "of the cross, of the grace of Jesus Christ, and of life eternal; he answered that he received the message from God with as much certainty as if an angel himself appeared. Then, having sent for some persons with whom he was at variance, he stretched out his hand to them, and exhorted all

who were present to remain united in the communion of the Church. At length, finding his strength failing, he said with Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'¹ And shortly afterwards he gave up his holy soul to the Lord." Such friends might console Calvin for many cavillings; their moral even more than their magisterial authority, was a powerful weapon in every difficulty.

IV.

The period comprised between 1541 and 1546 was, therefore, relatively peaceable. The disorders punished were generally not of a serious nature, or if they were, they did not generally assume the character of systematic immorality, or of direct and intentional opposition. Calvin had occasionally to inflict a fine or imprisonment on the sons of magistrates, who had nobly served their country and the Reformation; but those magistrates knew well what their religion and country still claimed, and they loyally remained the friends of the Reformer. To sum up all, there might be occasional murmurs against the Ordinances and against Calvin, but as to revolt, no one dreamed of it, and, besides, no one would have dared to show that he dreamed of it, for it was impossible to doubt that the general will was in favour of the actual order of things. We may ask if the Consistory never yielded to the temptation of displaying its authority, and if Calvin always had sufficient moderation and prudence to approve only of such severity as was strictly necessary in view of the end proposed? We would not affirm either. But details were lost in the general survey, and Geneva, seen from without, was beginning to offer the sight which might best commend her to the respect of the Protestant world. Nor, when received within her, did the strangers who were worthy of Geneva perceive anything which should induce a change of opinion. One of them, a Lyons refugee, exclaimed one day, "How delightful it is to see this lovely liberty in this city!" "Lovely liberty!" said a woman of the lower orders, "we were obliged formerly to go to mass, and now we are obliged to go to sermon." The good woman, as we have already admitted, was not altogether in the wrong; but the refugee was in the right, for he placed himself at the true point of view. Liberty to him, and to all Protestant France, to the Germany of Luther—to all those millions, in short, who were more or less persecuted, was liberty to serve God according to the gospel which had been restored. To that liberty he willingly sacrificed every other, and it was not even a sacrifice, so great did the compensation appear. Thus acted the thousands and tens of thousands of fugitives who, like himself, beneath the yoke of Calvin, felt themselves free, and gave thanks to God.

V.

On all sides, therefore, it was becoming the habit to look up to the Church of Geneva, and to its head. Strasburg had entirely given up the hope of seeing him again, and no other church attempted, as far as we know, to win him to her service. Calvin at Geneva, like the Pope at Rome, was an historical fact. No one thought of wondering, still less of being offended at his no longer taking personal part in conflicts at the outposts. Besides, there could be no doubt entertained as to his readiness, if needs be, to return into the thick of the fight, as was proved, in 1543, by the affair of Metz. Farel, who had been invited by the Reformed of that city, and then expelled with many more of them, was at Strasburg. Calvin went to seek him there, and it was not his doing if they did not go “straight to Metz, though this would not have been without danger,” as he says in a letter to the Council of Geneva; and, in fact, such was the danger that the magistrates of Strasburg did not permit the attempt. This letter to the Council reveals to us, as other letters written during this journey, in how troubled an atmosphere all the affairs of Europe were then carried on. The battle of religion and the battle of arms were ever more and more crossing and recrossing each other’s path. The conflagrations of war added their light to that of the stake; the Emperor and the King of France seemed to have sworn not to terminate their strife till war had finished the work of persecution, and made a desert of Europe. Let a truce come, and Francis I. will employ, in the extermination of Merindol and Cabrières, the leisure granted him by Charles V.! Then, again, at the extremity of Europe thus ravaged, appeared incessantly the phantom of the Turk, who, Calvin writes in July, is descending with a mighty power to assault Germany on three sides. It was already a marvel that the Turks had not long since carried out their constant menace. They might, in a few campaigns, have seized upon the whole of Europe, and placed under one yoke Protestants and Romanists, the Emperor and the Pope, Rome and Geneva. We may also add the terrors incessantly repeated by the plague, which always domiciled in some of the cities, and was always threatening all the rest.

This scourge visited Geneva several times. It has been said, in these our days, that the clergy refused to fulfil their duties towards those who were stricken. We are writing the history of Calvin, and it might suffice us to point out Calvin not refusing, any more than he had refused at Strasburg, during his pastorship in that city. But it is better to tell the whole story from the beginning.

It was in 1542. At the first appearance of the scourge, the Council requested the Company of Pastors to appoint a chaplain for “the plague-hospital.” The pastor Blanchet offers his services, and enters immediately upon his functions. Shortly after, in a letter to Viret, Calvin writes—“The plague

rages so violently, that few persons who are stricken, escape from death. One of us having to be chosen to attend to the sick, Blanchet has offered himself. If woe befall him, I fear that I must be his substitute, for, as thou sayest, we are all members one of another, and we cannot fail those who are in need of our ministry. . . . Since we have accepted this office, I see not what motive we could allege to withdraw ourselves from the peril." Always the same man! ever the law of duty,—cold but all-powerful. He *fears* being called upon to replace Peter Blanchet; but, if necessary, he will do it: no question as to that. The scourge ceases for a time, but reappears; Blanchet resumes his functions, and dies at the expiration of a few days. The Council orders that another be named, but forbids the selection of Calvin, seeing how needful he is to the whole Church; or, as the register says, "for that he is needed to serve in the Church, and answer all passers-by, and also to give counsel." Four of the pastors, Abel Poupin, Philippe de Ecclesia, and the two brothers Champereau, declare that they do not feel the courage to go and shut themselves up in the hospital;¹ but another, De Geneston comes forward, and his wife will share his peril. They shut themselves up in the hospital, and both die there, the wife first, the husband a few days after.

Such is the truth respecting this affair, which has given occasion to so much slander against the Reformation, against Calvin, and against Geneva. And who were those four men whose weakness was the cause of attacks so multiplied? One only, Poupin, remained at Geneva, expiating by a devoted ministry, his cowardice of a day. The three others, formerly priests, were among those whom we have seen expelled as unworthy, before 1546. Their cowardice was only the renewal of what, before the Reformation, Geneva had often had to reproach in their brethren. From 1494 to 1498, the registers return eight or ten times to the difficulty of procuring priests for the plague-stricken, or to the ill-conduct of those who accepted the office; and the priests were not six or seven, like the pastors of 1543, but numbered, at least, three hundred.

VI.

To complete this period, it remains now that we give the list of the works published by Calvin during these years. First of all, there was a writing filled with the most piquant irony against the Faculty of Divinity at Paris. That learned body had drawn up certain articles, very brief and very positive, a kind of Manual against the negations and assertions of the Reformation. Calvin supposes that a friend of the Faculty wishes to improve their work by adding to it, proofs,—and this friend turns out to be a simpleton, who gives

¹ A phrase of the register has given rise to the idea that Calvin had, at first, joined them; an absurd supposition in presence of all the facts.

proofs, indeed, or rather reasons, but such as the doctors would not have cared to give. They all amount on every point to one:—This is true and divine, *for* the Church has need of it, *for* we could not do without it, *for* if we were to lose this we should lose that also, and that, and then all! The enumeration is at times highly ludicrous; it reveals a masterly insight into the hidden springs of Romanism. Every article is followed by another, entitled the *Antidote*, a rapid but serious condensation of what can best be said against each of the Romish theses enounced.

Another writing is the *Humble Exhortation to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and to the Diet of Spires, that they would seriously put their hands to the Restoration of the Church*. Calvin had probably little faith in Charles the Fifth, little in the Diet, and little in all that could be done, even with the best intentions, so long as there was no rupture with Romanism; his aim, therefore, was far less to enlighten the emperor or the diet, than to trace a rapid yet complete sketch of the corruptions and errors of the Church. This work was much lauded; nothing so serried or so strong, says Beza, had yet been produced in that age; and this praise was not exaggerated. Let us add that this work is not less remarkable for dignity than for power. Calvin is truly what an advocate of the Gospel ought to be before such an assembly. We can only wish that, like Luther at Worms, he had had the honour of pleading in person.

We cannot bestow equal praise upon his *Scholia on the paternal admonition of Pope Paul III. to the Emperor Charles F.* It is forcible but often undignified. It is true, that in his *admonition*, Paul III. laid himself strangely open, both as pope and man, to the recrimination of the Reform. At the beginning, in order to authorize himself to admonish Charles V., his *dear son*, for being too indulgent towards heresy, he quotes the example of Eli, who was chastised by God for having shut his eyes to the faults of his children. Now, Paul III. had sons—by no means in a figurative sense—true sons, whom he had made princes, and whose morals were far from edifying to their father's States. Calvin seizes upon this fact, and bringing back every question to that of the morals of the popes, he gives way to sallies that ought to have no place in a religious discussion. But whilst regretting that he should not have been more sober, let us imagine what the contemporaries of those wretched popes must have felt at seeing them, in the midst of their licentiousness, blow the pretended apostolic trumpet, and claim in the name of religion, rights so completely forfeited in the eyes of morality.

Two treatises, more especially dogmatic, saw the light in 1543 and 1545. One, against Albert Pighius, is the *defence of the wholesome and orthodox doctrine on the servitude and enfranchisement of the human will*; the other against Pierre Caroli, attacks Arianism, and appeared later in French under the title of *A Treatise on the Divinity of Christ, against the Arians*. Calvin dedicated the first to Melanchthon, whose *Loci Communes* he translated,

about this time, under the title of *The Sum of Divinity, or the Common Places of Melancthon*.

It has been asked how Calvin was led to circulate a book in which several doctrines, especially that of election, are presented in a somewhat different aspect from what they were in his own. He probably was actuated only by the desire to keep up the idea of a fusion between the two halves of the Reformed, and to show himself ready, for this end, to make every possible concession.

The question of the Nicodemites, treated in the two epistles of 1537, furnishes him, in 1545, with matter for a new writing, of which it appears that the second part had been already published in French the year before. This second part, the most recent, is the *Excuse of John Calvin to the Nicodemites who complain of his too great rigour*. Of course, this *Excuse* is not one at all, and the author only asks for mercy by striking all the harder. Woe therefore to those who offer to God only a timid, cowardly heart, only a faith they dare not confess before men! Calvin divides them into four classes:—

I. Those who say they will not cause the weak to offend; as if it were not the greatest of all offences to lie to one's conscience.

II. The *dainty*, "well satisfied to have the Gospel, and to converse about it with the ladies, provided it does not prevent them from living as they please."

III. The *philosophers*, considering and waiting; and this third class is almost entirely composed of men of letters, "not, however, that all men of letters belong.

IV. The *merchants*, the men of money, "who are comfortable in their homes," and "wish not to be disquieted." What truth there is in all this, and how well has the moralist of the sixteenth century depicted the nineteenth!

Let us take note of another very curious treatise,—*a very Useful Hint of the great profit that would accrue to Christendom, if an inventory were made of all holy bodies and relics which are in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, and other realms and countries*. This *great profit* would be to make manifest the absurd frauds arising from the worship of relics.

Calvin begins by a few observations on this worship considered in itself; he recognizes in it one of those things of which St. Paul said, that "all will worship, whatever show of wisdom it may have, is but vanity and foolishness." Now here the very show of wisdom has disappeared; and even if the foolishness were less apparent in the thing, it would still be apparent enough in the abuse. The author does not stop, however, at frauds properly so called: Geneva has not forgotten, amongst other comicalities—the secret of which was discovered when investigation was ventured upon—the famous brain of St. Peter, which turned out to be a piece of pumice stone! But how many relics are there unexamined as yet, and which would give rise to similar dis-

coveries! How many others against whose authenticity no proofs can be adduced, it is true, but in whose favour neither do any exist, and whose spuriousness is morally evident! How many objects, found after seven or eight centuries, of which no one had spoken till then! The hair, the teeth, and the blood of Jesus Christ; the manger, in which he was cradled, and the swaddling-clothes in which they wrapped him; the water-pots of Cana, the table of the Last Supper, the linen clothes from the sepulchre, and at last the cross—the *true cross*—the fragments of which would make “a load for a very large boat,” are some of the specimens given by the author. And what relic is there that has not, like the cross, multiplied in the priests’ hands? Of what size would be the crown of thorns, if all the thorns shown by the Church were put together? Four towns possess the spear-head which pierced the side of Christ; three possess his robe, and that entire. Where do we fail to meet with the head of John the Baptist, whole or in parts? Which of the apostles would not have at least two or three bodies, if all the bones said to be theirs were reunited? And what saint is there of any renown but would offer the same phenomenon?

All this Calvin accompanies with details the most circumstantial; he names the towns, the churches, and the convents. Irony streams from his pen, but never continuously; scarcely has it flowed for a line or two, when he is again reasoning and indignant, and wishing others to reason and to be indignant. “Is it not too great a cheat? Who will believe that? Would it not be folly in me to beat back by argument mockery so evident?” There are very useless repetitions of an objection which is necessarily always the same, and one which is always before your eyes. You would like to tell him so, for you cannot understand how he came not to see that prolonged irony would have been far more poignant and conclusive than this alternation of irony and inferences. But Calvin is a man of inferences, and he cannot leave them any length of time in suspense. This would be art or address, and he does not wish to be clever; it would be diverting, and he would not excite laughter even to gain his argument.

Nevertheless, it would be difficult not to remark how, during that period, his writings resemble in kind and tone those of Luther. Had he, during his stay at Strasburg and his journeyings in Germany, better understood how certain classes are to be moved? Had he inquired of Melancthon the secret of Luther’s popularity? It is still the man of the *Christian Institutes* who reveals himself to us, but in several of his writings of this period under an entirely new aspect. He was the doctor of divines, or at least of the learned and serious: he seems now to wish to become the doctor of the people and of all. But in the masses there exists a certain instinct which makes them discern the true nature of every man who leads them: they know how to remain constant to what is fundamental in them, the primary element of their genius,

and they are subject to the influence of that element, even though for a moment subordinate. Thus, notwithstanding the witty element infused by Calvin into these writings—reminding us rather of Luther—it is certain that he continued to be far more influential by his serious works and the frigid element of his genius. All felt that the true Calvin was there, and it was the true Calvin that all wished to have, even in France, where a lighter cast of writing would seemingly have better answered to certain peculiarities of the national character. Calvin therefore found out that he had done far better things than coming down to the level of the mean,—he had raised them to his own, and this was, in Calvinistic countries, one of the characteristic features of the Reformation.

VII.

In this already long list of his writings during these four years, we have omitted one work which bears rather upon the conflicts of the next period. It is time to say of it a few words, which may serve as an introduction to the history of those conflicts.

Calvin published, in 1544, a writing, entitled. *To the Ministers of the Church of Neuchatel, against the fanatical and furious Sect of the Libertines who call themselves Spirituals*. In an edition of the following year, the *fanatical* sect becomes the *fantastic* sect, an epithet more exact. The *spiritual* Libertines proposed to themselves an end which not only Calvin but every Christian might deem strange and fantastic, viz. the accommodation of materialism and the gospel. For this it was necessary either to materialise the gospel or to spiritualise materialism. They had chosen the latter, and hence the name of *Spirituals* assumed by them. In assuming it, did they knowingly deceive? Here a distinction may be drawn. Those of Geneva evidently did nothing but seize, as a matter of tactics, upon a doctrine which sanctioned their disorderly practices; nothing in them ever indicates that they really endeavoured to reconcile the gospel, in which they had little or no faith, with pantheistic theses, which were too abstract for them to be at the trouble of investigating them philosophically. But the abstract, vague character, of these very theses is a reason for believing in the sincerity of the leaders of the sect—Coppin, Quintin, Perceval, and Pocque—who were specially attacked in this first writing of Calvin's against their ideas. At bottom, they did but give to Anabaptism a more philosophical form, endeavouring, at the same time, to reconnect it better with the gospel, but a gospel philosophized with this intention. Many suffered themselves to be deceived. The queen of Navarre had received Quintin and Pocque as two persecuted Christians; and she thought it very wrong that Calvin should have attacked them. "Madam," he writes to her, "a dog barks

when his master is assailed; and I should be very cowardly if, when I see the truth of God thus assailed, I was dumb and uttered not a word.”

God is everywhere, therefore God is all: such is the starting-point of the system. God is the Great Spirit, but he is also matter, for matter, from all eternity, is his envelope. All the motions of matter are therefore in Him, all the motions of spirits are equally in Him, for all spirits are Himself. There is therefore in the world, in reality, neither good nor evil, neither truth nor falsehood, for all proceeds from the same Being: the Gospel, in this sense, is divine, but only on the same grounds as any other doctrine. All, for the same reason, is common to all; for all is but one body, of which all the parts belong to me, as well as to what is called *another*.

Such is the system in which had taken refuge those who had begun or who began afresh to stand up against the regimen of Calvin. Not that they had preached at the outset all its consequences, or that apparently they would ever preach them. They would permit theft, assassination, and the reign of brute force no more than Calvin; their very corruption was a pledge that they did not intend carrying things so far as to imperil their property or their pleasures. But this system constituted them the sole judges of the applications it would suit them to make of it; it authorized them to shake off any irksome law, whether religious or civil, and, as to dogmas, to believe that only which could agree with such a system of morality. Accordingly, Calvin did not wait for great irregularities to resist ideas so calculated to induce them. The writing against the *Spirituals* belongs to 1544. From that period, and even before, his preaching and conversation were full of the same subject. Some he conjured to return to sounder notions,—others, the well-disposed, to open their eyes to the danger. But the contagion was mighty, and Calvin was to have the sorrow of seeing amongst his adversaries one of those who had most contributed to his return, that same Amied Perrin whom we have seen deputed to visit him and urge his return. To a party, a philosophical system is always a source of strength. Even when little understood by some, and even repulsed, in reality, by others, it unites their efforts, furnishes motives or pretexts, and justifies to the timid all that is dared by the boldest. It is an arsenal whence the able draw in time of need what they have need of, blending or separating, according to circumstances, thought, and action, quitting the vague or sheltering behind it, and setting up their standard or not setting it up,—but always forming an army.

VIII.

The struggle was therefore about to begin afresh, and that for nine years. Luther had just fallen asleep in peace, and Calvin remained at work, condemned to incessant conflicts in the very bosom of the camp, which had been

placed by his own hands in the centre of the universal battle. Nine years he was every moment on the point of being—not conquered, for he was not of those who can be conquered, but—crushed: for nine years it was his to expect every month and every week to be expelled from that city which he was nevertheless continuing to render illustrious and powerful abroad; for nine years he guided Geneva as a vessel on fire which burns the captain's feet and yet obeys him, and which, in combat, is not less formidable and feared.

It is true that there are at bottom apparently two distinct histories, connected only by the personality of the man who played the chief part in both. The Geneva of Calvin and the Geneva of the Libertines are not really the same. The first was that of all serious, moral, and godly men, of all the exiles who sought for shelter under the gospel standard, and of all those who sought for light, to bear it afterwards, through fetters and flames, in every part of Europe; the second was that of a handful of men who understood nothing about the first, who prudently dissembled as to their small number, but who did not even seek to dissemble their irregularities under certain forms of respect for religion and law.

One day, in the large hall of the Cloisters behind the cathedral, Calvin was giving his lecture on divinity. Around his chair hundreds were thronging, and amongst them numbers of future preachers and future martyrs. Suddenly they hear outside laughter, cries, and a great clamour. This proceeds from fifteen or twenty Libertines, who, out of hatred to Calvin, are giving a specimen of their manners, and of what they call liberty.

Such is the picture of the two Genevas. One of the two must of necessity perish.

The history of the one that fell would call upon us to relate many passages of a like nature, impieties great and small, aggravated offences against morality, and others which, though lighter, were aggravated by their intention; serious revolts, puerile revolts; all the restless mobility of a party which is really devoid of principles, and which, even when it might be in the right, acts so as to be in the wrong. In our days, some have affected to see in the Libertines only political Liberals, claiming civil liberty in opposition to the government, and religious liberty in opposition to the Consistory and to Calvin. This is to be ignorant of all the details of the struggle, and to accord to the Libertines the ideas of the most prudent and sincere Liberals of the nineteenth century. It is an anachronism in the first place, for even if honest and moderate, the Libertines could not have been such. But were they honest and moderate? That is the question; and it is this which their history will not permit us to maintain.

The struggle began, in 1546, on account of Benoite Ameaux, a woman who was cited before the Consistory "for several monstrous propositions." These propositions, more *monstrous*, indeed, in the mouth of a woman than in another, were pure Anabaptism. She only repeated what she had been taught by her husband, Pierre Ameaux, a maker of playing cards, who detested Calvin, who had prohibited cards; he detested him still more when they condemned his wife to a few days' imprisonment, and designated himself as the primary cause of the offence. One evening, when heated by wine, he gave free scope to his anger. "Calvin was but a new bishop, worse than the former ones; the magistrates who supported him were traitors. The true religion was that of Pierre Ameaux and his friends; that of Calvin was only deceit and tyranny." The Consistory had him imprisoned, and the Council condemned him to appear at the Hotel de Ville, to ask pardon of God and of the court. But Calvin knew that a part of the Council had wished for greater severity, and forthwith, because he deemed the vote of the majority a dangerous weakness, refused to accept for religion and the Church the imperfect satisfaction which was offered. If the fault of Ameaux appeared so slight to the Council, it must be because the Council considered that Calvin and his colleagues had preached, as Ameaux said, a false doctrine; it only remained, therefore, to bring the pastors to judgment, and the pastors declared, by Calvin's mouth, that they demanded it. This was going very far; it was also establishing a very dangerous precedent. The Two Hundred, to whom the Council had referred the matter, refused to adopt such a course, and after much hesitation, condemned Pierre Ameaux to perform the *amende honorable*, with a torch in his hand. The irritation of the party was great, and, it must be owned, not unfounded; Calvin had evidently constrained the Two Hundred. But the government showed itself decided not to tolerate any irregularities. Some Libertines, a few days after, disturbed Calvin's preaching by entering the church very noisily; so a gibbet was raised in the Place St Gervais, but happily it did service for no one. The warning and the firmness had sufficed.

Blood was to flow the following year.

Amongst the principal Libertines was Jacques Gruet, formerly a canon. After having for a while professed the grave and philosophical unbelief of Quintin, he had thrown off the mask; his confidential converse breathed the grossest infidelity, the most complete contempt of Christianity, of Christ, and of every sort of faith. It had long been known, but proofs were wanting.

One day, in the pulpit of St. Peter's, a note was found full of abuse against Calvin and his colleagues. Suspicion fell upon Gruet, who had been seen loitering about the cathedral. He was arrested. A domiciliary visit led to the discovery of blasphemous writings, and, what was more, supplied a clue to

a correspondence tending to betray Geneva to the duke. He was tried, condemned, and beheaded.

It is unjustly, therefore, that his condemnation has been represented as a monstrous punishment for the note to Calvin. The note was only the occasion, and, after the discoveries which were made, if Gruet had not been condemned as a blasphemer for his writings, he would have been condemned as a traitor for his correspondence. The sentence mentions the two crimes, and considers them both as worthy of death. We shall recur, when treating of Servetus, to this jurisprudence, the sad inheritance of the Romish ages; but it is right to begin by clearing Calvin from the unjust, absurd reproach of having demanded the blood of a man for a petty personal affront,—for a jest,—for Gruet’s note, written in the Savoyard patois, was less an affront than an unseemly piece of nonsense.

About this time Amied Perrin, the former friend of Calvin, began to play his pitiful part.

His wife was the daughter of François Favre, formerly a brave soldier and an honourable citizen, but now, says Bonivard, “old, rich, and stupified by vice.” She was brought before the Consistory on account of a ball given in contempt of the Ordinances, at which, however, one of the syndics, Amblard Corne, had been present. The syndic listened to the remonstrances of Calvin, and even declared it to be well that the great should be chastised like the small. The woman would listen to nothing, and poured forth a torrent of abuse. She was therefore condemned to a few days’ imprisonment. Her father, shortly after, was also imprisoned, but for debauchery and adultery. Perrin, who had likewise been at the ball, had left the town in order not to appear before the Consistory. Calvin wrote to him, entreating him, in the name of their old friendship, to sacrifice his pride to the common weal, and to imitate the submission of the syndic. Perrin was touched, and returned to Geneva, where he endured without resistance a short imprisonment, and seemed reconciled to Calvin. This was in May 1546.

In February 1547 Favre was summoned again for divers acts of debauchery. His friends, and all the party, then began to assert that the right of excommunicating belonged to the Council; the Council, which was disposed, like all governments, to accept every increase of power, did not repel the idea. This was to subvert the whole structure of Calvin, and yet it cannot be denied that the structure itself contained this element of ruin. Constantly called upon by the Consistory to punish religious misdemeanours with severity, the Council, in fact, pronounced final judgment, since without it, the sentence was a dead letter; why not, therefore, if it thought proper, pronounce judgment before the Consistory, without the Consistory? By agitating this idea, the Libertines evidently designed one thing only—to take from the Consistory the most important of its rights; they yielded that right to the

government, in the hope only that it would not be made use of, and that the mainspring of the Calvinian discipline would remain indefinitely relaxed. Calvin, therefore, needed all his energy to arrest the Council on this declivity. He did not, however, obtain a formal decision in favour of the Consistorial authority; it was recognised but indirectly, and even under the form of a rebuke. The Consistory was prayed, for the future, to be less hasty in demanding the intervention of the Council. Easter was at hand, and a reconciliation seemed at once desirable and feasible. "It is advised," says the register, "that the difference and hatred which exists between the ministers and Captain Perrin, his wife, and other relatives of the said Favre, should be settled in an amicable manner; nevertheless, let the said Favre be obedient to God and the law, as the other citizens, and lead the best life he can." The recommendation is amusing in its simplicity, and Calvin probably had to do himself a little violence to subscribe a resolution which supposed a quarrel between equals, a simple difference, when there had been a condemnation by the Consistory—the constituted authority. But Calvin thought it right to yield; and the register proves that the reconciliation took place before the Consistory, when the ministers uttered to Perrin and his friends, "not harsh things, but good and amicable remonstrances."

In the month of June, Perrin was sent to France to negotiate a treaty of commerce. During his absence his wife gave fresh cause of complaint; and on his return in September, he found her exiled with her father at Pregny, close to Geneva, but on Bernese territory. Braving alike Council and Consistory, he resolved to fetch her back; and, entering the Council hall in a fury, and to the interruption of the sittings he exclaimed, that he had rendered services enough for them not to suffer his wife to be punished or his relations either.

This was not the first time that he or his relatives had claimed impunity, to the subversion alike of republican and religious equality. Calvin, in a letter to Farel, relates to us one of these sad scenes. "If you will decidedly not bear the yoke of Christ," he had said to them, "build for yourselves somewhere a town where you may live to your fancy; but, so long as you are here, you will not escape the laws; and if there were in your dwelling as many diadems as heads, *God knows how to retain the mastery.*" And such, all through these wretched debates, was his constant idea. Whether speaking face to face with the rebels, or expressing to a friend his private thoughts, it is always from the elevation of his faith, and a lofty sense of his task, that he judges the men who throw obstacles in his path. In vain are they formidable as men; Calvin sees them and will see them to the last, in all their foolish littleness; and it will be almost with a jest, that one so little addicted to pleasantries as he is, will speak of their hatred. "They increase abroad the bickerings we have had here. At Lyons they have given me out for dead, in more than twenty ways.

True it is that Satan has here matches enough, but the flame goes out like that of tow. As to Perrin's abuse, it weighs no more with me than his personal importance, which is just a little less than a feather." Thus he wrote about the same time to M. de Falais. But he had another and a more elevated reason for not complaining too much of the life that the Libertines led him. He knows, he says, what is "the condition of the servants of God," who are made for suffering: and "we have hitherto," adds he, "had too easy a bargain."

Perrin appealed then once more to his services; but, besides the illegality of the action, his services proved to be at this moment rather questionable. He returned from France with a favourable treaty; but a rumour was abroad of very singular parleys between him and Cardinal Du Bellay. Nothing less had been talked of than that a troop of horse should be quartered at Geneva, under Perrin's command, for the defence of the city, and, if need be, of the French territory in the neighbourhood. This was to betray Geneva to France. Perrin was therefore arrested as a traitor. No positive proof could be found; and the conviction was besides entertained that he had been less guilty than presumptuous, thoughtless, and, above all, ill-advised. He was acquitted, but deprived of his office of captain-general—an office of the greatest trust, which gave him, in case of war, the command of the troops for which he was no longer fit.

The Libertines were loud in their outcries; others, in great numbers, thought the punishment too mild. The Councils were divided, and the city was a prey to the most violent agitation. On the 12th of December the pastors repaired to the Hotel de Ville, to show that "a great deal of insolence, debauchery, dissoluteness, and hatred was prevalent, to the ruin of the State." On the 16th, as the Council of Two-Hundred was beginning to sit for the purpose of discussing the measures to be taken, a dispute arose between a few members, and it soon became general, and such menaces were uttered against the pastors, especially against Calvin, that some of their friends ran to beg them not to come. They were at St. Peter's. Calvin left his colleagues and went alone to the Hotel de Ville, and entered the hall alone. The cries were redoubled, and swords were drawn. Calvin advances into the midst, cool and impassive, and all are silent. "He knows," he says, "that he is the primary cause of all these discords. If they will have blood, let them shed his." The silence increases, and he continues: "If they decidedly wish him to be exiled, he will exile himself. If they wish to try once more to save Geneva without the gospel, let them try." At this challenge, seconded by all the recollections of the disorder that had reigned during Calvin's exile, several of the most irritated began to reflect. This man, whom they can break but not bend, is the centre and nucleus of the State, at home; and abroad he is the State itself which is personified in him, and great through him. And has he not just now shown himself greater than ever? Who could be ashamed of

yielding to such a man? They relent, and oblivion of the past is voted. Three days after, Calvin reminds them that Christmas is drawing near, and that they ought to be able to have communion together. As for himself he is desirous of holding out his hand to Perrin. On his part, Perrin declares that he wishes ill to no one, and that he is ready to live in peace. Perrin was sincere at that moment, and so probably were many of his party. But, while their principles remain antagonistic, men cannot long continue friends.

X.

The calm was therefore only on the surface.

A year after the facts we have related,—and the whole year, 1548, was very far from passing peaceably,—we behold Calvin again before the Council. He complains that the citizens, and, among others, Amied Perrin, abstain from the Sacrament; he asks if that was what had been promised. Is it of him that those citizens complain? If he, in his turn, were to enumerate his grievances, of a truth there would be no lack of them. The Libertines load him with contumely. Some of them call their dogs by his name. When he passes through the streets some hiss, and others cry *Calvin* in such a manner as to make it sound like *Cain*. The heads of the party do not these things themselves, but they provoke them, and, at any rate, they do nothing to dissuade their friends from such a course. He is, however, desirous of asking once more for a reconciliation, that the Christmas Communion may not be profaned by animosities, nor deserted on account of grudges. The syndics thank him, and promise to do their best. A month afterwards, the Libertines had so well manoeuvred that Perrin was first-syndic.

All seemed lost; Calvin alone understood that it was perhaps a happy event, and, seeing his colleagues profoundly discouraged, he contrived to raise them by the voice of those very magistrates from whom, it seemed, they had everything to fear. How did he set to work? Did he find means of reclaiming Perrin for a time? Did the Libertines, now in authority, pique themselves on showing that they also could govern and enforce order? Had the majority of the Council, in spite of the new elections, remained better disposed than was imagined? Be that as it may, the proclamation of the 18th of January 1549 is one of the most Christian—the most Christian, perhaps—which had yet been made. Considering “the great woes which are over all the earth, and which are certain proofs of the wrath of God against mankind;” considering, on the other hand, “that we must give account to him of the people he has committed to our charge,” so that their blood would be required of us “if God, by our fault and negligence, were dishonoured and His holy ordinances trampled under foot,” desirous, in short, of following the example of the good kings of the old Church, and also of the Christian princes, lords,

and magistrates who have been guided by the Word of God," we declare "to all our subjects aforesaid, that we are greatly concerned that the holy admonitions which have been addressed to them by the Word of God, which is daily preached to them, have not been better observed, as was fitting." One of the causes of this evil is "that the ministers of God's Word *have been negligent, and have not done their duty* in admonishing and reproving." A strange reproach! If this proclamation, as is thought, was the work of Calvin, it was a masterly stroke to recommend severity towards the pastors by those who had so often reproached them for it. A long enumeration follows of the disorders, on which the Council declares its "will" is to keep a sharp look out. Let all, therefore, whether great or small, adopt a Christian way of living. "Let fathers of families be diligent in watching over children and servants;" let "our officers be vigilant in having our ordinances observed, without indulging either great or small; and let the preachers *make it their duty to be more careful and ardent than they have been in teaching, admonishing, and reproving vice properly.*" The reproach is, therefore, now changed into a formal order to spare nobody in future.

Sincere or not, the zeal of the Council bore fruit. The clergy took courage. Calvin, in a letter to Viret, states that all goes on tolerably well in "spite," he says, "of our adversaries' efforts." He indulged himself, therefore, in no illusion, and was perfectly sensible that the old leaven was still there.

This state of comparative calm and order brought out the more prominently the deplorable folly of a man who had also rendered some service formerly, and who had even during a time of pestilence nobly devoted himself. Raoul Monnet, not satisfied with leading a disorderly life, had drawn, or caused to be drawn, a series of licentious prints,—scenes from Aretini, only too well rendered,—and Biblical scenes, basely burlesqued. He called this collection his New Testament, carried it everywhere with him, and took especial pleasure in exhibiting it to young men. He was tried and condemned to death. The Libertines did not attempt to save him, whether because the crime appeared too great for them to implicate themselves in it, or, as Bonivard relates, because Monnet had brought profligacy and shame into more than one of their homes. His death was not, therefore, at least visibly, a cause of irritation.

But there remained an abundance of other causes, and the most foolish of them combined with the most serious. The ordinances forbade the giving to children, at their baptism, certain names to which, in the Romish times, a superstitious meaning had been attached. *Claude* promised a long life; *Balthazar* good health, &c. Now, some of the Libertines bore these names—*Claude* Genève, for instance, and *Balthazar* Sept They persisted in giving them to the children whose sponsors they were; the clergy persisted in refusing, and the Council, unless it openly violated the ordinance, was obliged to

decide in favour of the clergy. Then the Libertines complained that they were deprived of the right of sponsorship, a right which they suddenly began to esteem infinitely precious.

It was the same with the right of taking the Sacrament; and this leads us to one of the most serious incidents of this long struggle.

Berthelier, the son of the glorious political martyr of 1521, scarcely ever remembered his father except as a title to impunity. Cited several times before the Consistory, he had appeared, only to laugh or scoff; and his ridicule had been less that of a man than of an ill-bred school-boy. It was he who, in 1553, stirred up afresh the great question of excommunication, which was still pending, but hushed; he deemed it a propitious moment for inducing the Council to seize upon a right which, till then, had been left to the Consistory, but which, as we have seen, was contested, and contestable, if there was the least ill-will against that body.

Berthelier, who had been excommunicated for divers scandals a few days before the September Communion, appealed to the Council; and the Council, overruled by the friends of Berthelier, set aside the sentence, declaring that if, in his conscience, he thought he could communicate, he was free to do so. According to our notions at the present day, nothing could be better: we would have the sinner warned, and then leave him to judge for himself what he ought or ought not to do. In 1553, at Geneva, it was a violation both of the letter and the spirit of the Ordinances, the laws of the State; it was, moreover, a deplorable retrogression under the pressure of vice and infidelity. No one could believe or make others believe that the question was to protect an upright conscience against a timorous intolerance; and the Council was granting to the profligate, the mischief-maker, and the seditious, an authorization to receive the Communion in spite of the law. Calvin declared, therefore, that he should not submit, and that while he lived, Berthelier should not receive the Sacrament. The Council, while it maintained its decision, arranged that Berthelier should be privately begged not to appear at church. Berthelier made no promises, and the report was spread that he would be at St. Peter's on the morrow, accompanied by a crowd of friends.

On the morrow, the 3d of September, at the customary hour, Calvin ascended the pulpit. He perceived in the audience the insolent group of Libertines, perhaps already ill at ease because they felt themselves isolated in the midst of the crowded congregation, and with Calvin there before them. But he did not seem to see them. As calm as ever, externally at least, he preached, like Farel in 1538, upon the state of mind with which the Lord's Table ought to be approached. Then he added—As for me, so long as God shall leave me here, since he hath 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 dear and well known. . . . As we are to receive the Lord's

Supper, if any one to whom it has been interdicted by the Consistory should seek to intrude himself at this Table, I would certainly show myself as long as I live, such as I ought to be.”

When the Liturgies were concluded, he came down from the pulpit and blessed the bread and wine. The Libertines rose and prepared to approach. Then, covering the sacred symbols with his hands, he exclaimed—“You may cut these hands and crush these limbs: my blood is yours—shed it. But you shall never force me to give holy things to the profane!” At this action and voice, the *profane* paused. They looked at each other—they looked around. An indignant murmur circulated among the crowd, and, but for the sacredness of the spot, the murmur would have become an outcry. The voice of the people was for Calvin. The Libertines hesitated for a moment longer, and then fell back. The crowd opened a passage for their retreat, and the Sacrament was administered to the believers, who were still agitated, but proud of their pastor and rejoicing in his victory.

He expected to be banished, and openly said so in his afternoon sermon. “It was perhaps for the last time,” he said, “that he was speaking to the people of Geneva. Firmly resolved to do nothing that is not according to the will of God, he will nevertheless stay as long as he can make his voice heard; but if he be compelled to hold his peace, he will depart.” He had taken for his text the fine passage of St. Paul’s farewell to the Ephesians. He repeated, in the midst of his weeping congregation, the apostle’s words: “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace,” and went home to await the decree of exile.

The decree did not come, and he soon perceived that, on the contrary, his position was improved. Men always gain by courage, and he had besides obtained that the Libertines should be confronted with the people—the true people—who were already weary of their pretensions, their revolts, and of their contempt for all that was not themselves. This separation between the Libertines and the people was about to become rapidly more decided. It became more and more manifest that their numbers were small, that they were less a party than a faction, and that, in spite of the honoured Genevese names borne by a few, the Genevese nation was elsewhere.

Farel also had his triumph. He had come from Neuchâtel to replace Calvin, and also, it must be said, to be present at the death of Servetus, for the trial of Servetus, which began in August, was mixed up with all that we have been narrating. In one of his sermons he did not spare the Libertines, even calling them Atheists—whether alluding to the Pantheism of a few, or merely to their life without God and without faith. The Libertines immediately made an outcry, and the Council intimated to Farel, who had already returned to his church, that he must come and answer to that whereof he was accused. The Neuchâtel magistrates wished to keep him back. He set off, however,

and arrived at Geneva. Scarcely had he entered the city when he was recognised by some of the Libertines, who insulted him, and talked of throwing him into the Rhône. "Just so," said he to them, "did the priests and Papists clamour twenty years ago!" Happily, he was not the only one who remembered what he had then done for Geneva. People came thronging to the rescue; the Libertines were dispersed, and a numerous train accompanied him to Calvin's abode. The day after the morrow—the Council having summoned him—great numbers of citizens surrounded the Hotel de Ville, and a few, in the name of all, demanded an audience. They came, we are told by the register of the Company of Pastors, "to oppose those who had made complaint of Master Farel." No head of a family, said they, had taken part in those complaints, and, as for them, they esteemed Farel a good and true servant of God. "Whereupon it was ordered," continues the same register, "that the said Master Farel should be acknowledged a true pastor, as he had ever been, and it was declared that he had faithfully preached and discharged his office. He was also called *Father* by several, as having begotten them to our Lord, and as the first who organised the Church here. All this was a great comfort to the children of God and confusion to the wicked." Calvin's authority increased all the more. Near or absent, in bad times and in good, he had never distinguished his own cause from that of his old colleague. The Libertines had attacked him in Farel, and he, therefore, having been already a conqueror in September, conquered anew, in November, with Farel.

XI.

He could, consequently, without risk of appearing weak, lend himself to the fresh efforts which the Council was going to make to put an end to divisions. It seemed for a moment—in January 1554—as if this end was already attained. Berthelier and his party had apparently relented a little. It was decided once more that "byegones should be byegones,"¹ and that for the future there should be "good and firm union amongst all." But Berthelier, when entreated by the Council to recognise at least that there had been serious causes of complaint against him, positively refused. Then, as at a signal given, all began again—the uproar, the orgies, and the irregularities of every kind which had become inseparably allied with the movements of this wretched party. The leaders discussed the subject of excommunication, and at times they might have been taken for serious people; the rest were in taverns singing impious songs,—and what they sang aloud they knew was sung softly by their chiefs. Some of the more boisterous were imprisoned, but their friends obtained leave to visit them, and the prison became the scene of scandalous revelling. This was put a stop to. At last, in October, upon new

¹ *Tout serait mis sous les pieds.*

entreaties, Berthelier consented to make peace; and, three months afterwards, in January, Calvin obtained from the Councils a declaration of the rights of the Consistory.

But Berthelier had yielded for a moment, only the better to conceal his projects and those of the party. Petty revolts had come to nothing, so they determined on getting up one on a large scale.

The pretext was ready, and even tolerably specious. The ever-increasing majority which stood out against the Libertines, counted in its ranks many new-comers, French or Italians. The Libertines were nearly all old Genevese. Was it natural—was it just—that the new-comers should lay down the law to the children of the land?

Some writers of our day have put the question in the same terms. Does history authorise them to do it? We have already rectified one of their errors—that of considering the Libertines as men of principle, true patriots, and true friends of Genevese freedom. Though the subject and limits of this work have compelled us to omit many things, those which we have already related suffice, we think, abundantly to prove the contrary.

Here another error encounters us. The Libertines were old Genevese, it is true; but, in the first place, were they the majority of the nation? Everything indicates rather that they were, especially towards the end, but few, and very few; and it is easy to understand that their conduct had alienated from them many who had at first been seduced by the liberal ideas of which they pretended to be the apostles. The refugees came, therefore, to the succour of a real majority, which, though considerable, was harassed by a turbulent and unbridled minority. This is, however, a merely secondary consideration; the true question is now to be stated.

Geneva must necessarily either resign herself to be nothing, or to be—and that with ever-growing completeness—what the Reformation had made her. We have seen this already. A Geneva given up to the Libertines, would have been a Geneva soon reconquered by her former Romish masters, or a Geneva voluntarily led back to Rome by corruption and anarchy. It is not without reason that Romish writers are so indulgent to the Libertines, and so indignant at the severity of Calvin. What would they not have said, on the other side, if Calvin had tolerated such disorders? What reflections would have been made upon the Reformation which opened the door to every vice! But Calvin threw himself courageously into the breach. Calvin saved Geneva and the Reformation, and therefore Calvin was a despot and a tyrant, and the Libertines his victims. It is true that these same writers do not, for all this, abandon their other thesis—that the Reformation and disorder necessarily went hand in hand. The refugees, according to them, were the scum of Europe; and the indulgence that Calvin would not show the Libertines, he reserved for these men of bad character who come in aid of his despotism.

Some such there were indeed, as in every emigration there will be; but how do we know the fact? Precisely from the complaints of Calvin, and his ardour in freeing Geneva from their presence. Never was there a man less open to the accusation of having divers weights and divers measures.

If, then, the true citizen of a country is not he who is born in that country, but the man who, whether a citizen by birth or not, understands the conditions of its national existence and grandeur, and therefore labours and combats, perseveres, loves, and devotes himself—certainly the refugees were citizens of Geneva, and Geneva had none better. Farel was not legally a citizen, though the true representatives of Geneva, the true friends of the Church and of the country had just saluted him with the name of father; neither was Calvin, the greatest of all, for he only received the title of citizen in 1559, five years before his death. What matter! Before they were recognised as such by the laws of the land, they were citizens in virtue of another law—the gospel, which was also the law of the land, and the supreme law. Here was the bond of union and the unity. History offers, perhaps, no example of so rapid and so complete an absorption of nationalities and of character. Men came to Geneva, not only as to a city of refuge, but as to their native land, to which they would do homage by all they had endured in other countries for the same cause.

Such were the men whom the Libertines were indignant to see multiplying in Geneva. They saw in them only the agents of Calvin; they understood nothing of the pious heroism which had made them quit castles and estates to become the simple subjects of a petty Republic, and to submit to those stern Ordinances which the citizens themselves refused. They lavished upon them raillery and insult. “They shamefully outrage,” Calvin writes in November 1553, “the exiles of Christ.” Those who had saved no part of their fortune, were reproached by the Libertines for eating the bread of hospitality; or, if they gained their livelihood by labour, the Libertines endeavoured to stir up against them the Genevese workmen and traders. Those of them who had brought their money with them were represented as coming to buy over or to betray the Republic. In April 1553, Amied Perrin had demanded that their weapons should be taken away, with the exception of their swords, which they were not to wear in public. In July 1554, he demanded that even their swords should be taken away. They had formed, he said, the project of delivering Geneva up to the King of France, and Henry II. himself had revealed the plot in a letter to the Council of Berne. The refugees were stirred up. The accusation was not only false but absurd. To deliver up Geneva to that Henry II. who was bathing himself in the blood of their brethren, and to that Queen Catherine who had brought with her into France all the perfidy and cruelty of the courts of her native land! Perrin was called upon to produce his proofs. The syndic Lambert, the brother of the martyr of Chambery,

reminded him, before the Council of the Two Hundred, that he had been less scrupulous, seven years before, when he had wished to lodge in the city two hundred horsemen in the pay of the King of France. He concluded that Geneva should continue to offer abundant hospitality to the exiles, and that the freedom of the city should be granted to many more than heretofore, since only eighty had received it within the last five years, and Geneva had everything to gain by enriching herself with such citizens.

About sixty were received citizens during the early part of 1555, and, could syndic Lambert have returned to the world a century later, he would have recognised with joy, amongst the most illustrious and honourable names of Geneva, a large proportion of those sixty, or of the preceding eighty. On the 13th of May, the Libertines, by the instrumentality of two of their party, complained of these numerous admissions, but the Council did not listen to them. On the 15th and 16th there were fresh complaints. The people, they said, might well at last bestir themselves. The Council ordered an inquiry.

The Libertines did not await the result.

On the 18th of May, in the evening, Berthelier, Perrin, and two other heads of the party, met in a tavern with a certain number of "brawling companions," as Bonivard says. "After their tongue," he continues, "had performed its part, wine provoked their feet and hands to do their part." Perrin, however, had not yet made up his mind. They excited and flattered him, saying that the people reckoned upon him, and that it was he whom they expected to see at the head of the movement. He yielded, and started, and soon the revolt was in full career.

It was not for long. The insurgents found nowhere the support which they had hoped for. In vain did they have it proclaimed that the refugees were going to sack the town; the burghers stirred not; or, if they did, it was to join the ranks of the friends of order. There were, however, a few murderous encounters, but nowhere any approach to the success of the revolt. The troops swept down all that offered resistance, and took all that they could take, and then all was over.

The Libertines seemed to have endeavoured beforehand to merit no indulgence, and they met with none. Several heads fell beneath the axe. Amongst others, that of a brother of Berthelier. Perrin's would also have fallen, had he not succeeded in escaping. Others also had fled, and the rest were banished.

It is always painful to register executions; we should prefer having only to chronicle amnesties and pardons. But could Geneva in 1555 realize our ideal? Even had the laws and manners of the times permitted her to be clement, could she have been so in this instance, without condemning herself to pass anew through all the woes of the last nine years? The Libertines had

done everything to make it impossible for her to do anything but crush them, if she did not wish to perish after a long agony, by their system and their disorders.

For the rest, the survivors gave men but little cause to regret the dead. Taking refuge on the Bernese territory, and almost at the gates of Geneva, more than once their vengeance fell upon some inoffensive citizen; and it became necessary to request that Berne should oblige them to establish themselves farther off. They then excited the Bernese government to solicit their return, and next openly to insist upon it, making itself the judge between Geneva and the exiles. After this, the republic had only to resign itself to be the vassal and then the subject of Berne. To avert the storm, much firmness and also much prudence were requisite; for Berne was mighty, and had no affection for Geneva. It was Calvin who conducted the negotiation. Berne gave up her encroaching pretensions; and the Libertines, having no more to hope from that quarter, sought elsewhere. They turned everything to account against Geneva. In 1563, the magistrates were informed that the Duke of Savoy was preparing a sudden attack on Geneva, and there was certain proof that it was the banished Libertines who had counselled and arranged the business. They had received money from the duke; they had reserved for themselves the pillage of a certain number of houses; and, if the enterprise failed, as they would no longer be able to remain upon the territory of the Bernese,—the allies of Geneva,—they were to receive estates in Savoy. The city was immediately put in a state of defence, and was not attacked, and the Libertines only gained the infamy of having sold themselves to the two great enemies of their native land,—the Duke of Savoy and the Pope. Calvin requested the Council to order a fast and thanksgiving. The fast was held, and the nation was unanimous in thanking God for this new deliverance. Thirty-nine years later, in the famous affair of the *Escalade*, which was so nearly the grave of Geneva, traces were still found of this wretched party, which was ever ready to make common cause with the enemies of Geneva and of the Reformation. We know the bitterness which the vexations of exile may produce, even in a noble soul, and in one which has been fostered in the purest patriotism: the Libertines would not have been the first whom this bitterness had brought to hate the country once so loved.

But honestly, does the history of their former conduct authorize us to rank them amongst the honourable banished? And even if their cause had been what they pretended, what had they done as men, which did not show them incapable of understanding it, and unworthy to support it?

XII.

But to return. We must not, for the present, go beyond the exile of the Libertines in May 1555. This closes, in the life of Calvin, the new period of which we saw the commencement in 1546. We have gone over the ground as respects politics; let us now resume it as respects religion, which, unhappily, bordered much too closely upon the former.

There is a remark, which it is scarcely possible not to make at each new detail of the protracted struggle which we have been sketching. What must have been the state of mind and soul of a man involved in that whirlwind, shattered by all those shocks, and perpetually implicated in the pettiest, as well as in the greatest matters? This last point is especially noteworthy. In great contests, it is easy enough to remain calm and master of oneself;—the very importance of the struggle, and the lofty part you perform, help you to sustain yourself with proper dignity. But to have at once the conduct of the war and the care of the most paltry details,—to combat the lion, and to be assailed, at the same time, by swarms of flies, is enough to sour and exasperate the mildest of men, how much more, then, one by nature irritable and arden. Moreover, in this world, everything has a tendency to wear out, even the fortitude of a Calvin. The same man whom we saw, in the early part of the struggle, so heartily despising the fury of his adversaries, we shall see, a few years later, experience brief but painful moments of exhaustion. “It were better for me,” he wrote to Wolff in 1555, “to be burned once for all by the papist, than to be thus incessantly tortured by these people. . . . Only one thing supports me in this hard service; it is that death will soon come and give me my discharge.” Choose, then, any one day in the course of these nine years, and go to Geneva to see Calvin. You are come for the Reformer, for the man whose name fills Europe, and you will certainly find him; but do you know what you will also find? A man who is hunted by the most ignoble vexations, and whom some annoy at their pleasure by the grossest petty insults. Accompany him through the streets, and you will hear the hisses of which he has spoken to you. The dog which has just run between his legs is called back by his master crying out, “*Calvin!*” The animal obeys, for that is his name. While he is crossing the bridge, he is almost thrown down by three worthless fellows, who pretend not to see him, just as Perrin’s wife, when riding out of town on horseback yesterday, knocked down another pastor, who narrowly escaped with his life. Walk some evening under his window, and it will be a wonder if you do not meet some drunken Libertine, bawling out some insult, or singing some infamous ditty. Last Thursday, in the Consistory, he had to endure the sarcasms of some youth, or man, or woman, or girl, who will indeed be sent to prison, but who has sworn to do the same again. Next Thursday he will hear as bad, if not worse. And all this is but the mere accompaniment of the most serious anxieties at home and abroad,—the meditations of the writer,—the care of immense correspondence,—the

fatigues of the pastor and the preacher, —the sufferings, in short, and the agony of the sick man; for we know what was endured physically by that head so worn with travail. The bare thought of it all brings on a sensation of giddiness; yet it must be thought of if we would not be unjust towards him whose irritated nerves caused him more than once to write or to do what we should have preferred he had neither written nor done.

Add, finally, the painful isolation in which he was left by his wife's death in 1549.

We quitted her just as she had lost the third and last of the children she bore him. Her health, which was always delicate, was shattered by these repeated blows, and her last years were passed in a state of languor and suffering, of which the melancholy expression may be traced in the Reformer's letters. Now he takes leave of Madame de Falais in the name of his wife, "who is lying sick in bed;" now he offers her the salutations of "a woman raised up again to life." Elsewhere, he asks for the prayers of his friends. "Salute thy wife," he writes to Viret, "mine is her sad companion in the languors of sickness. I dread a fatal termination. But have we not enough with the many evils which menace us at present? The Lord will perhaps show us a more favourable countenance." The learned physician, Benoit Textor, multiplied the counsels of his solicitude at Idelette's bedside; but the succours of his art were unavailing; and the Reformer, who has been a witness of the care lavished by him on his helpmate, will piously remember it one day, by dedicating to Textor his Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.

In the early part of April 1549, Idelette's condition became worse. Calvin's friends, Beza, Hotman, Des Gallars, and Laurent de Normandie, foreseeing the bereavement at hand, hastened to him. Detached from the world, which she had learned "to use as not abusing it," Idelette was no longer held to earth except by her solicitude as to the fate of her children by her first husband. But either because of some delicate scruple, or of her eminent faith, she kept silence as to her maternal anxiety. A female friend pressing her to speak on the subject to her husband: "Why should I?" she answered. "That which is important, is, that they should be brought up aright . . . If they are virtuous, they will find in him a father; and if they were not, why should I have commended them to him?" In a last conversation, Calvin, anticipating her secret thoughts, promised her to treat them as his own children. "I have already commended them to God," she said.—"But that," he replied, "does not prevent my taking care of them likewise."—"I know well," she rejoined, "that thou wilt not abandon those whom I have confided to the Lord." Tranquil on this subject, she beheld death approach with serenity. The fortitude of her soul never faltered in the midst of her sufferings, which were intermingled with continued swoons. In default of words, her look, her gestures,

and her countenance expressed the faith which sustained her to the last. On the morning of the 6th of April, the minister Bourgoïn addressed her with pious exhortations. She showed her interest in them by ejaculations which were interrupted but earnest, and seemed like the anticipations of a flight to heaven. "O glorious resurrection! . . . O God of Abraham and of our fathers!" . . . "At seven o'clock, she had another fainting fit, and feeling that her voice was about to fail her, she said: "Pray, my friends, pray for me!" Calvin drew near, and by her looks she expressed her joy. With troubled accents, he spoke to her of the grace of Christ, of the earthly pilgrimage, and of the certainty of a blessed eternity, and ended by a fervent prayer. She followed these words in spirit and showed herself attentive to the holy doctrine. Towards nine o'clock she expired, but so peacefully that it was not known at first, whether she was asleep, or had ceased to breathe.

Such is the narrative transmitted by Calvin himself to Farel and Viret, and terminated by a sad recurrence to himself, now condemned to the solitariness of a widower's life. "I have lost," he says to Viret, "the excellent companion of my life, who would never have quitted me, either in exile, in misery or in death. She was a precious help to me, and never occupied with self. . . . I repress my grief as much as I can; my friends do their duty; they and I, however, make but little way. Thou knowest the tenderness of my heart, not to say its weakness. I should succumb if I did not make great efforts to conquer my affliction." The letter to Farel is not less touching. "Adieu, then, dear and well-beloved brother; may God guide thee by his Spirit, and help me in my trial. I should not have resisted this blow, had he not stretched out his hand to me from heaven. It is he who raiseth up the downcast heart, and who confirmeth the feeble knees." Calvin, however, had the strength to fulfil all the duties of his ministry; and his fortitude, in the midst of his tears, excited the admiration of his friends. But the remembrance of her whom he had lost was never effaced from his heart; though still young, he never formed other ties, and he never pronounced the name of Idelette but with profound regard for her virtues, and with tender respect for her memory.

Never was homage more legitimate—never were regrets more deserved. In losing Idelette de Bure, Calvin not only lost the companion of his ministry and life—he also lost a virtue. If the mission of the Christian woman is to console and bless, to remind men of the rights of charity—too much neglected in ages of revolution—none were worthier than Idelette to carry out this mission at the Reformer's side. Often sick and morose, and soured by the resistance of men and things which bend but slowly to the designs of genius, Calvin lost too early those domestic affections for which he was so well calculated, and of which he experienced the salutary influence only for nine years. Many a time, doubtless, during those years of heroic conflict and of secret despondency, of which his correspondence reproduces the phases,

he regained his calmness by the side of the courageous and gentle woman who made no compromise with duty. Many a time, perhaps, he was tempered and softened by one of those words which come from the heart, and of which woman possesses the secret! And when, at length, in gloomier days, the controversy of opinions commingled with the shock of parties, raised up Bolsec, Servetus, and Gentilis, who can say how much the Reformer was in want of the counsels and kindly influence of Idelette de Bure?

XIII.

It would be rash to insist too much upon this last idea, for the blame attached to Calvin is not of a nature which a supposition, however plausible, can suffice to efface. Yet one thing remains—I mean that the mournful facts, the remembrance of which is associated with the names of Bolsec, Servetus, and Gentilis, were all posterior to the death of Idelette. Another name, that of Castalio, has often been pronounced as equally reviving the memory of Calvin's intolerance. Now, the disputes with Castalio took place at two several times, once before and once after 1549, and it was in reality only on the second occasion that Calvin was harsh, violent, and unjust. In 1544, he had only opposed the nomination of Castalio to the pastoral office at Geneva, because he professed certain new opinions in reference to the Canticles, Christ's descent into hell, &c. He had even given him, in the name of the company, a certificate attesting that they excluded him with regret, in view of his merit, his zeal, and the services which he had rendered to the college in his capacity as tutor. This proceeding, which was unusually mild for that epoch, did not prevent Castalio from bearing a grudge against Calvin, to such an extent, indeed, that he interrupted him one day in the midst of his sermon. Calvin had him censured, and surely it was the slightest penalty that could be inflicted upon a disturber of public worship; but nothing more was done. Castalio had voluntarily laid down his tutorial functions, and he withdrew voluntarily to Basle, and it is there we shall meet with him again, though it was ten years later, unjustly and violently attacked by Calvin for having protested against the execution of Servetus.

Let us now pass from 1544 to 1551, and come to the banishment of Bolsec.

The more we have studied this matter, the more apparent to us is the true motive of the importance that has been attached to it—it is not Bolsec himself, but his book against Calvin that has excited so much interest on the part of Calvin's enemies. Not that we in anywise pretend to approve of the Reformer's extreme harshness towards him—we have already sufficiently explained our way of thinking on that point, and it is not to be expected that we should reiterate it at length on every occasion. But, after all, Bolsec was

neither burned alive nor beheaded—Bolsec was only expelled; and the execution of Servetus, which has been made so much of, ought at least to make the condemnation of Bolsec appear relatively mild. But whatever the cost, must not a pedestal be raised for him whose slanders are repeated with so much complacency?

Jerome Bolsec had been a Carmelite at Paris. Having been denounced for certain sermons which savoured of the Reformed doctrine, he had been obliged to leave France, and had taken refuge at Ferrara. After divers journeyings, he came to Geneva, not as a divine, but as a physician. Soon, however, he began to occupy himself with theology, and it became known that his opinions on some points, especially on predestination, were not those of the Genevan theology. The Company had him brought before them. He promised to keep silence, and, during several months, the registers make no mention of him. On the 16th of October, at the Thursday sermon—having heard the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination expounded in all its severity—he spoke very warmly. It was, he said, not merely an error, but a heresy, and he would prove it when they liked. Calvin, with no less warmth, took up the accusation; and one of the witnesses of the scene—the deputy Lieutenant of Police—“seeing” the register says, “the scandal that the said Master Jerome had caused in the Church, had him taken to prison.” The pastors assembled that very day, and decided on having a conference before the Council with Bolsec. This conference took place. Bolsec defended himself ably, and, more than once, it was Calvin who had to defend himself, especially when Bolsec had developed the idea that his doctrine tended to make God the author of evil. Calvin reproduced with much vigour what he had already often advanced in reply to a reproach which was unhappily not unfounded.

The discussion lasted two days. The Council was greatly embarrassed. Not that it hesitated about pronouncing Calvin right, but because Bolsec’s arguments did not appear so very bad as to call for a severe condemnation. The Swiss Churches were therefore written to for their opinion. Whilst waiting for the answers, the Council would have released the prisoner, upon bail, however; and Bolsec remained in prison only because no one came forward to be surety for him.

The Church of Zurich counselled severity; Berne and Basle, indulgence. The sentence, which was pronounced the 18th of December, though apparently very severe, is really very mild. Bolsec, as we have already said, was condemned to leave Geneva, never to return. Observe: he was not even a Genevese and expelled from his native land, but a foreigner, who had not been settled a year in the country. Did Calvin ask for a heavier penalty? There is nothing in the trial to indicate it, and a few days after the condemnation, in a letter to Bullinger, Calvin exclaims:—“Calumnious people have spread the report that we were desirous of a severer punishment, and it has been

foolishly believed.” Now, Calvin never dissembled when he was severe; and if he declared here that he desired nothing but banishment, it is because it was true; and we may all the more believe him that we shall see him at the same time, very frank in his expression of horror at Bolsec’s opinions. That was a sad letter in which he broke off with his old friend, M. de Falais, who was guilty of not being horrified with Bolsec in the same degree. He would rather “a hundred times be a papist,” he says, “than Bolsec or Castalio.” This is what the Reformer could write; and it is an afflicting page in the history of the human heart. But we were upon a question of fact; let us not quit it. The name of Bolsec has been employed against the Reformer, as that of a martyr,—and the fact is that Bolsec was simply expelled from Geneva. As to those who are indignant that Bolsec should even have been banished, we know not what to say to them, unless that they are completely ignorant how the question stood in regard to the Reformation and to Geneva,—especially to Geneva. To wish that she had opened her gates to all the variations and daring flights of religious thought, is to wish that that great lever, the Reformation, had without a fulcrum lifted the world. If Bolsec had been treated more severely, he would not have been any the more excusable for having written the book which has made his reputation with Calvin’s enemies. That anger should have dictated to him violent pages, would readily have been pardoned in a man to whom Calvin had been so imperious and bitter; but six-and-twenty years after the quarrel, and thirteen years after Calvin’s death, to publish that abominable libel which he gave for the history “*of the life, manners, acts, doctrine, and death*” of the Reformer, is to go far beyond what may be pardoned to the most righteous resentment. The ex-monk had become a Romanist again, and wished to purchase a welcome amongst his former brethren; and nothing seemed better for this purpose than to immolate Calvin under the basest stigmas. But there are men yet more guilty than Bolsec, and they are those who continue to borrow from his book, and who compel serious historians, Romanists as well as Protestants, to tell them that they lie. Already in the sixteenth century, Papyre Masson and Ræmond, the ardent enemies of Calvin, declared false all that Bolsec had said of his morals. In the seventeenth century Maimburg, in his *History of Calvinism*, openly rendered the Reformer the same homage, and the grave Ellies Du Pin advised the Romanists no longer to “lacerate his person with such tales.” *Tales* they were in fact, in the full meaning of the word; for Bolsec generally did not take the trouble to give even the semblance of truth to his narratives; and sometimes it would seem that he only sought, by way of amusement, to imitate the liar, who is even more clumsy than bold. Who could imagine, for instance, that he could have dreamed of representing Calvin,—the “great faster,” as Ræmond calls him,—as an insatiable eater, for whom the most delicate morsels in the market were monopolized? All the book is of the same

calibre. It is hatred, verging, we will not say upon delirium, but upon stupidity; and we will refer once more for the details to the writer who has had the patience to refute them one by one, and that is Drelincourt.

XIV.

Bolsec leads us to Servetus, but by a road very different from that taken by the accusers of Calvin in this matter.

In this very book, in fact, in which the Reformer is torn piecemeal, Bolsec, speaking of Servetus, declares that he experienced “no regret at the death of so monstrous a heretic.” Servetus, adds he, was “unworthy to converse with men and as for himself, he would wish that “all his like were exterminated, and the Church of our Lord well purged of such vermin.” Thus, we find the most ardent of Calvin’s enemies, the one who seemed to think that Calvin would willingly have sent him to the stake, Bolsec, in short, interrupting his calumnious pages to declare that in his view the death of Servetus was just!

Hence comes the conclusion which we shall see arise out of all the facts relating to this melancholy affair,—namely, that it is a great anachronism to charge Calvin with this fault, as though it was his own, and one with which his own age might have reproached him. Lament that he had an opportunity to commit it; blame him for having committed it with the bitter zeal which is always and in all things to be condemned; but to accuse him alone of it, when all his friends, *including the mild Melanchthon*; all his enemies, with the exception of Castalio, but including Bolsec, and the whole sixteenth century, in short, approved, and, in some sort, committed it with him,—is to sacrifice him to the ideas of the nineteenth century, as Servetus was sacrificed to the ideas of the sixteenth. But when this sacrifice of Calvin is demanded by Romish writers; when those who testify so much horror before the stake of Servetus, are those who experience none before the thirty or forty thousand fires which were kindled by the Church of Rome in the same century,—we will no longer say, where is justice, but the most common honesty and the most ordinary decency?

XV.

We left Servetus at Paris, in 1534, demanding of Calvin a conference which did not take place, Servetus not making his appearance.

Servetus was born in Spain in 1509; he was sent into France by his father, who feared that he might incur the severities of the Inquisition, and was converted at Toulouse to the new ideas of which he had already had a glimpse in Spain. He blended in his studies, law, physic, and divinity, and brought to them all, the juvenile ardour which may be equally admired as generous and

courageous, or condemned as pride, imprudence, and rashness. Toiling like one of the sixteenth century, and daring as one of the eighteenth, he pried into everything. In his first work against the Trinity, and in the fifth book, there is a passage which was unheeded by his contemporaries, but which contains the whole theory of the circulation of the blood.

Already the author of two works, we find him in 1535, as a simple corrector for the press, but publishing with notes, an edition of "Ptolemy's Geography." In 1537, he taught at Paris, with success, geography, mathematics, and even astrology, which drew upon him a denunciation from the Sorbonne, and a sentence from the Parliament. We find him at length settled as a medical practitioner in the neighbourhood of Lyons, and then at Vienne in Dauphiny.

He was there when he entered into relations with Calvin. Haunted by the idea that the Reformers had stopped too soon, and that Christianity, in order to become true again, needed a restoration deeper and far more complete, he hoped to induce Calvin to place himself at the head of the work thus resumed. This was to misunderstand the man; and, besides, even if he had been of a spirit more pliable, it was to ask much to wish from him a declaration, that till then he had only half taught a reformation. Moreover, what Servetus asked was not merely a modification of the formula of such or such a doctrine:—anabaptist pantheism lay at the basis, and Calvin was very right in considering such a basis subversive of even those things which Servetus still respected. Thus, as was shown by the trial, and as had been already shown by the writings which Servetus produced during his correspondence with Calvin, his objections against the Trinity flowed from his pantheistic theory. If, for the general public and for history, the dispute is concentrated upon the field of this doctrine, it is because it is natural that a general theory should be resumed and embodied, at each epoch, in a special question, and that which brings most into play the sympathies and antipathies of the moment. Pantheism, in our day, is often taught or combated on the ground of social questions; between Calvin and Servetus, it was on the ground of dogma. Therefore, even if we were disposed to grant dogmatically less importance than Calvin conceded to the question of the Trinity, we must yet admit that Calvin was right in perceiving, in the system and method of Servetus, the subversion of Christianity. No Christian, not even the most latitudinarian, would judge otherwise if a new Servetus were to arise, he would only need such a conversation as Calvin relates having had, one day, before the Council, with the Spanish heretic. "What!" said Calvin, "if one were to strike this pavement with his foot, and to say that he is trampling upon thy God, wouldst thou not be horrified at having subjected the majesty of God to such opprobrium?"—Then Servetus said, "I have no doubt that this bench, this cupboard and all that can be shown me, are the substance of God."—And, again, when it was

objected to him that according to him, therefore, even the devil would be substantially God, he replied laughing: "Do you doubt it? All things are part and parcel of God."

This is what the Reformer saw or suspected seven years before, in the correspondence of Servetus; and it was this which dictated, in 1546, his celebrated letter to Viret. "Servetus," he said, "has sent me lately a thick manuscript of his reveries, informing me with incredible arrogance, that I should there see astonishing things. He offers to come here, if I please; but I will not pledge myself to it, for, if he come, I would not suffer him,—so far as my authority had any weight,—to leave Geneva alive."

The historians of the Reformation have sometimes denied the authenticity of this letter, which, in fact, was once doubtful, but is now unquestionable. And why seek to blot out these lines? That Calvin should have spoken beforehand of demanding the death of the heretic, should the opportunity occur, is fundamentally better than if he had acted towards him with more circumspection, and concealed from him what awaited him at Geneva. This letter, moreover, has the advantage of clearly defining how the question stood in Calvin's mind. If, on the one hand, it is painful and grievous to us to see him ready to ask for the death of a man who has entered into familiar correspondence with him, the fact establishes, on the other hand, at least the total absence of all personal animosity. The menace, which was executed in 1553, belongs to a period in which the Spaniard only showed him consideration, almost friendship. Calvin, then, could not hate him personally, and he may therefore have said, with perfect sincerity during the trial, that he had hated, and did hate, the errors,—not the man.

One thing might seem to us to be much more sad,—it is that Calvin should have laboured to have Servetus condemned at Vienne. Is it true? It is possible to think so. Servetus had just then secretly printed in that city his *Christianismi Restitutio*, which was none other, it seems, than the thick manuscript of 1546. A first search, upon information come from Geneva, led to no result. Servetus had been warned in time by a friend, and had made away with all that might have proved him to be the author of the book. A second search was more successful, thanks to documents which also came from Geneva, and these documents were the very letters formerly written to Calvin by Servetus.

Appearances, therefore, are against Calvin, and we have one thing only to oppose to them, but it is weighty. And it is the denial of the fact by Calvin. "The report is circulated," he says, "that I have managed so that Servetus should be caught on papal ground, namely, at Vienne, and thereupon many say that I have not acted well in exposing him to the mortal enemies of the faith." After a few explanatory words, he continues: "It is not necessary to insist upon the repudiation of so frivolous a scandal, which falls to the ground

when I have said in one word, that there is no truth in it” His enemies admit that the business was not conducted by him, but by a Lyonese refugee, M. de Trye, who acted as his secretary. The question, therefore, is reduced to this,— to know whether the secretary had orders to do what he did. Now, we do not think that any man of good faith, at all acquainted with Calvin, can dare to suspect him of having said, “It is not I,” if the culprit had been his agent. But why speak of culprit? Calvin says, indeed, that “many” think the deed an ill one; but he, himself, is by no means of their opinion. “If,” he says, “it were truly objected to me,¹ I would not deny it, *and I do not think it would turn to my dishonour.*” Two states at war do not on that account fail to lend each other aid in arresting a murderer: there is no shame, consequently, according to the notions of those times, in helping one another for the punishment of Servetus, a soul-murderer. Do we not see the Genevese magistrates, shortly after, requesting the concurrence of those of Vienne, and the Viennese magistrates granting it with readiness. The Genevan judges will receive information of the French proceedings: they will write fraternally to the papists who would have burned Servetus, but who would far more willingly have burned them. Geneva and Rome will that day take each other by the hand. All this is odious to us; but then, it was quite natural; and if the Reformer,—which is not the case,—could be convicted of having caused Servetus to be condemned at Vienne, his real fault in this sad business would be in no wise augmented.

Here also should recur an observation already made. We have seen that Servetus, at Paris, by attacking Calvin personally upon a doctrine which he might have attacked equally in all theologians, Romish and Protestant, constituted him, in some sense, the guardian and champion of that doctrine. The position into which Calvin was forced, and which was fully accepted by him, soon became that of all the Calvinistic churches, and, above all, of the Church of Geneva. A doctrine of such importance, and one which had remained common to all Christendom, became very peculiarly important to those who were accused of shaking the foundations of Christianity. They were less able than any, we will not say to abandon it, for no one dreamed of this, but to defend it without energy, and to show lenity to such as denied it. When the Vienne judges learned that the delinquent, who had escaped from their prisons, had been arrested at Geneva, they hastened to claim him of the Genevese magistrates. Now, it was a public law at Geneva never to grant extradition; and two such demands, one from the King of France, and the other from the Savoy Senate, had recently been rejected. They refused, therefore, to give up Servetus; but to take him away from the stake at Vienne was, in the situation we have just indicated, to condemn themselves to treat him no better. What

¹ If the accusation were true.

would Romanism have said if the heretic, who had been condemned at Vienne, had been absolved at Geneva? Even now those Romish writers who affect so much pity for Servetus, and so much horror for his adversary, would have had enough to say if Calvin had shown indulgence. Servetus would then be only an audacious Pantheist, subverting, with the Trinity, the whole of Christianity; Calvin would only be an impotent or cowardly chief, authorising, from the outset, all the aberrations into which the Reformation is accused of having led succeeding generations.

XVI.

But to return to the trial. We will set aside all details which are not indispensable.

Having escaped from the prisons of Vienne, and wishing to betake himself to Italy, why did Servetus pass through Geneva? He might, at least, have avoided the city. Above all, why, instead of passing through with all speed, did he stay there a month? The trial does not elucidate this point. It has been conjectured that he was detained by the Libertines, who were ever on the watch for what might be an annoyance to Calvin. It is also possible that, seeing them so nearly on the point of triumphing—for it was during the syndicate of Perrin—the idea occurred to him of keeping himself in readiness to succeed the vanquished Reformer. Be that as it may, the whole of the trial does not allow of a doubt as to an alliance between them and him, a bond of union, at least, and a very close one, between their cause and his. It matters little whether this bond was the result of a formal understanding, or merely of circumstances; it matters little, also, whether Calvin understood from the beginning or not all the import of the trial. The Libertines compelled him to understand it sufficiently, and the death of Servetus became a political and social, as much as a religious necessity.¹

Having been informed, on the 13th of August, of his presence in the city, Calvin demanded his arrest, and the order for it was given by one of the syndics. But, according to Genevese law, no one could be arrested on a mere information, unless the informer gave himself up as a prisoner at the same time. A young Frenchman, Nicolas de la Fontaine, the secretary of Calvin, went through this formality for him, and presented, on the morrow, a complaint in thirty-eight articles, drawn up by the Reformer. The first five relate to the antecedents of Servetus; the others sum up, rather confusedly, his Pantheistic opinions, his arguments against the Trinity, and his ideas on certain special points—infant baptism, the age at which sin begins, &c. Servetus was interrogated the same day upon these thirty-eight articles, and confirmed

¹ This point of view, which most historians have hitherto ignored or neglected, was developed for the first time in a memoir by Mr. Rilliet de Candolle. (Geneva, 1844.)

some, but denied others, and the Lieutenant for Criminal Cases, in transmitting to the Council a summary of the interrogatory, concluded for his being brought up for trial.

In consequence of this, the Council assembled on the morrow in the Criminal Audience Chamber, which was situated in the prison. Servetus was re-interrogated on all the points, but, encouraged probably by the presence of certain councillors whom he knew to be hostile to Calvin, he no longer confined himself to the defensive. Let a public conference be appointed, he says, and he is ready to confound Calvin by Scripture and the fathers. Calvin would not have refused, for he tells us in his *Declaration against the Errors of Servetus*, that there was nothing he desired more than “to bring such a cause into the Church before the people.” Thus, by the side of his despotism, there was always the democratic idea. He would not accept the decisions of an adverse majority; but in the sphere which he believes to be that of truth, he wishes the people, who are the Church—the Church to be associated as a body in all the labours and combats of its leaders. The Council did not authorise this public conference.

On the 16th of August there was another sitting, and it was marked by a lively altercation between Berthelier, the Assistant of the Lieutenant for Criminal Causes, and Colladon, a counsellor who was the accuser’s advocate. We know Berthelier. Colladon, on the contrary, was a type of the serious Protestant, and of the refugee who loved his faith in proportion to what he had sacrificed for it. But he was also a type of the lay-theologian, who is often more absolute than the professed divine. For the rest, between Berthelier and himself, the question was less about Servetus than Calvin; and with Berthelier, politics took the first place in the matter. Calvin, whose wont it never was to conceal himself behind any one, understood the moment was come to take the affair in hand himself. The very next day he declared that he would appear as accuser; and he was authorised to be present, accompanied by any one he chose, at the examination of Servetus. There was a very long examination the same day, and one which often assumed the form of a debate between Calvin and the accused. It was in this debate that Servetus let fall that strange profession of his pantheistic creed which we have related above. It seems to have made a very disagreeable impression upon the minds of the judges, and it greatly discouraged those who were disposed to favour him. Calvin could write to Farel on the 20th of August: “I hope there will be capital punishment but, added he, “I desire that the horrible part of the sentence may be remitted.”¹ Calvin wished therefore for death by the sword, and not death by fire. Did he afterwards change his mind? We shall see that he did not. Even if he had changed his mind, this movement of compassion, at

¹ *Pœnæ afrocitatem remitti cupio.*

the very moment when he had been engaged in close and active struggles with Servetus, would still prove how they are mistaken who insist upon it that his hatred had been long fostered in prospect of a holocaust.

Then it was that they decided upon writing to Vienne to ask for a copy of the proceedings instituted there, and to the Swiss Churches for their opinion. Calvin did not conceal his dislike to this step. He remembered that Berne and Basle had counselled clemency towards Bolsec, and he already saw them trying to save Servetus.

The case went on notwithstanding, but very soon under a new form. The doctrinal question was exhausted, and the matter of heresy sufficiently proved; but as if to gain time, a series of discussions was entered upon as to the mischief which Servetus might have done, or wished to do, the publicity given by him to his opinions, and his obstinacy in maintaining them, although he knew they were condemned by ancient councils and ancient imperial decrees. These pitiful cavils—so strange from Protestant lips—more than once made Servetus to say things which were mistaken only in one point, but it was a very serious one, and it was, that they came nearly three centuries too soon, and were addressed to persons who could not comprehend them. If, said he, he had not retracted, it was simply because it would have been a lie on his part. If he had not thought fit to keep silence, in spite of the imperial laws which menaced him with death, it was because those laws dated from a period when Christianity was already more or less corrupted. Did the Church know such legislation in apostolic times? This last argument was one of those which were most offensive to the judges. Servetus then dared to deny even the very law and right in virtue of which they judged him! The ancient, imperial, and episcopal city had indeed been able to shake off the yoke both of emperor and pope; but her magistrates considered they had inherited all the laws and rights of the Empire and the Church, and they did not understand how any one dared to question them.

XVII.

Meanwhile the fate of Servetus was not discussed in court alone. We have told what struggles were intermingled with the proceedings: what we have just related took place in the very week of that September Communion in which Calvin hazarded his authority and perhaps his life against the exasperated Libertines. He might conquer, and, in fact, he did conquer; but he might also be conquered, and his defeat would be the salvation of the prisoners. Servetus, from the depths of his prison, followed the vicissitudes of the combat; the different phases of the trial exhibit him at one time bolder, and at another more humble, according as he hoped or not for succour from external events. The written memoir on the thirty-eight articles, which was

demanding of him in the beginning of September, is evidently drawn up under the impression that Calvin's credit had been considerably lowered. It is the accused who speaks loudly, and who accuses. Calvin is not only mistaken—he has calumniated, he has lied—and “who will say that a criminal accuser and a homicide is a true minister of the Church?” It is all in the same strain. “Thou knowest not what thou sayest; thou art a wretch if thou proceedest to condemn that which thou dost not understand. Thinkest thou to deafen the ears of the judges by thy currish barking merely?” But Calvin, even if he had been so near his fall as Servetus imagined, was not the man to change his ways of proceeding on that account? In his answer—which was also written—he only descends to the level of Servetus, to hurl back at him his abuse in the same tone, and, with his iron hand, he has soon thrust him again into his humble position as the accused. The unhappy man had thought it no longer necessary to veil anything; and his bold memoir became an act of accusation drawn up by himself against himself, and accompanied by all the proofs.

It had been decided that this memoir and the answer should be sent to the Swiss Churches; but, though the two documents had been presented to the Council on the 5th of September, a fortnight elapsed before they were dispatched. The Council hesitated to pledge itself. If the Swiss Churches did not judge like Calvin, what was to be done? If they did judge like Calvin, it would be necessary to condemn Servetus; and, amid their other Genevan disputes, the Council was not anxious to procure for Calvin a victory which might lead to others. Calvin understood this sentiment perfectly well. His letters to Bullinger and Farel, indicate great discouragement. The possible absolution of Servetus appears to him the subversion of his work—of his moral and political work, as well as of his religious work, and the too certain indication that God no longer supports it. He even goes so far as to hint at the possibility of his abandoning it all, and taking his departure. Here there is, consequently, another error which has to be noticed. Calvin is supposed to have been all-powerful at this epoch, and he is represented as dictating the sentence to a government of which he is the soul,—and never, on the contrary, had he been so nearly unable to do anything. Bullinger conjured him not to give way to this feeling, and not to expose Geneva, by his departure, to the accomplishment of her ruin by her own hands. Farel, who was ever ardent, endeavoured to show him, in the arrival of Servetus at Geneva, a wonderful dispensation of God. He had come that the Government and Church might have the opportunity of showing themselves firm and faithful. God would not permit that this opportunity should be rejected by those to whom he had offered it. The death of Servetus was necessary and indispensable; those who said the contrary were traitors, or, at the very least, imbeciles,—absurd imbeciles. “As for me,” continued Farel, “I have always

declared that I was ready to die if I had taught that which was contrary to sound doctrine, adding that I should be worthy of the most fearful torments if I turned aside any one from the faith of Christ. I cannot therefore apply a different rule to others.” Thus did these stern men reason. The question of sincerity, or of intention, they set completely aside; or rather—they considered it to be always and everywhere decided by the nature of what had been taught. Neither good intention nor good faith were possible in him who taught error, or in him, at least, who persisted in teaching it. It was the Romish idea in all its rigidity, but without its logic; for it can be logical only where the infallibility of the tribunal is laid down as a principle. But the Romish idea was so well established, that we find it accepted at last even by Servetus himself. 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 Calvin “may be detained a prisoner” like himself and, once confounded, be put to death instead of him.

Having been a month in prison, he was beginning not to understand the reason of the delay. He had said his last word, and why did they delay either to condemn or to absolve him? On the 15th of September,—probably on some intimation from without,—he demanded that his cause should “be brought before the Council of the Two Hundred,” and he represented Calvin as his sole enemy. Three days afterwards, having received the answer to his memoir, he sent it back, covered with notes, and signed “Michael Servetus, alone, it is true, but having Christ as a most sure protector.” On the 21st of September the two documents, accompanied by several others, were dispatched to the Churches of Berne, Zurich, Basle, and Schaffhausen. On the 22d, whether secret information had made him consider Calvin’s position as still very precarious, or whether his imagination amplified what he knew of it, he writes to the Council formally to demand that an accusation may be brought against Calvin, and, in his turn, draws up a long list of “Articles about which Michael Servetus demands that Jehan Calvin should be interrogated.” The whole letters show the feverish state into which grief, vexation, and other causes, as we shall see, had thrown the unhappy prisoner. He ends by saying that Calvin ought to be expelled from Geneva “like a magician as he is,” and adds, “his property ought to be adjudged to me, in compensation for mine which he has caused me to lose.”

Three weeks elapsed, and Servetus receiving no answer, understood at last that he was mistaken. A humble and sorrowful letter of the 10th of October reveals to us quite another world of sufferings. To live in a prison in the sixteenth century was horrible; humanity, which was so little careful in the very hospitals, scarcely knew the way to the dwellings of crime, and as to distinguishing one criminal from another, no one dreamed of it. Servetus, treated like a common malefactor, had already, on the 15th of September,

addressed to the Council a letter full of the most lamentable details. He recalls their attention to it on the 10th of October, because it has remained unanswered. His clothes are in rags; he is eaten up with filth; and the first cold of autumn is a fresh torment Did he exaggerate? It is possible; because it is difficult to believe that such was the state of a man who had in his favour the First Syndic, several councillors, and the gaoler too, Claude Genève, who was one of Perrin's confidants. But let us not dispute about his suffering, of which there will always remain enough, and too much. So the Council judged, for it was decided, upon his second request, that some relief should be granted.

XVIII.

The fate of Servetus was in the meantime decided, but out of Geneva. A messenger of state, who had been commissioned to bring back the answers of the Churches, transmitted them to the Council on the 18th of October. Each of these answers was twofold: there was that of the Church or of the pastors, and that of the Government. In all, there were eight.

There was a complete and awful unanimity. Servetus must die! Berne and Basle, which had been so indulgent, two years ago towards Bolsec, had for Servetus none but expressions of horror. "We pray the Lord," say the pastors of Berne, "that he may grant you a spirit of prudence, of counsel, and of strength, in order that you may shelter your Church and others from the pestilence." The pastors of Basle rejoice to behold Servetus in the hands of the magistrates of Geneva, in order that, according to their office and the power which they hold from God, these magistrates may so repress him "that henceforward he may no more be able to disturb the Church of Christ" The pastors of Zurich write:—"We think you ought to display much faith and zeal, especially because our Churches are in bad repute abroad for being heretical and for favouring heresy. The providence of God offers you an opportunity of clearing both yourselves and us from this injurious suspicion." Schaffhausen subscribes to these words, adding that the blasphemies of Servetus must be cut short, for, like a gangrene, they would eat away the body of Christ. The answers of the Government are still more explicit Berne, whose advice the Government of Geneva felt specially bound to follow, was not satisfied with clearly counselling death; it was made known by private letters that the Bernese magistrates had openly spoken of fire as the only punishment proportioned to the crimes of such a man.

Here, then, was the whole of Protestant Switzerland formed into a jury, and unanimously pronouncing by the voice of its magistrates and pastors the condemnation of the accused. No mention is made of extenuating circumstances; nor is there any solicitation, either direct or indirect, for pardon or

indulgence, and yet all knew that it was a question of life and death. The Council of Geneva could no longer hesitate to condemn;—indulgence would have been an insult to the Swiss Churches, a sort of treachery towards the whole of Protestant Christendom, which, by their voice, had demanded the death of the criminal, in the name of its own safety, honour, and salvation. This was immediately understood by several of the counsellors who, till then, had only seen in this affair a trial between the Spaniard, in whom they felt but little interest, and the Reformer, whom they did not like. Henceforward, they could yield, not to Calvin, but to four important Churches and to the whole body of Protestantism,—and Servetus had decidedly against him the majority of the Council.

His friends, however, and Perrin especially, still endeavoured to save him. Perrin demanded, at first, absolution, pure and simple. This would have been the exile of Calvin, and the final triumph of the Libertines, and it was refused. He demanded then, what had already been asked by Servetus, that the cause should be brought before the Council of Two Hundred. Calvin had many enemies there, and that Council was less bound by the previous advice of the four Churches and four governments. They still refused; but there is no one now who does not say, “Would to God that Perrin had succeeded!” and we, too, say so with all the world. Yet it is not the less true, that if the general state of affairs is admitted to have been such as we have described, the efforts of Perrin were neither those of a friend of the Reformation nor those of a wise politician; and to regret their failure may certainly be humane, but it is also rather selfish. We think of ourselves, and of the annoyance which this affair has cost us, and we make no account of the requirements of the moment, which were misunderstood or betrayed by the Libertine magistrate. For the rest, we have only to occupy ourselves here with what concerns Calvin, and he has left us details which render our task singularly easy. “After Servetus was convicted of his heresies,” says he, “I made no entreaties that he might be punished with death; and to what I say, not only will all good people bear witness, but I defy even the wicked to say the contrary.”¹ Calvin needed not the testimony which he invoked; he had given no one the right to doubt what he said, and the work which we quote appeared in 1554, a few months after the death of Servetus. Much more, then, may we believe him when he declares in a private letter, written on the eve of the execution, that he, with his colleagues, has made every effort to obtain the substitution of the sword for the stake. Observe that he was not writing to some friend milder than himself, in whose eyes he might wish to array himself with the semblance of humanity. The friend was Farel, who was more hostile to Servetus than was Calvin himself; and it was to him, as we have already seen,

¹ Declaration upon the Errors of Servetus.

that Calvin had declared, a month before, that he would not have inflicted on Servetus the frightful death which he saw menacing him.

Why did the Council refuse this mitigation? Perhaps that they might not seem to adopt in part only the imperial canon law, which recognises nothing but the stake for heresy; perhaps, also,—for we know that those who voted for the stake were not all Calvin's friends,—not to give the Reformer a fresh victory, by allowing him, as it were, the right to pardon. But, finally, the assertion remains, and remains indubitable. As for the pile, which figures so much in the interested apotheosis of the unhappy man for whom it was kindled,—for death by the sword would have been much less canvassed;—the pile 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 exempted from it.

XIX.

Shall we narrate the execution? Farel had undertaken to accompany the condemned man. He was with him when, on the morning of the 27th of October, he was informed that that day would be his last. He was left in ignorance of the stake, but the thought of death sufficed to deprive him, at first, of all his strength and courage. Scarcely had he recovered when he began again with Farel the theological discussion he had so often renewed with Calvin. Farel was desirous that Calvin should once more see the condemned; so Calvin came with two councillors. Servetus was asked by one of the two, what he wished to say to Calvin? he replied that he only wished to entreat his pardon. Then, said Calvin, "I protest that I have never prosecuted thee because of any private injury."¹ He said the truth; but this idea has served too often to encourage in their severities those who have borne like witness to themselves. Calvin then began to enumerate all the occasions in which he had shown his good will in endeavouring to bring Servetus back into the right way. This, too, is reasoning in a vicious circle. Might not Servetus have said the same of himself? Had he not also, at Paris, and in his correspondence, and at Geneva, endeavoured to lead Calvin to what he considered to be the truth? It is painful, in the narrative of this last interview, which is related in all its details by Calvin, to see in him, to the last, nothing but the theologian,—reasoning, discussing, and condemning. He does not even seem to suspect, that, in spite of doctrine and through doctrine, it would be possible to say a word of sympathy to the unhappy man who is about to die, and who awaits the tremendous surprise of finding the stake where he had only expected the sword. The remark may have been made, it is true, and not without foundation, that the very excess of this earnest pertinacity is at once its

¹ Declaration against the Errors of Servetus.

explanation and its excuse;—that Calvin, believing with all his soul in the condemnation of Servetus, could not say to him too much about it;—and that when we see a man on the point of rolling over into an abyss, we think far less of showing him compassion than of alarming him for his safety, and of holding him back, if necessary, by violence. But the comparison is defective in one point. From that abyss which Calvin beheld yawning for Servetus, he might and ought to have attempted to lead him gently away. This was what Calvin did not understand. Such as he showed himself towards Servetus under accusation, such will he show himself towards Servetus under condemnation. Not a word, not a movement tending to soften him by kindness and compassion! Calvin has determined to present to him, to the last, only that idea against which, for twenty years, he has seen him harden himself. And Servetus still hardens himself: so then Calvin obeys, he tells us, the command of St. Paul; he *withdraws himself* from the heretic, and leaves him to Farel.

Farel had the melancholy honour of showing himself yet more harsh. When Servetus, who had been conducted to the Town Hall, learned there the way in which he was to die, and threw himself horror-struck at the feet of the judges, and besought as a favour that he might be beheaded, and yet, in spite of his horror, refused to save himself by a retractation,—Farel, instead of recognising at least the sincerity which was thus proved by the unhappy man, threatened not to accompany him to the stake if he persisted in calling himself innocent. He held his peace; but no trace of a struggle, nor even of hesitation, appeared in his terror. It evidently did not once enter his mind to save himself by a lie. Farel, from whom we receive these details, could see in all this nothing but obstinacy; and the more the doomed man, in spite of his agony, persisted in not yielding, the more unworthy of all pity did he become in his eyes. At the foot of the stake, as at the Town Hall, and as before in prison, there was not a word of Christian consolation. Once only did Farel ask him if he would commend himself to the prayers of the spectators. Servetus said ‘Yea,’ and Farel desired the multitude to pray. But Farel himself prayed not: his sole task was to harass Servetus, in order to extort from him some word which might be considered as a disavowal of his errors. At last, the executioner performed his office; and soon, a few ashes were all that remained of Servetus. Farel, not many days after, will tell all this in a letter, and will exhibit no more emotion over the dead heretic, than he felt on the 27th of October, the day of his execution, when at the side of the heretic while yet alive.

XX.

We shall not be reproached with having softened or veiled anything in those melancholy scenes. We have explained how this execution was

possible and might appear necessary. We have refuted, by an appeal to facts, some of the slanders to which it has given rise. Many others have been uttered to which we will not even pay the honour of repeating them. Calvin has even been reproached by some on account of the green wood of which the pile of Servetus was made, in order, they say, that Servetus might die a lingering death. Thus, at the very moment when Calvin was asking for a milder form of death for Servetus, they would represent him as employed in rendering his tortures more cruel. Besides, what are they thinking of? Green wood was a favour, for the victim was stifled before the flames reached him. All this discussion, moreover, reposes historically upon nothing. The documents which deserve to be believed make no mention of wood, either green or dry; and the whole is only one of the thousand fables which blind hate has heaped around the name of Calvin. But it was indispensable that something should be invented more odious, or more seemingly odious, than the sentence at Vienne, which bears, at full length, “To be burned alive by a slow *fire*” Let us quit these details, once for all. In vain are the horrors of this fatal day magnified; they will never equal those of so many days which had been witnessed already, and which were yet to be witnessed—we will not say by Spain, whose soil is made up of human ashes—but by the Netherlands, by Austria, by England, under her bloody Mary, and by France, under her devout and dissolute kings. If Servetus had perished at Vienne, who would now have spoken of him? Who would notice the luckless unit which is lost in the enormous total of the victims of Rome? What Romanist, in the sixteenth century, had the audacity or even the idea of reproaching Calvin or the Genevese for the death of Servetus? The tardy horror with which it inspires the Romanists of our day, will never, do what they will, be ought else than a tribute of homage to the Reformation, for it is Romanism that is attacked and condemned when the Reformation is condemned for having inconsistently done once what Romanism did every day upon principle.

The question occurs, how Calvin could overlook this inconsistency, with his eminently logical mind; it occurs especially on reading the book which he published the following year, and in which he erects into a system what had been done in the case of Servetus.

In the first part he refutes the opinions of the theologian; in the second he demonstrates the lawfulness of the power of the sword as applied to the repression of heretics. We will not follow his arguments in detail; they are all links in the chain, which forms one vicious circle, for, as we have already remarked, where there is no longer a tribunal reputed infallible, there can logically no longer exist penal laws against error. Calvin, it is true, felt this difficulty in part. He speaks little of the punishment of error as error; and, in this respect, he separates himself almost entirely from the Romish idea as it was realized by the Inquisition, and even out of the Inquisition, properly so

called, by all the tribunals which judged under the influence of the Church. There it was heresy—heresy in itself, which was smitten—heresy in its obscurest adherents, just as in its most renowned apostles—heresy, whether discovered in the depths of the conscience, or proclaimed in sermons and books. There is nothing of this kind in Calvin. Not only would he have the heretic punished simply as a disturber of society, but he always supposes a case in which there has really been a disturbance, a shaking of the foundations, and serious danger resulting, both from the gravity of the error, and the activity of the heretic. This is also the idea of Beza. He published, in the same year, his book *Of the Punishment of Heretics by the Civil Magistrate*, and, like Calvin, it is solely against the civil offence, and against social disturbance of a really serious nature, that he calls for the action of the magistrate. This distinction had been carefully drawn by Calvin and the Council of Geneva on the trial of Servetus. Several of the interrogatories, as we have related, bore less upon the errors of Servetus than upon what he had done to spread them, and upon the evil they might have occasioned. In the sentence, which is very long, the sentence of death is connected with these considerations far more than with the fact of heresy itself

Hence in practice an important consequence ensues; it is that Calvin's system respecting the punishment of heretics did not at all extend, like that of the Romanists, to every heretic, and to every opinion reputed heretical, but only to extreme cases—the preaching and diffusion of errors considered subversive of Christianity. And with this is connected a fact of which Romish writers should, at least, take some notice. Thousands were put to death as Protestants, but Calvin never spoke of putting to death one Romanist as a Romanist. Men like Gruet and Servetus—those, in a word, whom all Christendom would have smitten as he did—are the men he smote. This was still, in our view, to go too far; but history must nevertheless take note of these differences. The intolerance of Calvin could lead to the scaffold only a very small number of victims; but Romish intolerance was, at that very moment, immolating thousands.

And if we were to restrict ourselves to what was odious and inconsistent in the intolerance of Calvin, how could impartial history refuse to see in it that which was at the same time daring and great? Calvin knew very well to whom he was about to furnish weapons. He knew that his book would appear as an irrefutable argument in favour of Romish cruelties, and that he especially, in the eyes of millions, was the chief of heretics, the most guilty and the most dangerous; he knew, in short, that he was authorising Romish Europe to drown some day, perhaps in blood, that nest of heretics, the den in which he had just preached his thesis.

Luther, not less courageous, but more a *man*, will frankly own that such considerations are not indifferent to him. "Thou askest me," he writes to

Link, “if the civil magistrate is permitted to slay the false prophets. I have little love for condemnations to death, even when fully merited. Besides, in this matter, one thing alarms me; it is the example we give. Look at the papists; and, before the time of Jesus Christ, look at the Jews. The law commanded that false prophets should be slain, and they ended by slaying almost none but blameless and holy prophets. . . . In nowise, therefore, can I approve that false doctors should be put to death.” But such a fear will never make Calvin expunge or soften one word. Let brands from the pile of Servetus one day kindle his own—he cares little; let Geneva be overwhelmed and perish, and little cares he still. She, like himself, will have had the glory of publishing all she thought true, and of doing fearlessly all she thought to be her duty.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

SUMMARY.

- I. Fresh severities in France—Numerous martyrs—*The five prisoners of Lyons*— Letters addressed to them by Calvin—Their Death—Dymonet—Richard Lefèvre—How Calvin was regarded by the martyrs—*Morituri te salutant*.
- II. Calvin and England—His letter to the Duke of Somerset, the Lord-Protector— Some details—How to preach the Gospel—How to reform abuses—How vices are to be corrected—Zeal and piety of the Protector—His death—Edward VI.—Calvin dedicates to him several of his works—Progress of the true Reformation—Calvin and Cranmer— Project for a Protestant Council— Death of the young king—Queen Mary—Persecution—The English at Geneva—Knox—Geneva and England—Geneva and Scotland— Geneva and Holland.
- III. Italians at Geneva—Gentilis.
- IV. Calvin's Commentaries on the New Testament—They mark a revolution in the study of the Bible—Wisdom and perspicacity—No vain erudition— Practical sense and Christian experience—How Calvin makes us feel at ease, and charms us.
- V. Other writings—Against the Council of Trent—Against the *Interim*—Logical and moral vigour—Did Calvin break off too absolutely from Romanism?
- VI. Treatise against Judicial Astrology—Treatise, *Of Scandals*—Analysis and details— Four sermons on different subjects for the times—Analysis and quotations.
- VII. Treatise on Predestination—Writings against Castalio—Against Westphal —Discussions on the Eucharist—Calvin arranges an agreement between Geneva and the Swiss Churches.
- VIII. Glance at the next period—Calvin's activity—Peace in Geneva, but war and ambushes all around—Geneva boldly identifies herself with the apostolate of Calvin—Complaints of the King of France—Calvin prepares the reply—Missionaries and martyrs multiply around him.
- IX. Calvin and France—He deprecates and blames all insurrection and violence—His pretended letters to M. Du Poet—His Letters to the Baron des Adrets —How he wishes possession of the Churches to be taken—How mighty the Reformed religion would have been in France if it had listened to him— Conspiracy of Amboise—Calvin's grief.
- X. General character of his influence upon France—His epistles *To the Faithful in France*.
- XI. How he watched over the application of his principles—The forms of his authority— His relations with the Church of Paris—Affair of the Rue St. Jacques—His exhortations to the martyrs—Geneva sends them the pastor Macar—Calvin draws up the Confession of Faith to be presented to Henry II. in the name of the Protestants of France.
- XII. The first national synod assembles under his influence—The Confession of Faith— Discipline—Analysis—The question of episcopacy—What the French Protestants desired.
- XIII. Rapid progress of the Reformation in France—Coligny—Beginning of his connexion with Calvin—His conversion—His courage at Fontainebleau—Weakness and recovery of his brother, d'Andelet.

- XIV. Colloquy of Poissy—Calvin present, though absent—Theodore Beza— Results of the colloquy—Two thousand one hundred and fifty churches organised—Edict of January—The king of Navarre abandons the cause.
- XV. When and how the Protestants of France began to have recourse to arms—Calvin in this new phase of the struggle—Unjust accusations—Violence of the Parliament of Paris—Contrast between the two armies—Battle of Dreux—On how little the fate of France then hung—France *might be* Protestant; the French *might be* Calvinists—Calvin preaches submission and hope—Edict of Amboise.
- XVI. Calvin at Geneva during this period—Blandrata, Gentilis, Baudoin— Commentaries on the Old Testament—Commentary on the Psalms—Calvin and David—Studies of the human heart—Several series of sermons—Job and Coligny.
- XVII. Nothing beyond the reach of Calvin’s activity—The jurisconsult—The diplomatist—The man who was necessary in everything—The political legislator.
- XVIII. Foundation of the College and Academy of Geneva—Ceremony of the 5th of June 1559—What perseverance Calvin had needed.
- XIX. The College during three centuries—What memories it may suggest—The great secret of Calvin and of all who sprang from him—Feeble means and great results—Those results owe their importance and duration to him—In what respects Calvin has been more powerful than Luther.
- XX. Last years of Calvin—Sickness—Poverty—Disinterestedness—Sadolet knocks at his door.
- XXI. Last labours and last illness—Six weeks of agony—Patience and faith— Calvin still at work—Last communion.
- XXII. He receives on his death-bed the visit of the Council—The morrow: visit of the Company of Pastors—Exhortations which he addresses to them—His will.
- XXIII. Last visit of Farel—What they must have said to each other—Censures and fraternal repast—His last days—His death.
- XXIV. His funeral—What his tomb says to us, though nothing authentically marks its place.

I.

ROME had no need of the sad encouragement just given her by Geneva. Her severity had never relaxed. Threatening clouds were accumulating on all sides, around the Reformation and its capital.

We have said to how many refugees Geneva opened her gates; the same gates were daily opened to let those go forth who were returning to the battle, accompanied by the directions and prayers of their leader. The collection of Calvin's letters 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 organised. 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 the 22d of August 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 the 7th of July, 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. . . . 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? This is what 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 cell¹ 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.”

But of 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 who had studied at Lausanne, where the ministry had just been conferred upon them. After a few days passed at Geneva, they returned to France, and were arrested at Lyons. 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 will yet 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 the 1st of March 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

¹ *Croton*: another form is *groton*.

to look without ceasing unto God; how should they not do it now that “necessity exhorts them to direct all their senses towards 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 the 16th of May, 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 wilt 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,” continues Crespin, “were the last words heard from the said five valiant champions and martyrs of the Lord.”

So died, two months afterwards, another martyr, Dymonet, who had also been comforted in his prison by a long and beautiful letter from Calvin. So also died, the following year, Richard Le Fèvre, of Rouen, who had long been in correspondence with Calvin, and who wrote to him in the beginning of May: “This is to let you know that I hope to go and celebrate Whitsuntide in the kingdom of heaven, and at the marriage of the Son of God, if I am not summoned earlier by the good Lord and Master.” Whitsuntide found him still here below; the stake was not ready till the 7th of July.

We could greatly lengthen this list; but we have said enough, and perhaps too much. Still, it is never without difficulty that we resolve to leave out martyrs. We reproach ourselves with frustrating them of their renown, and we console ourselves only by the remembrance of the glory which crowns them in the presence of God.

Those who have no personal knowledge of war, often ask themselves what must be felt in that terrible mode of life, in which each day and hour may witness the fall of so many who looked for lengthened years. How can we but ask the same question of ourselves as we look upon the picture of that gloomy period? What must they have thought, what must they have felt, at

Geneva when they learned, stroke after stroke, the death of those whom they had known and loved, and of so many others who had never seen Geneva, but who they knew had died, thinking of her and of her leader? As for that leader, we could wish, above all, thoroughly to analyse, by means of his works and letters, what was passing in his heart. Certain things astonish us at the outset. We should like to find him with the martyrs, more full of feeling, and more expansive—more human, in short. Amongst all those admirable exhortations we seek for the traces of a tear, and we find none. Let us be content with what we find, for it is after all very grand and noble. He was commander-in-chief, and his character and position were in harmony. The martyrs were to him soldiers who fell in battle; their death was only an ordinary event, a mischance, to speak after the manner of men, a blessing, to speak as Christians speak. Why should we be more ill at ease than they themselves were? They admired and loved that Calvin whom we, more sensitive but more feeble, love so little. They understood that he was the man whom the Church needed, the general required by the battle, and with all their heart they cried out to him, as they marched to death, *Morituri te sollicitant!*—“they who are going to die salute thee!”

II.

But whilst Protestant France seemed no longer to have anything to ask but exhortations for her martyrs, England was opening to the Reformation—to the true Reformation, which was proscribed under Henry VIII.—and the influence of Calvin was making itself mightily to be felt there.

Henry VIII. had died in 1547, and with him died that religion which bad faith or ignorance alone could confound with evangelical Protestantism. His son, Edward VI., was only nine years old. The Duke of Somerset, the Lord Protector, brought him up in the principles of serious Christianity, and proclaimed them, without delay, in the kingdom. Hence his relations with Calvin, who dedicated to him, in June 1548, his *Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy*. Hence, in particular, that remarkable letter which was addressed to him by Calvin in October of the same year, and which contains a complete exposition of the Reformer's views as to the transformation which England must undergo.

He begins by congratulating the Regent upon this great work, which God has put it in his heart to do. The depositary of the royal authority, he can “repress by the sword” those who opposed his projects; but the great means is to act so that the gospel may bear all its fruits of holiness, and that “those who profess the gospel should be truly renewed after the image of God.” For this three things are necessary—purity of doctrine, the extirpation of abuses, and the correction of vices.

On the first point, one principle only is really fruitful, and everything must be brought back to it—justification by faith. But the fruitfulness of this principle depends upon the manner in which it is preached; and here comes a fine page upon what truly Christian preaching must be, or not be. The people must be “touched to the quick,” and Calvin fears there is still “very little living preaching” in England. Now, “you know, my Lord, how St. Paul speaks of the liveliness which ought to be in the mouth of good ministers of God, who ought not to make a parade of rhetoric in order to show themselves off, but the Spirit of God must resound in their voice.” Let us have, then, good trumpets, which penetrate even to the depths of the heart; for there is danger lest you should see no great profit of all the reformation you have made, however good and holy it may be, unless this power of preaching be manifested at the same time.

Upon the second point (abuses), one sole principle also is to be laid down, and that is to return fully to Scripture, and to true apostolical traditions. Without naming Henry VIII., whom he could not directly call in question during the reign of his son, Calvin demands the proscription of all that he had retained of Romanism, and of all the accommodations he had imagined between Romanism and the gospel. “Nothing is more displeasing to God than when we, by our human prudence, would either modify or retrench, advance or retire, against his will” The Reformation must be God’s work; and if the word of God is not that which decides supremely what is to be retained or abolished, the Reformation is no longer anything but the work of man, fragile and vain, like every work of man.

On the third point (vices), there is also still one single principle, and that is to repress all that can be repressed, and to punish all that can be punished. The same logic and the same error come up here, as in the laws given by him to Geneva. The same logic:—You punish crimes committed against men, says Calvin, can you not punish crimes committed against God? There is the same error and the same danger:—In punishing crimes committed against God, you are in danger of usurping His rights, and of being a tyrant, and, what is worse, of making Him seem to be such Himself. But Calvin can and will see in England, as at Geneva, nothing but the necessity of reducing morals into harmony with faith: he cannot understand a Christian who has the power, and does not employ it, to make the gospel supreme.

This scheme was to the Lord Protector’s taste, and he did his best to carry it out. Overcome, the following year, by a coalition of political interests and religious animosities, imprisoned and menaced with death, he proved by his Christian patience that Christianity was not, with him, a means of governing only, but an inward power and life. Calvin congratulates him on this account, in May 1550, far more than on a return of fortune which partially restored to him his power as protector. A Christian when in disgrace, let him show

himself such now by pardoning those on whom he might take vengeance; and let him show himself such by courageously putting again his hand to the work of the Lord in England. "Raised from a perilous malady, ought we not to give twofold diligence doubly to honour the good God, as if he had bestowed upon us a second life? God, in binding you to Him by new obligations, would incite you to do better than ever." But God, sometimes, lets his best workmen perish; and He will not that any man should think himself necessary to His designs. The Duke of Somerset was overthrown a second time, and, shortly after, ascended the scaffold, wept over by the young king in whose name he had been condemned to die.

But that young king showed yet more zeal than the duke for the final establishment of the Reformation. He was fourteen years old when Calvin dedicated to him two of his works,—the *Commentary on Isaiah*, and the *Commentary on the Catholic Epistles*. The homage of these two books was not rendered to the king only, 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; and 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 offering of these two books was a great joy to him; and Calvin, in a letter to Farel, relates the reception given at London to the pastor Des Gallars, who was the bearer of them. They were accompanied by a letter, in which Calvin returns, but more briefly, to what must yet be done in England to complete the work of the Reformation; his tone, although he never forgets that he speaks to a king, is that of a friend or a father. Another letter, written the following year, is yet more paternal. Calvin dedicates to the young king a brief exposition of Psalm lxxxvii., "hoping," he says to him, "that you will take pleasure in it, and that its perusal will also be profitable to you." This idea occurred to him one day, he adds, when he was preaching on this psalm. "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 of heaven: now, in this psalm, the nobleness 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 the 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 in that other 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 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.”

Calvin was also in correspondence with the man whom his office and piety alike designated as the prime minister of the pious designs of Edward VI.—Cranmer, the Primate of England.

Cranmer, under the capricious and terrible hand of Henry VIII., had sometimes quailed; but he was one of those who, from the very outset, had pursued athwart the royal reformation, the thought of a truly Christian reformation, such as that of which Calvin was the representative, and, as it were, the incarnation. Now, in order to achieve this great work, he thought more union was necessary, not in England only, but in the whole of the reformed world. In 1552, seeing the papal army serrying its ranks, he was desirous that the Reformed faith should do so likewise. “To unite the churches and protect the flock of Christ, nothing is more potent,” he writes to the Reformer, “than harmony of faith. I would, therefore, that godly and learned men should assemble to confer together upon the principal points of doctrine. Our foes now hold their councils at Trent for the confirmation of their errors; and shall we hesitate to convoke a godly council to restore and propagate the truth?” The intention was good, but the idea was dangerous. A Protestant council would probably have only served to bring out more prominently in the presence of Rome, not only the divergencies that had already manifested themselves, but those which were disappearing amid the perils and heroism of the struggle. Was it not better that each Church should remain mistress of her own faith, and keep, against the common enemy, all the impetus of liberty? Then, as now, Rome dexterously wielded her argument of Protestant diversities; and then as now the Protestants replied by manfully fighting under the common banner of Jesus Christ, and such a unity was well worth the dubious unity which, like the Romish Church, they could not have obtained except by exclusiveness at first and torpor afterwards. But Calvin was attracted by the showy side of the idea, perhaps also by the recent success which he had gained with the Swiss Churches, as we shall see, and by the success which he did not yet despair of obtaining in Germany. In his answer he thanks Cranmer warmly for not allowing the affairs of England to prevent him from thinking of the general interests of the Church. He thinks the project godly and wise, and for his part he would gladly cross “ten seas,” if necessary, to repair to so blessed an assembly. The close of his letter is, however, somewhat less warm, if not somewhat embarrassed, and we should not be surprised if, without saying so, Calvin had made some of the reflections which

we have been making. But what does not change is his lively affection for England, and his entire confidence in the virtues of the young king.

Death was about to destroy all these hopes, already realised in part. Edward died before he was sixteen, and after him reigned his sister, Mary, all whose cares were immediately directed to the extirpation of the Reformed religion. She attempted what was impossible. The Reformation had struck deep root into the heart of the English nation; the reign of Edward VI., though very short, had sufficed, by setting it in its right way, to effect in England what the reign of Calvin was effecting at Geneva. But Mary could do what may always be done by the arm of power—she could make martyrs, and Cranmer was one of her victims. Calvin, in 1550, had thanked Edward VI. for the reception given by him to French refugees, and Geneva was about to have English refugees, who had also been expelled by persecution. In 1555, Calvin asks for them of the Council the use of one of the temples of the city. “Formerly,” says the register, “the said English have received other nations, and have given them a church; but now it has pleased God to afflict them.” The Church of the Auditoire, already allowed to the Italians, was allowed to them. Two ministers, named by them, were accepted by the Council, and one of those ministers was replaced, the following year, by John Knox, the future Reformer of Scotland. The death of Queen Mary and the accession of Elizabeth recalled them to their own country in 1559, and shortly after we find the French Church at London addressing itself to the Company of Geneva for a pastor. The Company, with the consent of the Council, *lent* the pastor Des Gallars, who had been the bearer of Calvin’s books to Edward VI. Des Gallars remained three years in London, and we see him, on his return, charged to bring back to Calvin and Geneva the most lively testimonies of the gratitude of the English. Thus there was established between England and Geneva that close alliance which was and still is sealed by the great name of the Reformer. The mighty monarchy and the little Republic were to be sisters before God, sisters even before men, so much does moral grandeur efface, even in the eyes of the world, every inequality, and if one of the two had to give up the name of sister for that of mother, England would give that name to the city of Calvin.

But one of the kingdoms of that powerful monarchy was to be more specially the daughter, or the sister, of Geneva. In Scotland certain traits of the genius and faith of Calvin were to be graven more deeply than even at Geneva itself.

John Knox had remained on his three visits to Geneva only three years altogether; he came there, moreover, only after having courageously passed through his trials as to his doctrine and his zeal. What then could the Genevese Reformer give him?

Nothing it seems; and yet he gave him much, and Knox, on leaving Geneva, felt as a new man, and Scotland, on seeing Knox again, also felt as if he had been breathed upon by a new breath of doctrine and of life.

What had passed? Let us leave to abler men to study how the genius of Scotland, personified in Knox, entered into communion so intimate with the genius of Calvin. In such questions there are always elements which escape us, things which God alone, the lord of hearts could know. Let us simply state what was, and what is. For three centuries Scotland has manifested it with noonday clearness. She has been proud and happy to be connected, through Knox, with a greater than Knox, and this gratitude, deeper now, perhaps, than at any other period, is not less glorious to Scotland than to Calvin.

Great also was, and great is still, the gratitude of another people, whose destiny was to be decided by the spirit of Calvin. Holland, no more than Scotland or England, had received from him the first evangelical leaven; but she found in him what her first aspirations had sought, and it was in the midst of the most tremendous struggles for her liberty and her faith, that she learned more and more to appreciate what he had imparted to her.

III.

When speaking of the English we referred to the Italians, whose own country never recalled them, and many of whom to this day figure in their descendants in the hospitable city. But the history of their colony at Geneva would call upon us to relate, at the outset, sundry struggles, in which we should not always have to praise the Reformer. Doubtless he could not expose himself to compromise his work by leaving to the Italians a theological liberty which he refused to others; the Calvinist army could keep in its ranks none but soldiers equally submissive and zealous, and the Italians seemed to believe, on the contrary, that zeal might dispense with submission. Even if Calvin had been more disposed to indulgence, he would scarcely have tolerated the audacities which some of them sometimes allowed themselves. It is, nevertheless, painful to see Calvin so imperious, and so harsh with men who had braved Rome to the face, and had forsaken all for the gospel. One error, in his eyes, radically destroyed the merit of all that might have been done or endured for the faith; he himself, as we have seen, was ready, sincerely ready, if he could be convicted of error on one single point, to allow himself to be considered as an impostor and a wretch, and to be treated as such. The trial of Valentin Gentilis marks the culminating point of these struggles with the Italian colony. All that we might have had to say here upon Calvin, either to acquit or condemn, we have already said in the trial of Servetus. Let us not return to that subject.

Gentilis was less courageous than the Spaniard. He was, like him, put upon his trial for his anti-Trinitarian opinions, but a prompt retractation saved his life at Geneva, and led him afterwards to compass his own death. Tormented with chagrin at having given way, he knew no rest till he had restored himself in his own eyes. He returned, therefore, not to Geneva, but to a place at hand, upon Bernese territory, and thence he sent a challenge to any one who would maintain against him the Reformer's opinion. He laid down the conditions of the contest. Nothing but Scripture was to be quoted, and he who was conquered was to be put to death. The Bernese government only accepted the conclusion. Gentilis, who was considered as already conquered, by the fact of his condemnation at Geneva, was conducted to Berne, and there his head fell upon the scaffold. His friends at Geneva were exiled, or exiled themselves, and the Italian community, not without secret murmurs, re-entered that unity, without which Calvin could not understand either Geneva, the part of Geneva, or his own part in that city.

But these latter events occurred after the fall of the Libertines, and belong to a period upon which we have not yet entered. We have placed them here only as connected with those which precede, and in order not to have to recur to these sad subjects.

IV.

To complete the history of the previous period, it remains for us now to say a few words of the Reformer's writings during those nine years. They were the most fruitful years of his laborious life; and, in particular, during them the *Commentaries of Calvin on the New Testament* were published.

Thus, in 1546 and 1547, we have the two Epistles to the Corinthians; in 1548, the Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and the two to Timothy; in 1549, the Epistle to Titus and that to the Hebrews; in 1550, the Epistle of St. James, and the two to the Thessalonians; in 1551, the Epistles of St John and St Jude, and a new edition of all St Paul's Epistles; in 1552, the Acts; in 1553, St Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, which were arranged as a harmony, and supplied with a parallel Commentary, followed by a Commentary on St. John. The Old Testament came afterwards, with the exception of Isaiah, published in 1551, and Genesis in 1554.

The *Commentaries of Calvin* 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 good sense dethroning scholastic erudition; and it is truth, sought in every verse, and every word, by the straightest and shortest road. Doubtless, in many passages, better elucidations have since been found, but it is precisely because his method has been

followed. Biblical science owes him, in a word, what any science owes to the man who transports it to the domain of facts, and lays as its basis, observation and experience. Such a man may still make mistakes in many details, and even on points more important; but he has opened the way to all ulterior progress, and, in that respect, he has a right to claim as his own, the very corrections which others will subsequently make in certain portions of his works. In reading Calvin, moreover, we must never be too ready to think we have understood better or seen farther than he. Modern exegesis has often been surprised to discover that what it imagined to be new had been seen three centuries before by Calvin; often, too, after some of his interpretations have been boldly rejected, they have been taken up again as the best. And, indeed, even in regard to things which he could not know; those which have only been elucidated since his time by travels, by archaeology, or other sciences, his lofty intellect often sufficed to give him a glimpse of the truth across all the errors and all the ignorance of his times.

Those times deemed themselves learned; and in some respects they were right in thinking so. But their science was chiefly erudition; and erudition ill employed is death to true science, and the scourge of the human mind. Calvin, the commentator, will not despise it; but he will receive, and above all, will give, only so much of it as is truly useful, what bears upon the point, and what throws light upon it. He knows that it has often been paraded only to conceal an ignorance which has been too real. In him we never find quotations which are not positively necessary to support or elucidate his statement; we never find interpretations discussed for the pleasure of discussing them; and, above all, we never find anything which resembles an intellectual exercise or playing with Scripture. “It is audacity which necessarily leads to sacrilege,” he will tell you,¹ “to drag the Scriptures hither and thither without any positive aim, and to dally with them as with a thing made for pastime only; as many have long done.” Long, indeed, very long. The mediaeval schools studied the Bible only as a matter for exercise, and as the aliment of scholastic theology; and this is one of the things which explain why they perceived so little the disagreement between the Bible and Romanism. They searched for mere searching’s sake, far more than in order to find; they ploughed and re-ploughed the soil of Scripture, but without requiring it to produce anything. The Reformer, on the contrary, wishes not to lose a stroke of his diligent spade, and he does not mean that, in the smallest furrow he makes, there shall not germinate and fructify, some idea which has been sown there by the hand of God.

This is, therefore, another point in which the living unity of his work appears. In the *Institutes*, which are, as it were, its plan and programme,

¹ Epistles of St. Paul—Dedication to Simon Grynæus.

practice ever runs side by side with theory, and the moral man is ever by the side of the believing man, or rather there is the complete unify of the two; so much so that, where one of the two is absent, Calvin will deny that the other exists. In the laws of Geneva there is the political and civil consecration of this idea; the pertinacious, and, if necessary, the pitiless pursuit of the same ideal. In the Commentaries we find, at last, an attentive and pious search for all that can furnish men with the means of its realisation.

But that which, above all, renders these researches profitable, is the Christian experience displayed in them by the author. Here lies his great ability, for here he is something better than an able man—he is a Christian—nothing but a Christian. In vain, when commenting on the Bible, will be the mere wish to say only what is useful; what will your intention avail if, for want of experience, you do not discern what is or is not useful, and what may or may not serve to the development of the Christian life? In order to this, therefore, you must have lived that life—nay, more, you must have lived it with self-observation, studying in your own heart the influence, bearing, and fruitfulness of each idea. Such is the inner work of which the results are imprinted on every page of the Commentaries; such is also the secret of their power. Although without warmth, they are full of vigorous life, and, thanks to this character of serious truthfulness, the absence of warmth is only a fresh element of authority and power; you perceive the man who will say that only of which he has before him and in him some unexceptionable proof. Hence also follows a result which at first surprises us, when we remember that it is Calvin—the absolute Calvin, with whom we feel so much at ease. The Calvin of the Commentaries, except in a few passages, is no longer the man whom we generally picture to ourselves; he is a friend who leads us through the field of Scripture, relating what he has seen, inviting us to see, allowing us to pause but little before the flowers, and much before the fruit; and with serene good will he offers to us the fruits which have seemed to him the most wholesome and nutritious. But he does not content himself with simply guiding you; he consults you, in some sort, aiding himself by your experience, or amicably constraining you to acquire it, if you have none. You hold the pen with him, and feel his superiority only by the charm which is felt at hearing another express, wisely and clearly, what one has himself thought, or what he may have wished to think.

V.

The publication of the Commentaries had been often interrupted by that of other works, which were required by circumstances at home or abroad. We will indicate the principal of them.

In 1547, Calvin had to write to the Church of Rouen, which was troubled by the doctrines of Libertine Pantheism, preached by an ex-monk. “I must neither dissemble nor hold my peace,” says he in the introduction to this work, “when I hear that the name of God is blasphemed anywhere.”

It is the same idea which he expresses the following year on resuming his pen, not against an obscure monk, but against the famous assembly of which the decrees were to become the gospel of Rome. Nothing yet, it is true, announced such a result. Opened, after long delays, in 1545, the Council of Trent dragged itself miserably along, with a very small number of prelates—twenty- five at first, but afterwards a few more, nearly all Italians, and visibly embarrassed by the grand name of General, or Oecumenical, with which the Council had been decorated. The Romish Church has succeeded so well in forgetting those clay-feet of the colossus, and in causing them to be forgotten, that it is curious to see what a well-informed contemporary was able to say of it, without fear of being contradicted. Calvin asks these few bishops, dressed up with the name of General Council, if there is amongst them at least some well-known name, some theologian of any weight. Though unknown in their obscure dioceses, “a change of air” has sufficed for them to become the light of the world! Their decrees, moreover, are not drawn up by themselves; the true Council of Trent is composed of sundry monks, whom the bishops have brought to make them transact the business. And even were the Council composed of a thousand bishops, the rights which it arrogates to itself would be no better founded on sound doctrine and history. Who ever saw the first Councils ascribing to themselves infallibility? Even had they done so, the errors taught by this would sufficiently prove them to have been in the wrong. Calvin passes under review all the decrees which were published. He shows that, after having proclaimed Scripture and tradition as the sources of faith, the Council has really drawn from the second only; and has, moreover, decreed more than one thing which even tradition does not sanction—amongst others the canonicity of the Apocrypha. They have fallen into errors in substance, or vices in form, and there are contradictions, omissions, unintentional obscurities and intentional obscurities—those, for instance, of the decree on grace. Calvin sees and says all this, and that, in sum, the Council has hitherto produced only one page really true, and that is the one which the legates of the Pope, in their opening instructions, devoted to the delineation of the vices of the clergy, the evils of the Church, and the necessity of applying a remedy. But the decrees of the Council are the best proof that the Romish Church does not possess this remedy; and its subsequent decrees were to prove it still better.

Calvin was mistaken, therefore, in one thing only. He thought—what all Romanists then thought with him, including the members of the Council—that this Council was a failure, and that the obligation of reducing to form so

many errors till then floating about, was a misfortune for Romanism. He therefore judged the Romish Church still too favourably, for he did not think her capable of holding the gospel so cheap as to accept the work of Trent, and to find in it her unity, authority, and strength.

The Council, moreover, had just been prorogued, and it might be doubted whether it would ever be reassembled: and, in fact, it was not till more than fourteen years after. Hence the appearance in Germany, of the famous *Interim*, of Charles V., a singular decree, which pretended to decide what Protestants and Romanists were *provisionally* to believe till a good and true Council, acknowledged by all, should make them agree. The Interim certainly contained good things; but, if it was sufficiently Protestant greatly to displease the Romanists, it was sufficiently Romish to be yet more displeasing to the Protestants. Some, however, in Germany, appeared to be satisfied, and endeavoured to be so. It was to them especially that he addressed his *Interim adultero-Germanum*, which was subsequently published in French, under the title of *Two Treatises touching the Reformation of the Church, and the true means of determining her differences*. This *true means*, according to Calvin, is not and never will be that of the *halfway-men*, the men of accommodations and compromises, such as those who have drawn up the Interim or who approve it. Not that he blames, on principle, all concession, but he sees, in fact, that those who begin to yield, yield too much, and also, that for one man who yields from truly Christian motives, many think only of living in peace at any price. Away, then, with those “framers of a factitious concord;” away, then, with that concord the plan of which is but a tissue of equivocations, a long to-and-fro between the gospel and Rome, between light and darkness.

After having thus characterised the work in itself, Calvin resumes, one by one, all its articles. Errors, half-errors, wiles great and small, consequences patent, consequences latent, he omits nothing, he pardons nothing, and his conclusion reappears more evident each time. The expedients of the halfway-men are nothing worth. One means only is good, and that is frankness; a candid return to the gospel, the frank profession of the gospel. This conclusion Calvin develops once more at the close, in a passage full of life,—an eloquent appeal to suffer all rather than to abandon, even in little things, the rights and interests of truth.

This treatise is, therefore, not only a protestation against the Interim; it has its importance in the history of Calvin’s work. Whether the author intended it or not, it is his answer to those who assert that the Calvinistic reform broke off too completely from Romanism. Was nothing, then, to be retained? we are asked even at the present day. Would it not have been more to the interest of the cause itself to have been more accommodating? “The interest of the cause” is a human thought which Calvin despises and rejects, or rather,

which it does not occur to him to reject, because he knows nothing of it. In nothing does he know anything but the interests of truth; and even if, humanly speaking, the cause must suffer from that, it is of little concern to him. But, here, he does not admit that it suffers from it: the Reformation has everything to gain, even humanly speaking, by breaking with everything that is not the gospel. If you wish to conquer by the Bible,—and by what else would you dream of conquering?—you must not begin by agreeing at its expense, even upon secondary things, with those who have abandoned or burlesqued it. Do not forget, moreover, that it is by secondary things, by forms, practices, and usages, that Rome established and still maintains her empire. The little which you would yield her, would become a great deal in her hands; you would have furnished her with the means to reconquer, if not you at least your children. This is what Calvin had comprehended. Is the danger of acting otherwise less now? So some think. It seems to them that a position marked out by a struggle of three centuries cannot be compromised by allowing it to be encroached upon in a few unimportant points. Such is not our opinion; and we think that the greater part of Calvin's reflections on the Interim are altogether as just now as they were in 1549.

VI.

The same year witnessed his *Warning against that Astrology which is called judicial, and other forms of Curious Desire which now reign in the world*. An author of the nineteenth century could not speak more contemptuously than Calvin of these follies. But he would not have men content with pitying such things; he knows that this is not sufficient to prevent their constant recurrence. "What is the remedy then," he asks, "for obviating such inconveniences? Let every one regard that to which he is called, so as to apply himself to his office. Let men of letters give themselves to things good and useful, and not to a frivolous curiosity, which serves only to amuse the foolish. Let great and small, the learned and ignorant, think that we are not here to occupy ourselves with useless things, but that the end of all our practices ought to be the edification of ourselves and others in the fear of God." Thus it is, always the practical life; and always the banishing of evil, be it what or where it may, by the sense of duty and the fulfilment of duty.

This is always the ruling idea of a treatise which appeared the year after, the *Treatise of the offences which, at the present day, prevent many from coming to the pure doctrine of the Gospel, and draw away others*. The word offences¹ is here taken in its old evangelical sense; it designates all that may furnish the indifferent and the lukewarm either with pretexts for not embracing the Gospel or opportunities of denying it. In dedicating this book to his

¹ *Scandales*.

friend, Laurent De Normandie, Calvin says: “Sir and beloved Brother,— Since I have long ago, and for many reasons, vowed and dedicated to you in my heart some one of my books, I have wished to choose this one amongst others, because your example may serve as a great confirmation of the doctrine it contains. For since you willingly forsook the land of your birth and came here to dwell as a stranger, it is true that you and I can bear witness to the assaults which Satan has devised against you.” And, in fact, scarcely had he arrived at Geneva, when M. De Normandie had received tidings of the death of his father, killed, they said, by grief at seeing his son a Protestant. Two months afterwards, his wife, who had come with him, was carried off by death, and this fresh trial, some said, was the chastisement of his apostacy. But he, on the contrary, saw in it only an additional reason for attaching himself invincibly to the Gospel.

It is this sentiment which Calvin would inculcate upon all men. Trials, contradictions, calumnies, struggles without, and struggles within,—offences, in short, for this word includes them all,—are what he reviews; always concluding that nothing can excuse us from enlisting under the banner of Christ. He divides offences into three classes. The first are those which our heart has the unhappy talent of finding in the Gospel itself—difficulties, obscurities, things repugnant to our inclinations, to our pride especially, and, in short, the *foolishness* of the cross, as the apostle called it. The second are not in the Gospel, but, in some sort, all around it, a kind of barrier which the indifferent rejoice to meet with. To this class belong religious disturbers, the irregularities of the Church or of her ministers, papal despotism, the errors, superstitions, and absurdities which have been preached in the name of Christ, and for which men make Him responsible, in order to dispense with going to Him. The third class, in fine, comprehends the disgust, opprobrium, and dangers to which those are exposed who embrace the gospel. This part, which is the least real now, was then most so; but Calvin places under this head all commonplace objections against the Reformation, and, as those objections have scarcely changed, it contains for us also many things as actually suitable as for the readers of those times. In short, this is one of the most carefully-written and complete of Calvin’s works.

The same ideas appear again, in a more directly practical form, in the *Four Sermons treating of matters very useful for our times*. “Though I have written before,” he says in the preface, “two treatises ample enough to show that it is not lawful for a Christian in Popish countries to make believe in any wise to consent or adhere to the abuses, superstitions, and idolatries which reign there, nevertheless, there are people who every day are asking my counsel afresh. There are others also who do not cease to allege their rejoinders and subterfuges against what I have written on the subject.” Calvin thinks therefore that he cannot do better than publish a sermon which he has

preached upon it, and to this he adds three others which will, he hopes, leave no point undecided.

In the first he shows the obligation to flee *idolatry*—that is to say, all outward participation in a worship which a man does not approve in his heart. Nothing, in his view, is indifferent in the matter of divine worship. Whoever is present at the mass approves the mass, and with the mass, all that belongs to it, and all of which it is become the centre. Whoever submits to one of the Romish forms, submits to the authority which established them, and thereby overthrows, as much as in him lies, the authority of Jesus Christ. “Let us keep, in short, this rule, that all human inventions devised against the Word of God are true sacrileges. . . . I know how harsh and unbearable such strictness appears to those who would be dealt with according to their taste . . . What would they that I should do? I have treated them hitherto only too gently. Whether I speak of it or whether I forbear, we are none the less obliged to keep this law.” Woe, therefore, to those who “indirectly renounce their Christianity.” Woe unto those who are “so entangled in the world” that they cannot, they say, be judged like others. “There is here neither exemption nor privilege for great or small, for rich or poor. Let all, then, bend their necks. Let the poor man fear, lest if he should say, ‘I know not what to do,’ God should answer him, ‘Nor know I what to do with thee.’ Let not the rich be intoxicated with ease and comfort, and let them learn to count all things dung and loss which would turn them away from or hinder them in leading a Christian life.”

In the second sermon, Calvin exhorts to the suffering of all things rather than not to declare openly for the gospel. He insists especially upon this idea, which is often developed in his letters to the martyrs, that strength comes with the trial, and in proportion to the trial. “A young man who dwelt here with us, being taken in the town of Tournay, was condemned to be beheaded if he recanted, and to be burned alive if he persisted. When he was asked which he would do, he replied simply, He who will give me grace to die for His name, will surely give me grace to endure the flames.” But Calvin rarely quotes the noble instances with which contemporary history might have abundantly supplied him; one might say he fears to diminish the glory of the martyrs before God, by praising them before men; or perhaps that he fears to authorise the timid to resign to the strong the care of the battle and the victory. Often even, as we read, we might question whether the generation whom he exhorts to be courageous is the same which had nurtured, and was still nurturing, so many lofty souls; one might rather think it composed of weak men, betraying or ready to betray their faith. It is always, then, as we have said, the general and his army. Ten soldiers who lose heart afflict and grieve him more than he is moved by a thousand who die.

The third discourse aims to teach believers to appreciate the happiness of possessing the truth, of being truly “in the Church,” which, according to Calvin, exists there only where the true faith is confessed. Those who have had nothing to do to procure this happiness, seeing that God “is come to visit them in their nest,” let them tremble lest they render themselves unworthy of it by not appreciating it. Let not those who have bought it by sacrifices or by exile, imagine that they have paid for it; and, above all, let them not deem themselves less guilty if they dishonour by their life that “house of God” in which they are come to dwell. But because Geneva, or any other place of refuge, is not solely peopled with saints, may it be concluded that it is as well to remain in popedom or “the papacy?” Woe unto those “proud villains” who despise the liberty of serving God in spirit and in truth. Cannot a man, say they, “pray to God by himself?” Must they positively “trot to Geneva?” Well, let them not come. They can do still better. Where they are, in the midst of popery, let them raise the standard raised at Geneva. But “our closet philosophers” are too cowardly for that, “and they understand too little the worth of the gift of God.” Be it ours to understand it, and to make it understood.

In the fourth sermon, Calvin’s object is to show “how much trouble a man must take to redeem the liberty of serving God purely.” The development is such as the times demanded; it is full of practical details, and of special refutations and exhortations, such as were required by those who had forsaken their country and their wealth. But he will have the sacrifice complete; he will not allow the exiled Christian to fancy he has a right to claim earthly compensation, still less to make sure of it before starting. Ah! if they had “learned and retained the doctrine of David to prefer a little corner at the threshold of the temple, before the highest places they could elsewhere choose, they would not be so loth to take counsel.” We tell them, indeed, in the name of God, what they have to do; but they wish that there should also be pointed out to them “the ways and means of living.” Hath God then made us stewards,¹ to secure for them a lodging, and to give to each, according to his rank, board and wages? Calvin knows well what Geneva has done, and will always do for destitute exiles; he knows also that their most devoted “steward” is himself. But to promise anything would be to authorise the exile to reckon upon men, or rather upon one man; God must be and remain for earth as for heaven his only hope and his only salvation.

There are in these discourses pages of faultless eloquence, amply compensating for the inequalities with which they are interspersed. They give, moreover, a tolerably exact idea of Calvin’s style of preaching, and it is that which has induced us to dwell for some moments upon them

¹ *Maîtres d’hôtel.*

VII.

Let us mention a few other works, purely theological or purely polemical.

We shall not refer again to the book against Servetus; but we find,

In 1550, a treatise *On the Eternal Predestination and Providence of God*, and another *On the Christian Life*.

In 1552, there was a new edition of the work on Predestination, revised and augmented.

In 1554, there appeared a *Brief Answer to the Calumnies of a certain Busybody, upon the doctrine of Predestination*. That certain busybody was Castalio, and the term indicates but too truly the tone of the work. We have already said how harsh Calvin showed himself towards his old friend. He was not less so in a second answer, published in 1557. When one reads now some of the pages by which Castalio brought upon himself these attacks, the temptation is great to cast all the blame upon Calvin. Castalio was the apostle of toleration, and, in the middle of the sixteenth century, said all that would be spoken now by the most enlightened and liberal Christian. But it is precisely here, if we are just, that we shall find the excuse for Calvin's vehemence. We can understand how such liberality must have appeared to him an abandonment of the rights of truth. And, in fact, is it not often so? And if this inconvenience, though less in our eyes than those of intolerance, yet seems so serious,—could it not have alarmed Calvin?

In 1555, another work appeared;—his *Defence of the sound and orthodox doctrine of the Sacraments, their nature, their efficacy, &c.* The following year there came out a second *Defence*, directed against Joachim Westphal, and, in 1557, a *Last Warning* to the same Westphal, whose ultra-Lutheran ideas on the Eucharist were, in fact, worthier of a doctor of the Sorbonne than of a Reformed divine. Here, again, charity was sadly forgotten. We must add, however, that the pastor of Hamburg had begun the debate, and that in terms which were most insulting to the Church of Geneva.

Calvin had not succeeded, therefore, in having his ideas on the Eucharist admitted into Germany: the death of Luther had broken off his project of reaching the disciples through the master; and when the master was dead, the disciples were even less disposed than before to deviate from his doctrines. Calvin then directed all his endeavours towards the Swiss Churches. In 1540, we saw him reassuring them as to the progress which he was accused of having made towards the Lutheran doctrine.

The same fears were renewed in 1549, and he repaired to Zurich with Farel, and demanded a conference of the clergy. He showed them that his doctrine was not substantially opposed to that of Zwinglius, to which he only added a spiritual and mystical dement, which was always, in fact, admitted by all the pious Zwinglians, their master very certainly included. "Christ

being the truth itself," Calvin had said in his *Catechism*, "He does not merely give us, in this sacred repast, a figure and promises, *but He makes us partakers of His own substance, and unites us with Himself in one life.* Zwinglius, to cut short all danger of Romanism, had, in theory, made of the Lord's Supper a simple memorial of the Saviour's death; but this memorial, said Calvin to the pastors of Zurich, was such that it might have, in practice, a more inward and more powerful efficacy. Why, then, refuse to mention the sacred union which the Supper establishes between the believer and his Saviour? A confession was therefore drawn up, which was afterwards signed by the other Churches of Switzerland. This result greatly rejoiced Calvin in the midst of his trials,—for it was a few weeks after his wife's death, and he thanked God for it, as for the most precious consolation that could have been granted him.

VIII.

Shall we pause to cast another glance upon the life and labours of Calvin during this period?

Let our readers rather go over our record of it for themselves, and if, at the same time, they remember that we have omitted many things,—in particular, that we have given no details respecting the occupations of the pastor and of the professor; that, in short, we have said nothing of his health, which was more wretched than ever—they will speedily come to the conclusions which we might set down here. Faults may be recapitulated, but we shall bow before his indefatigable and fabulous activity,—the perpetual triumph of faith over agony of mind and body.

The next period, comprising also nine years, will take us on to the death of Calvin. We shall have fewer facts to relate. Not that the activity of Calvin had relaxed; but he was more and more acknowledged to be the centre and head of the Reformation in all Western Europe, and found himself mixed up with a great number of events, of which the recital would rather be the history of his age than of himself. We shall confine ourselves, therefore, to what specially belongs to himself

We have seen the Libertines dispute with him for Geneva, and Geneva finally remain with him; we shall, therefore, have to show him completing the work of making her his own, and what he had aspired to make her for the part which he wished to secure to her. This part, we have seen, that the mere presence of Calvin had sufficed to give to the Church of Geneva, even under the Libertines, when the Reformer might have been banished any day. Europe had then not much cause for observing the change which had come over the small republic that had been restored to order and peace; but Calvin, tranquil in his citadel, could the better devote himself to the innumerable cares that so many Churches claimed at his hands.

This tranquillity was, indeed, but relative. Calvin had no more to fear from within; but the citadel might any day be attacked and won, and Calvin knew but too well on whom, in that case, would fall the first fury of the foe. We have already related the attack prepared, in 1563, at the instigation of the exiled Libertines. Calvin had only five months more to live, and it is doubtful whether he would have been allowed to complete them. Three years before, the heretical city had been more menaced than ever.

The Romish princes demanded the reopening of the Council, and the Pope, who feared it, proposed, by way of diverting their thoughts, that they should begin by subduing Geneva. The letters have been found which Pius IV. and Cardinal Borromeo, the future St. Charles Borromeo, wrote on that subject to the King of France, the King of Spain, and the Duke of Savoy. The whole plan of the campaign is traced in them. The King of France is to send troops through Burgundy, the King of Spain through Franche-Comté; the duke is to have his army reinforced by a troop of cavalry sent him by Pius IV., and the papal treasury is to count him out twenty thousand crowns to aid in the preparations. Three armies were therefore to rush at once upon Geneva; humanly speaking, nothing could save her. But if Geneva were taken, to whom should she be given? To that difficulty, under God, she owed her safety, not one of the three sovereigns caring to conquer her for another. But she passed months in continual apprehension, and, in truth, during the lapse of those years, she had not a single day of full security. Thus did she serve, under Calvin, her apprenticeship to that hard life which was so long to be hers. She was accustoming herself not to have her existence assured for a year, not even for a month, but without, for all that, diminishing in the least her courage or activity.

Far, therefore, from seeking to make herself forgotten,—which, indeed, would have been impossible for her while Calvin was there,—she identified herself more and more with the work and genius of him who had fashioned her after his own image; she accepted the responsibility of that apostolate of which the field was continually widening, but of which all the perils were threatening to overwhelm her. In January 1561, when the fears excited by the Pope's intrigues were at their height, a letter was received in which Charles IX loudly complained of the disturbances caused in his kingdom by preachers come from Geneva, and he calls upon the Council to recall them without delay. Great commotion thereupon ensued in the Council. That letter was, perhaps, the first act of the drama which was preparing. What was to be done? Calvin is charged to reply to it; he will know what is best to be said to avert the danger, if it be possible, without disowning the courageous preachers who have been trained in his school. Calvin, therefore, drew up the letter. It is humble in form, but firm in substance. The ministers of Geneva have sent no one into France; but all who have applied to them, and in whom they

have found “some wisdom and grace,” have been exhorted “to employ themselves wherever they went for the advancement of the gospel.” The ministers of Geneva neither could nor ever can do otherwise, for “since they are persuaded that the doctrine which they preach is of God, tending to make known aright the grace which He hath given us in Jesus Christ, it cannot be that they should not desire it to be sown everywhere.” Could it be that the most Christian king did not desire this himself also? And after this almost ironical remark, he adverts to the “troubles” for which the king blames the preachers. Troubles, properly so called, they are complete strangers to. “They have laboured with all their might to prevent the occurrence of any outbreak; they have never advised any change in or attempt against the state.” But if men may brand as a disturbance any emotion caused by the preaching of the gospel, and any success obtained by those who preach it, then the preachers are guilty, very guilty, but Geneva will not forbid them to be guilty in such a way. Such is the conclusion of the letter—a little veiled, indeed, but clear. The letter reached the king, signed, not by Calvin, but by the “*Syndics and Council of Geneva*,” according to the official formula.

The facts were in conformity with the words. A letter from the Reformer to Bullinger (May 1561), shows us to what an extent, and by the simple pressure of circumstances, that active and powerful propaganda was organised. “It is incredible,” writes Calvin, “with what ardour our friends devote themselves to the spread of the gospel. As greedily as men before the Pope solicit him for benefices, do they ask for employment in the churches beneath the cross. They besiege my door to obtain a portion of the field to cultivate. Never had monarch courtiers more eager than mine. They dispute about the stations as if the kingdom of Jesus Christ was peaceably established in France. Sometimes I seek to restrain them. I show to them the atrocious edict which orders the destruction of every house in which divine service shall have been celebrated. I remind them that, in more than twenty towns, the faithful have been massacred by the populace. But nothing can stop them.” These lines are one of those rare passages in which Calvin allows himself to be surprised into a little enthusiasm. He is happy in the apostolic papacy with which he is invested by the candidates for martyrdom; he is proud of it—not for himself; for there is not a word indicative of pride, but for the noble cause of which he is the acknowledged leader.

IX.

But enthusiasm never made him lose sight of the more positive side of his office, and amidst that ardent and youthful soldiery he remained the man of discipline and order. He had not waited for the complaints of Charles IX. to forbid the Protestants of the kingdom all that might, with justice, be called

disturbance or violence. In vain have all his letters to the churches of that country been ransacked, not a word has been found in them which could be considered as an appeal to force or reprisals, and his enemies have been compelled to fabricate the two famous letters which are still sometimes quoted, though their spuriousness has been abundantly proved. The pretended original manuscripts, preserved in the archives of the family of d'Alissac, have been recently examined. Not only are they not in Calvin's handwriting, nor in that of any one of his known secretaries, they are full of faults of spelling and style, which have been carefully corrected in the printed copies. Even when corrected in other respects, the style bears no resemblance to that of Calvin. It is impossible to express more absurdly counsels to murder and pillage, and of abject humility towards the Baron du Poet—a humility never shown by Calvin, even when writing to the greatest princes. Finally, in the first, M. du Poet is called *General of the Religion in Dauphiny*, and this letter is dated 1547, a period in which the Reformed religion had in Dauphiny neither a soldier nor an organised church, and when M. du Poet was still a Romanist! In the second letter, dated 1561, the same person is called the *Governor of Montelimart, and High Chamberlain of Navarre*, dignities with which he was not invested till long after the death of Calvin.

Even if we had not these details, the fraud would be sufficiently proved by the contrast these two letters offer when compared with others; let us take, for instance, only the one he wrote, in 1562, to the famous Baron des Adrets, whose outrages dishonoured the Reformed religion, and who ended by relapsing into Romanism. Having made himself master of Lyons, des Adrets authorised there the irregularities of a soldiery which had been trained by his bad example. "It is high time," Calvin writes to him, "that moderation should be shown. . . . You must strive to obtain it, sir, and especially to reform an abuse which is in nowise to be tolerated; it is this,—that the soldiers pretend to make booty of the chalices, reliquaries, and such like utensils of the churches. What is worse is, that it is reported that one of the ministers has thrust himself in amongst them. . . . What a horrible offence to disgrace the gospel, and to expose to opprobrium the cause which in itself is so good and holy. . . . We have not hesitated, sir, to let you know privately our opinion, and to exhort you in God's-name virtuously to exert yourself in this matter." Thus, the bare thought of the pillage perpetrated at Lyons spoils all the happiness he would feel at seeing in the hands of the Protestants a city which had been so cruel towards them. This sentiment reappears in his letters on many other occasions. No success rejoices him so much as to make him reconciled to seeing it accompanied or followed by things he does not approve; he intends that all the champions of the Reformation, the bearers of the sword as well as the bearers of the Word, should be serious and pious men, altogether worthy of their cause. Several times, in particular, we see him blaming

the Protestants for having seized upon Romish churches. He would have them fall into their power by the force of events, by the conversion of whole towns or villages, as was sometimes the case; and till then, the Protestants must assemble, it matters little where,—in houses, in barns, or in the open air, if needs be, and this moderation will gain them many more adherents than the usurpation of churches. But Calvin will not expatiate on this last idea; he would fear to counsel anything that savoured of calculation, and to preach *the interest of the cause*. What is wrong is wrong, and must never be permitted. This is his morality on all occasions. But he did not content himself with being grieved, as a Christian, by certain details of the struggle; he took a yet higher view, and comprehended what the Reformation might lose, even if victorious, by becoming in France a military and political party. The only combats and the only triumphs worthy of her, he said repeatedly, were the sufferings of her martyrs already recompensed by so many conquests. Scaffolds and faggots bear fruit; wars, and even successful wars, are barren. So it was seen ere long. If the Reformed religion could have gone on growing ten years longer as she had grown till then,—poor, austere, strictly confined to the religious sphere, and watered with blood indeed, but her own blood,—she would have been mistress of France. Events were shortly to confirm too well the apprehensions of Calvin. But here, again, he set aside the question of consequences, contenting himself with calling evil what seemed to him to be so. Observe, amongst others, his letter to Coligny respecting the conspiracy of Amboise, that untoward commencement of political Protestantism which henceforward, was to be associated with Christian Protestantism. He was accused of having shared in it, and even of being its instigator, seeing that its head, La Renaudie, had lived at Geneva a short time before. Calvin, then, tells the admiral what had passed. “Some one,” said he, “asked counsel of me whether it would not be lawful to resist the tyranny which was then oppressing the children of God. As I saw that several already cherished the same opinion, after having given him a positive answer that he must abandon it, I endeavoured to show him that there was no foundation for it in the will of God.” The person who had taken “the business in hand did not consider himself beaten. He made “great lamentations over the inhumanity practised, in order to abolish their religion, and that they were hourly expecting a horrible butchery to exterminate the poor believers.” “I answered simply,” continues Calvin, “that it would be better we should all perish a hundred times than be the cause of exposing the gospel to such a disgrace.” The conspirators persisted. “Then seeing the matter thus going the wrong way, I lamented grievously, and often have these words been heard from my mouth, ‘Alas! I did not think I should live to see the day when we had lost all credit with those who boast of being believers! Must the Church of Geneva, then, be thus despised by her children?’” Calvin identifies himself with the Church of

Geneva; she reprove, and will reprove like him, any use of carnal weapons in the great war of faith. This sentiment is the more remarkable, that it seemingly agrees but little with the Calvinistic notion of a Christian State. But Calvin carefully distinguishes between possession and conquest. When the gospel possesses the State, let there be then a close union between politics and the gospel; but for the gospel to possess the State, that is to say,—for Calvin demands always the real and not the apparent,—to possess it really and intimately, it must have been conquered by the only gospel weapons — faith, persuasion, example, and patience.

X.

This suffices, we think, to determine the character of the influence exercised by Calvin upon the Churches of France. He never relaxed in his labours to maintain them on purely religious ground, or to bring them back to it; and if, in spite of so many very different incitements, religious energy continued to circulate mightily in their bosom, and if political Protestantism did not prevent Christian Protestantism from growing uninterruptedly in piety, knowledge, and devotedness, it was in great part to Calvin that they were indebted for it. There is scarcely one of his letters in which he does not recur to his ideal of the *Church under the Cross*, growing before God in proportion to her sufferings, and desirous before men of no other glory.

Notice, amongst others, his two beautiful epistles *To the Believers of France*, in June and November 1559. He is not addressing in them some small Church, to which, in fact, suffering alone could be recommended, but he is speaking to all the Churches, to a party which, as was shortly seen, could raise armies, take cities, and seize upon half the kingdom. And yet, what he would say to the smallest Church, he says to that great party, composed of more than two thousand churches, and he says nothing more. To suffer, to suffer again and again, is the only combat which he commends; to fertilise by their blood the field of truth, is the only victory of which he vaunts. “Doubt not,” he writes to them, “even if the wicked had exhausted all their cruelty, that there shall be one drop of blood which shall not fructify to augment the number of believers. If it does not seem at first that the fortitude of those who are called to bear witness is profitable, nevertheless acquit yourselves of your duty, and refer to God the profit which is to accrue from your life or your death, for He will know when and where to reap the fruit . . . Let us permit this thick darkness to pass away, waiting till God shall bring forth His light to rejoice us, though we are never destitute of it in the midst of our afflictions, if we seek it in His Word, where it never ceases to shine. Thither it is that you must direct your eyes in these great troubles, and rejoice that He honours you in that you are afflicted for His Word’s sake, rather than

chastised for your sins, as we should all well deserve to be, but for His forbearance.” This is the only concession which the austere Christian will make to the persecuted Christians; he permits them to consider themselves as suffering, not as sinners, but as soldiers of Jesus Christ. Warlike images often recur to his pen, but always strictly limited to their spiritual sense. “Persecutions,” he says in his second epistle, “are the true combats of Christians. Assaulted, what must they do, if not run to arms? Now, our arms, to do battle in this position, are to fortify ourselves in that which God shows to us by His Word. . . . And since the poor flock of the Son of God has been scattered by the wolves, retire to Him, praying that He would take pity on you, and that He would stretch out His hand to shut their bloody mouths, or turn them into lambs.” Such is the line of conduct traced out by Calvin for the Protestants, and that in the first days of the reign of Francis II.—a reign which was short, but which might have been long, and had given up France to the Guises, who were thirsting for Protestant blood.

XI.

It would be interesting to see how Calvin watched over and followed the carrying out of his programme in every one of the Churches with which he had to do. We are far from possessing all the letters he had to write to them. Some of them were in constant correspondence with him—those of Poitou, amongst others, and those of the neighbouring districts, who looked upon him as their first founder. Calvin scarcely ever alludes to this latter circumstance, for, with him, the work is everything, and the workman, even when it is himself, is nothing; once only will he say to the believers of Poitiers: “Since it hath pleased God to make use of our labour for your salvation.” But he usually begins and ends his letters to these Churches with the more solemn forms of apostolic salutation. Their general tone is also sometimes still more serious than in his other letters; the father will be more apparent, but the brother does not disappear, for it is remarkable how faithful he remains to the great Calvinistic principle of the equality of pastors. He will, therefore, sign himself “*your humble brother*;” and this term, even after some forcible admonishment, neither shocks nor astonishes. It is impossible not to see in it at once the expression of a true sentiment and of a just idea. Calvin, however, loses nothing by it. The authority of God and of God’s Word merges in his own all the more readily that it borrows nothing from hierarchical pretensions or from pride. Hence also in his exhortations, counsels, and rebukes, there is a perfect equality of tone. He will no more swell out his voice with the small than with the great, with the great than with the small; and that voice, ever the same, will all the more be that of duty, law, and wisdom.

The Church of Paris, of which he had also been, in some measure, the founder, was always peculiarly dear to him; its importance, besides, as the Church of the metropolis, was a sufficient recommendation. But it was on that account more recommended also to the watchfulness and severities of the enemies of the Reformation: and it was only in 1555 that it succeeded in establishing itself. Calvin, in March, 1557, congratulates her on her onward course “amidst the fears and assaults” to which she is daily exposed; he sends her two pastors in the name of the Church of Geneva. She had asked for more, but, for the moment, all are employed, “and therefore, Sirs and Brethren, I shall supplicate our gracious God to have you in His holy keeping.” Yes: God keeps his people, but not always as they understand it. Less than six months after this letter, Calvin writes to them again, but it was to comfort them in a fearful trial. The populace had been set on against a peaceful assembly held in the Rue St Jacques. An infuriated mob had dragged to the Châtelet all that they could lay hands on, and the magistrates had sanctioned the arrests. “Brigands and robbers were taken out of the most noisome ditches and dungeons,” Beza relates,¹ “to make way for these.” The arrangements for the trial were in progress, and the stake was evidently about to be erected. It was then that Calvin wrote: “True it is,” he says, “that the trial is great and hard to bear, to see such dreadful tribulation, and that God delays to stretch out his hand, but it is not said without reason, that God will try our faith as *gold is tried in the furnace*, and if sometimes He permits the blood of His people to be shed, nevertheless He accounts their tears precious.” Hitherto the French martyrs have been of obscure condition, “contemptible to the world.” But now there are some who are more elevated according to the world, and their sacrifice will be the more striking, their blood all the more fruitful. In fact, amongst those who had been thrown into the dungeons of the Châtelet, there were several noble ladies. Three letters from Calvin, one addressed to all the female prisoners, and the two others to two of them, carried consolation into that abyss. The catastrophe occurred on the 4th of September. On the 27th one of these noble ladies, Philippine de Lunz, the widow of the lord of Graveron, mounted the pile with two of the deacons of the Church, and bequeathed her example to her companions. The executioners beheld her approach with a smile of happiness on her face, and dressed in white as for a festival. She was not four-and-twenty years of age.

But if Calvin spoke to the surviving ladies only of the duty of dying like her, he none the less exerted himself to save them. It was at his suggestion that the Swiss cantons and the Protestant princes of Germany interceded with Henry II. in their behalf: it was he also, who, thinking of every thing, busied himself with sending a little money to the prisoners. If there is “a drop of

¹ Ecclesiastical History.

humanity in us," he writes to the Churches of Vaud, "let us succour them in such need," and if it should happen, continues he, that "money should not be promptly found there, I will make such efforts, even if I have to pledge myself head and feet, that it shall be ready here." At the same time, he got presented to Henry II., in the name of the Protestants of France, a confession of faith, designed to open his eyes as to the new calumnies with which they were now loaded. They were no longer accused merely of revolts, as when Calvin addressed the *Institutes* to Francis I.; their doctrines, their morality, their assemblies everything in them was now full of nameless abominations, such as were reported of the primitive Christians by the pagan multitudes. Did the king give any heed to this document, which was perfectly frank and clear? His policy had need of the German princes; and it was to them, probably, far more than to humanity or to Calvin, that he yielded. Four new victims had perished, and a promise was made that there should be no more executions. But all who would not abjure were left in prison, and several died worn out by ill-treatment. In January 1558, Calvin wrote again to the Church of Paris, to comfort her under the weakness of some and the sufferings of others, and to announce the departure of two new ministers. One of them, Jean Macar, was pastor at Geneva; his zeal and knowledge had endeared him to Calvin, and his eloquence, to all the people. It was with sorrow, but without a moment's hesitation, that his offer was accepted of going to throw himself for a while into that bloody whirlwind at Paris. "We have been willing not to fail to help you," Calvin writes, "by depriving ourselves of our brother." Arrived at Paris, Macar ventured to ask permission to visit the prisoners, and, strange to say, it was granted him: the judges were won over and fascinated by this fearless courage. But Macar ventured many other things. His letters to Calvin contained the most curious details as to the semi-barbarous civilization which the Church armed against the gospel Geneva recalled him, and, shortly after, when the plague broke out, Macar asked to brave death once more by consoling those who might be struck by that scourge. He was plague-stricken himself, and he died, "to the great regret of the whole republic," says the registers, "and to the great loss of the Church."

XII.

Such then—and we have omitted a number of details—were the relations between Protestant France and the Church of Geneva. But he who had organized the latter regretted to see the Church of France without any regular organization, and as earnestly as he dissuaded her from embodying herself into a political party, so earnestly did he desire to see her *one* as a Church.

It was therefore under his inspiration that there met at Paris, in May 1559, that humble assembly which the unanimous assent of the Churches was

going to adorn with the name of first National Synod. Only eleven Churches were represented there, including that of Paris. It was little, and it was much. The delegates staked their lives.

There, then, were laid the foundations of the edifice, the materials for which had been accumulating for forty years.

There was first a confession of faith, easily drawn up at this moment, when no serious difference of opinion existed in the churches, which were all faithful to Calvin's theology. There was next a system of discipline, which was simple and brief, but which clearly traced the chief outlines, and was in short a true constitution, quite ready to shelter all the laws and institutions which might afterwards derive their inspiration from it.

The starting-point is the *Church*, in the apostolic sense of the word, the local Church, the body of believers grouped in the same locality, town, or village. It is for them to assume, as soon as they can, the form of a Church, by the nomination of a consistory, the call of a minister, and the establishment of regular worship.

Over the Church is the Conference,¹ a group of churches. The Conference is to assemble twice a year; and every Church is to be represented therein by a minister and an elder. It regulates all affairs common to the Churches in its circuit.

Over the Conference is placed the *Provincial Synod*, which assembles once a year. It is the Conference enlarged,—a group of several Conferences; and each Church sends to it also a pastor and an elder. By it the election of pastors must be made; but every Church is to ratify the choice which has been made for it.

Finally, and above all, comes the *National Synod*. This is composed of two pastors and of two elders, delegated by each provincial synod; it is the ultimate judge in all affairs, and there is no possible appeal from its authority.

This constitution had been dictated by Calvin. If, with our modern ideas, we perceive therein some infractions of the democratic principle, which was placed by Calvin at the foundation, we can, on the other hand, scarcely fail to recognize in it a remarkable adaptation to the situation and wants of French Protestantism. It was necessary that the basis should be at once as wide and as popular as possible, and that the authority, at each degree more concentrated, should be one, and powerful, and capable of maintaining itself by the side of the royal authority, whether friendly or hostile.

Yet Calvin did not entertain the idea of seeking this unity and strength in anything which should remind us of the episcopate. This was not because the episcopate in itself seemed to him condemned by the Gospel. It cannot be said, in fact, that the Gospel forbids the establishment in any Church of a

¹ Colloque.

chief pastor, or a general overseer. Error and usurpation arise when men are no longer content to consider the episcopate as an office instituted by the Church, and when men attribute to the bishop a divine right, a mystical and necessary superiority over the inferior ministers. Calvin, in the *Christian Institutes*, had expressed himself so as to leave the Churches at full liberty on this point. In the letter to the duke of Somerset, he speaks of “the office of *bishops* and *curates*.” In a letter to the King of Poland, Sigismund II., he himself proposes, in case Poland should break off, as he hopes it will, from the Romish Church, the establishment of a Polish episcopate. Why will he have nothing similar in France? Probably, in the first place, because the equality of the pastors seems to him more certainly evangelical and primitive. In the next place, doubtless, because the episcopate would always be in danger of bringing back a part, at least, of the Romish abuses in relation to that head. He accepts it in England, but it is because it is already there; and he advises it in Poland, only because he does not think he can do otherwise. In France, where he is not compelled to admit it, he will not admit it. Besides the above reasons, he knows and feels that French Protestantism must, and for a long time, be a missionary, militant, and suffering Church, requiring martyrs rather than chiefs, who might easily be softened down by grandeur, and easily spoiled by the ambition of always rising higher. The Reformed Church of France will therefore be really and seriously a republic, and closed to all that might injure its form or enervate its spirit.

It was assuredly a misfortune to have to constitute the Protestants a state within a state, and especially to constitute a republic within a monarchy,—a great cause of envy should they be powerful, and a great pretext for persecutions, should their enemies have the upper hand. But Calvin had no choice of means. For a Church as for a State, the question whether it is to be or not to be, is always the first to present itself. It was the will of the Protestants of France *to be*, and they had paid dearly enough for the right to will it. Moreover, they did not aspire to remain indefinitely a state within the state, but to become the state itself by assimilating to themselves the whole nation; and the rapidity of their progress sufficiently authorized that hope. If royalty were once drawn into the movement, it would be possible to confer on establishing a more perfect harmony between the two powers.

XIII.

The progress which was already so rapid at the time of the first synod, became still more so when the scattered Protestants felt themselves to be members of a great body, constituted by a formal act. Churches rose by hundreds, and adherents came thronging to them by thousands and tens of thousands. It was not from month to month, nor even from week to week, but

literally day by day, that the conquests of the Reformed religion might be certified. It was a strange spectacle that France then presented. On the one hand there was royalty, in the persons of Henry II. and Francis II., father and son, who were seized, as it were, with a rage for executions; on the other hand, instead of the handful of poor creatures to be inferred from the tone of the edicts and the atrocity of the measures taken, there were cities and whole provinces; there was a large portion of the nobility, and shortly after the majority; there was the Duchess of Ferrara, the daughter of Louis XII.; there was the Queen of Navarre; there was her husband, the head of the house of Bourbon; there was the Prince of Condé; and, lastly, there was Coligny, one of the finest characters of that or of any other age. Such was the army which the *man of Geneva*, as he was called at court, saw growing up, and of which he felt himself to be the head. He, moreover, constantly had his eye upon those other heads, princes, and great lords whose presence might do so much good, or so much harm, according as the gospel was the one thing needful with them, or only the second, and an accessory. How many cares did that miserable King of Navarre cost him?—now a zealous Protestant, from whom, it seemed, everything might be hoped, and now wavering, feeble, and cowardly! But with Coligny how completely is he at his ease! How he feels that he is the Christian hero whom he may praise, without reserve, in the firm assurance that their common Master will also praise him as a good and faithful servant!

A first letter from Calvin to Coligny sought him out in Flanders, where he was the prisoner of the King of Spain, after the battle of St. Quentin. Captivity and sickness completed his conversion to the gospel. His memoirs represent him as meditating one day on the mysterious chances of human destiny, and saying, “All the comfort I have is that which it seems to me all Christians ought to take—that such mysteries are not acted without the permission and will of God, which is ever good, holy, and reasonable, and does nought without just occasions, of which however I know not the cause, and of which I ought as little to inquire, but rather to humble myself before Him.” The comfort which he sought in the Bible came also to him in a letter from Calvin. Calvin exhorted him to bless his captivity, already so prolific in the fruits of life, and which, by its prolongation, might become yet more so. “God hath, as it were, drawn you aside. You know how difficult it is in the midst of the honours, riches, and might of this world, to lend Him an ear. . . .” God will speak with him alone; God has found the way both to his ear and heart Coligny left his prison the following year, not only with that profound faith which was to be the soul of his life, but with the resolution of fleeing from those honours and grandeurs, the momentary loss of which had been so blessed to him. He made over to his brother the post of colonel-general of the infantry, renounced that of governor of Paris, requested to be replaced as

governor of Picardy, and went to seek in his manor of Châtillon-sur-Loing, for the continuation of the holy leisure of his captivity.

There, under the gentle influence of his wife, Charlotte de Laval, his convictions and piety were yet more strengthened. Calvin had prepared her for this noble part. The same day on which he wrote to the admiral to congratulate him on his trial, he had written to her, to congratulate her, both on the trial and the holy task which would afterwards be the more easy for her. On another occasion he warns her "to prepare herself to hold fast" seeing there would be no lack of those who, on his return, would endeavour to bring him back into the bonds of popery and the world. "Reflect," said he to her, "that your duty will be, by your example, to help him to take courage." Now, on his return, the only thing which still prevented him from declaring himself publicly, was the fear of exposing his wife to trials which she might not have the courage to endure. One day, therefore, when urged by her, he began to depict the frightful sufferings of the Protestants, adding, as his memoirs tell us, "that, nevertheless, if she were disposed not to refuse the common lot of all those of the (Reformed) religion, he, on his part, would not be wanting in his duty." She desired no more, and shortly after it was known that Admiral Coligny had publicly received the communion from the hands of a minister.

The year 1560 was about to realise, in colours yet more sombre, the picture drawn by Coligny for his courageous wife. New edicts of extermination were published; in every parliament a *chambre ardente* (burning chamber) was established, the sole office of which was to condemn to the flames all who were suspected of belonging to the Reformed religion. Paris, Toulouse, Dijon, Bordeaux, Lyons, Poitiers, and other cities, witnessed a shocking series of executions. On the 21st of August, at Fontainebleau, at the opening of the Assembly of Notables, a man rises, approaches the throne, bows, and presents the king with a petition, the *Supplication of those who, in divers provinces, call upon the name of God according to the rule of piety*. It is the Reformed religion asking, not only to live, but to live in broad daylight, under the king's protection; it is Coligny who stakes his head by placing the request at the foot of the throne. Accordingly, the man of Geneva will again find for Coligny some of those words which, in his mouth, are enthusiasm. He therefore writes to him, five months afterwards, "We have wherewithal to praise God for the singular courage which He hath given you to serve for His glory, and the furtherance of the kingdom of His Son. Even if all the world were blind and ungrateful, and it should seem as though all your trouble were lost, be content, my Lord, that God and the angels approve you." In a letter to Bullinger he says, "The admiral is the only man upon whom we can reckon;" the only man, he meant to say, among the great; for it is in the very same letter in which we have already heard him congratulate himself on

the progress of the Reformed religion, and on the fervent courage of those who were setting out to preach it.

Perhaps also this word—"the only man," was but the expression of the grief which some then occasioned him. The King of Navarre, amongst others, did more harm than an enemy, and Calvin wrote to him, the same month (May 1561), a severe letter, in which he showed him that his vices were the source of his cowardice. Even Coligny's brother, François d'Audelot, had for a moment wavered. Confined, during several months, in the castle of Melun, he had finally consented to hear mass; but afterwards, alarmed at his fault, he had written to Calvin to confess it, and, if possible, in some degree, to justify himself. Calvin replied, and with one back stroke laid low all the scaffolding of his excuses. Even if they were accepted by men, "all this can never unburden you before God." Has he not been a scandal to believers? Has he not demolished what he had raised? Has he not furnished the enemies of the truth wherewith "to triumph," imagining that they have conquered in him the Reformed religion, the Gospel, and Jesus Christ? "It has therefore been a very bad fall which you should remember with bitterness of heart" The bitterness was already great; and it became still greater,—d'Andelot found no rest till he had expiated his fault. "I never knew a man," wrote his illustrious brother, "more a lover of piety towards God; and I humbly pray the Lord that I may depart this life as piously as I saw him die. God was about to grant him still more. He did not die less piously than his brother, and he died a martyr!

XIV.

Though the following years saw Calvin not less mixed up with the affairs of French Protestantism, let us confine ourselves to a few leading facts.

In 1561 the famous Colloquy of Poissy took place. It had been convoked by the court of France in the chimerical hope of some accommodation between Romanism and the Reformed religion. Calvin, of whom every one had thought at first, but whose departure the Council of Geneva opposed, found there a substitute in a man who was already beginning to be regarded as his successor,—Theodore Beza. We have the letter which the Council wrote on that occasion to the King of Navarre, who was Protestant enough for the moment, and took great interest in the matter. "As to the worthy Theodore Beza, our good pastor and minister, we are constrained to own to you, Sire, that it is to our great regret that he has undertaken this journey, for we know what hurt both the Church and school will suffer from his absence. But if it pleases God that his labour should bring such fruit, we know well it is right to forget all private consideration . . . and we pray you, Sire, that it may please you to take under your protection a part of our treasures in the person of him

whom there is no need for us to recommend to you.” These words, so honourable for Beza, show us the position he had acquired at Geneva, where he had been only two years; but Calvin had drawn up the letter, and consequently it also shows us how free Calvin was from the slightest feeling of jealousy. The most flattering sentiments which the Council could have uttered respecting himself, Calvin puts into the mouth of the Council respecting a colleague whom Poissy was to bring into such prominent relief. The same remark applies to all his letters to Beza, during the sojourn of Beza in France. “Thou canst not imagine,” he writes to him on one occasion, “how tormented the Council is, scarcely daring to hope that thou wilt return.” Another time he says, “So long as thou art not restored to me, I shall feel continually as if something were lacking to me.”

The saying of the Cardinal of Lorraine, after the first speech of the Protestant orator, has often been recalled. “Would to God that he had been dumb, or that we had been deaf!” But it is easy to be deaf when the desire to be so exists; and where did it ever exist more strongly than in the Cardinal of Lorraine? The colloquy, as was to be expected, served only to display the gulf which separated the two Churches. But the young king, Charles IX., or rather the Queen-mother, had shown dispositions less hostile—in fact, almost friendly; and we find Calvin, in a letter to the Admiral Coligny, indicating, as one of the results to be pursued, that the King should agree with the Queen of England, the Princes of Germany, and the Swiss, to protest against the Council of Trent; which had long been prorogued, and was considered by many Romanists null and void, but which there was some talk of reopening. The plan of Calvin failed, but another great result followed the colloquy—the new impulse given to the Reformed religion. In vain had the prelates at Poissy treated her as a criminal, and sat there, as they said, only as her judges; the country had viewed the matter in a very different light, and shortly proved it to them. A pastor of the district of Agén wrote to Farel that three hundred parishes in those parts had just “put down the mass.” “Four thousand, six thousand ministers,” added he, “might find employment in the kingdom.” These numbers, which seem thrown out at a venture, will not appear exaggerated if we remember that the admiral, when desired by the Queen-mother to give her the list of the Churches already organised, found *two thousand one hundred and fifty*.

The clergy concluded that too much mildness had been shown, and pleaded for measures increasingly terrible. The government, inspired by the Chancellor de l’Hospital, and impeded besides by the material impossibility of proscribing everywhere the new form of worship, was beginning to think of admitting in principle the co-existence of the two religions in the kingdom.

Hence appeared, in January 1562, what is called the *January Edict*.¹ This act granted to the Protestants the right of assembling, provided it was outside the towns—a singular clause, since in several towns the majority was on their side. Beza advised them, however, to observe the edict, which evidently led the way to greater liberty. We have seen what Calvin's system was—to use no violence, and to expect all from the force of circumstances, without in the meanwhile relaxing in the least, and without sparing any toil or sacrifice.

But about the same time the King of Navarre was completing his pitiable evolutions. Undermined by the debauchery for which opportunities were purposely scattered in his path, and seduced by the promise of recovering his kingdom of Navarre, or of receiving an equivalent, he ended by relapsing into Romanism. Beza, who was still in France, failed in all his efforts to keep him back; and a long and urgent letter from Calvin met with no more success. But the queen was firm. “The compassion which I have for your anguish,” Calvin writes to her, “makes me feel how great and bitter it is to you. Yet, be that as it may, it is better far for you to be sad for such a cause than to become indifferent to your ruin.” Ill treated by her husband, she went to her states of Bearn, leaving her son, but beseeching him with tears to hold fast to the faith of his mother. That son, alas! was the same who was one day to say, “Paris is equal in value to one mass!”²

XV.

Still, the massacre of Vassy had showed with what degree of good faith the chiefs of the Romish party would carry out the edict, which had been promulgated within less than two months. It was the signal of war. “It is to be observed for ever,” says Agrippa d'Aubigné in his *Universal History*, “that, so long as the Reformed were put to death under the form of justice, however iniquitous and cruel it might be, they held out their throats and had no hands. But when the magistrate, weary of the flames, cast the knife into the hands of the people, who could forbid unhappy men to oppose arms to arms, and steel to steel, or to catch from unjust fury the contagion of righteous rage? The insurrection, moreover, was authorised, or nearly so, by the Queen-mother, who was weary of the yoke of the Guises, by whom she and the young king were almost kept prisoners, and who therefore wrote to the Prince of Condé a letter in which she seemed to place herself, the king, and the kingdom under the protection of the Protestants. Hence they could without scruple enter upon the path towards which they were impelled by the necessity of self-defence, and Calvin, without contradicting himself, could approve of the war, only reserving, as we have seen, the right to condemn

¹ *Edit de Janvier.*

² “*Paris vaut bien une messe.*”

every excess. When the Prince of Condé was menaced in Orleans, and solicited succour from the Protestants of Germany and Switzerland, Calvin energetically seconded his request; he supported no less energetically a request from the Protestants of Lyons, who were the masters of the city, but were menaced by the Romish army. Berne, Neuchâtel, and the Vallais, granted some troops, and d'Andelot, about the same time, brought from Germany a body of six thousand men; we see Calvin, moreover, writing to the Churches of the South of France to urge them to find the money required to pay the little army. The Protestants have been reproached for receiving this aid from foreigners, and Calvin has been represented as a Frenchman who delivered his country up to the Germans and Swiss. Had not the Guises begun by allying themselves with Savoy and Spain, inviting two foreign princes for the extermination of the Protestants who, at that moment, spoke only of living in peace under the edict of January? Indeed, the Protestants had never spoken of anything else; it required all the excitement of war to carry them sometimes beyond that which defence rendered lawful, and never were excesses approved, still less commanded by their religious leaders.

Whilst Calvin is indignant about a few thefts committed at Lyons, the parliament at Paris, docile to the inspiration of the clergy, sanctions, by a solemn decision, all the murders which have been or are to be committed. Every Frenchman is enjoined to "fall upon" the heretics and kill them "as mad men, the enemies of God and man," wherever they meet with them. The Duke of Guise laid siege to Rouen, and here also is another contrast between the children of the two Churches. In the Romish army there was license and debauchery of every kind; but in the city order and seriousness, praying and psalm singing, and calm and dignified courage. The city when taken was given up for a week to the fury of the soldiery, and after that came the judicial murders. Amongst the victims was the minister Marlorat, one of Beza's companions at Poissy. The King of Navarre had allowed himself to be put at the head of the Romish army. Mortally wounded during the siege, he seemed to return, in his last hours, to the faith which he had betrayed.

On the 19th of November was fought the battle of Dreux. The Protestants were nine thousand, the Romanists nearly double that number. This was not much for either side, but there was war from one end of France to the other, and every one had to think first of all of his town, his village, or his house. The Protestants had the advantage at the outset, but afterwards the Duke of Guise obtained, thanks to a body of reserve, not a victory, for the hostile army withdrew in good order, but a most important result—the Protestants were prevented from marching upon Paris, which they would have occupied without difficulty. Now, the occupation of Paris might be the signal for the definite triumph of the Reformed religion in France. Men were fully prepared for this, as is proved by a saying of the Queen-mother, when a report was

spread that the Protestants were conquerors, “Well, then, we shall pray to God in French!”

It has been calculated that a thousand men, and perhaps seven or eight hundred men, would have sufficed to change once more the aspect of the fight, and, with the aspect of the battle, that of France for centuries, for nothing is less tenable in presence of the history of those times, than what has been written in our days respecting certain obstacles, internal and invincible, which victorious Protestantism would have encountered. The French spirit is alleged, the great gulf which separated and still separates it, we are told, from the sombre genius of Calvin. But those Calvinists, whom France was beginning to count by millions, were Frenchmen; they were Frenchmen, too, who were to remain steadfast in her bosom through two centuries of oppression; they were Frenchmen also who were to flee, preferring to abandon all rather than deny the faith of Geneva; and those thousands of pastors who were going to keep invincibly, both in their native land and in exile, the traditions of Calvinistic austerity, were Frenchmen. Besides, the question is not what Frenchmen were or are, but what the Reformation made them; and when we behold her creating so rapidly characters so remarkable, transforming in the north, in the south, in every part of the kingdom, considerable populations, how can it be pretended that the rest must necessarily have escaped her influence? One explanation alone is possible; God did not then will the triumph of the Reformation in France. Why did He not will it? Away with our questions! His ways are not our ways; let us submit and be silent!

This is what Calvin had more than once to preach after the battle of Dreux, to all those hearts which were, less cast down by defeat than painfully astonished at seeing God abandon the cause. They too said—Wherefore? “I abide for my sole answer to Abraham’s saying, *God will provide.*” Thus wrote Calvin to the governor of Lyons, M. de Soubise, his old disciple at Ferrara, who always signed himself in his letters. *Your obedient son and friend.* But Calvin foresaw this time that obedience would be hard, and he insisted all the more on its being full, entire, and not paid to himself of whom he spoke not, but to God. When God “takes away the sword from those with whom He had girded it,” they have but one thing to do,—to wait till God restores it to them. Submission will be “difficult of digestion.” What matter! “God hath given us a heavy blow: let us remain cast down till He lift us up. Since God wills to afflict us, let us keep quiet.” And assuredly neither M. de Soubise nor any one else imagined that this meant, “Let us hide ourselves.” *To keep quiet*¹ with Calvin and his disciples could only be to humble themselves before God,—to be steadfast before men,—to hope and to pray. The counsel is as good now as it was in 1563.

¹ *Se tenir coi.*

The Edict of Amboise, which was published on the 19th of March, was less favourable than the Edict of January, but it still admitted the principle of the co-existence of the two forms of worship. Violated by the Romanists wherever they had the power at their command, and violated by the Protestants, wherever they were numerous enough to cast off the restraints that shackled their worship, the Edict of Amboise notwithstanding, brought, if not peace, at least a truce. But it was one of those truces in which no one seeks to conceal that his purpose in remaining quiet is to prepare for the coming combats which he foresees. It was in the midst of these anticipations, in May 1564, that the important and mournful news, which had been expected, it is true, for several months, reached the Churches—Calvin was dead!

XVI.

Hitherto, during this final period of his life, we have only seen him in his action abroad;—let us now behold him at Geneva, and, that we may not have to recur to them, begin with his writings.

We shall not give a complete list of them. It is very long, and, on quitting the foregoing recitals of wars, troubles, and tortures, it is with a singular feeling we run over those titles which transport us into the silent closet of the thinker. True, many of them are still war-cries: Blandrata, Daniel de Saconay, Gentilis, Baudouin, and yet others, did not brave with impunity that pen whose point, it could be wished, had oftener been tempered by charity. But the rest are of a very different nature, and their number is considerable.

In the first place, there are the Commentaries on the Old Testament. Isaiah had already appeared in 1551, and Genesis in 1554. Afterwards came, in 1557, the Psalms, and, the same year, the prophet Hosea; in 1559, the twelve minor prophets; in 1561, Daniel; in 1563, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Jeremiah; and in 1564, Joshua. Several of those Commentaries were not written by him, but taken down from his public lectures by Charles de Jonvilliers, his secretary, and Johannes Budæus.

All that we have said of his Commentaries on the New Testament, we might say of these. Simplicity, wisdom, practical sense and truth, not always found, but always earnestly sought after, and by the shortest road. “I know,” he will say to you, “how many would find it much more to their taste that there should be a heap of matters accumulated, the more so that this has great splendour and acquires renown to those who do it; but nothing has commended itself more to me than to look to the edification of the Church. God, who has given me this will, grant by His grace that the issue of it may be such!”

This “will “and these qualities are nowhere more remarkable than in the work of which Calvin spoke in these lines, the Commentary on the Psalms.

Here we find the important preface which we have often quoted, and which contains nearly all we know, from himself, of his history and inner life. Accustomed, as we have seen, to carry on together the study of the sacred books and that of his own heart, the study of the Psalms was peculiarly attractive and profitable to him “If the perusal of these my Commentaries,” he says, “brings as great advancement to the Church of God as I have found profit in them to myself, I shall have no occasion to repent of having undertaken this labour. I am wont to call this book an anatomy of all the parts of the soul. The Holy Spirit has here described, in a lively manner, the sorrows, sadnesses, fears, doubts, hopes, solitudes, and perplexities, and even the confused emotions by which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. For the rest, if the readers should derive any fruit or profit from these Commentaries, I would have them to know that the experience which I have gained from the combats in which the Lord has exercised me, albeit it has not been very great, has nevertheless greatly helped me therein.” He relates to us how even the history of David has continually made him reflect upon his own. David, the shepherd, and afterwards king of Israel, is to him a figure of the dispensations of Providence towards himself, so low at first, and become—What? You think, perhaps, that he is about to take the humanly glorious side of the comparison, and to see, in David’s royalty, a type of his own, as spiritual head of many more Christians than David ever had subjects? By no means. That high and excellent dignity to which he blesses God for having raised him, is simply that of “minister and preacher of the Gospel.” He recognizes no loftier title, and when he speaks of “small and mean beginnings,” he has not in view the time in which he was unknown, but that in which, already known, and already on the road to fame and glory, he knew not the truth, or had scarcely begun to catch a glimpse of it. Thus, even when he seems to bring himself forward, it is only as a Christian placing himself before God, and before the Word of God, in order to study human life in his own life, and in his own heart, the human heart. The *Commentary on the Psalms* is a master-piece of moral and religious analysis.

The same years witnessed the appearance of several series of sermons, also taken down, for the most part, by his friends, for he always preached extempore, but they were published under his own eyes and probably revised by him.

A first series, on the Epistle to the Galatians, had already appeared in 1552; the second, upon two chapters of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, belongs to 1558, as well as the third, a collection of discourses on various subjects. In 1562 there appeared five series, of which one was of sixty-five discourses on the first three gospels. In 1563 came the last, a series on the two Epistles to Timothy, and one on the book of Job. These last discourses have been held in great repute, especially in the sixteenth century. Coligny

used to have them read and re-read to him. These austere studies on misfortune, resignation, and providence were calculated to please men who lived amid so many troubles. Job was to them, even more than David—a personification of “those sadnesses, fears, doubts, and perplexities” by which the human heart is assailed. Job represented to them also the Church, given up for a time to the malice of the great enemy of souls, but predestined to triumph and to renew her strength, like the eagle, under the lifegiving eye of her God.

XVII.

This sentiment was scarcely less necessary to the Genevese than to the Protestants of France; for we have seen by what ever-recurring dangers they were surrounded. Calvin succeeded in inspiring them with this sentiment, and he did this better than by preaching it eloquently. His whole life was its highest and most complete expression. It is trust, still trust, always trust, and when the danger redoubles, it is the redoubling of trust. That frail tabernacle which might any hour be swept to the ground, was that in which the imperturbable co-worker with God pursued his task as in an impregnable tower: that city and that Church, which possibly had not a week to live, was that wherein everything was developed under his care, as in profound security. A letter from an Italian refugee, Vergerio, transports us into that solemn atmosphere in which sounds from without might indeed at times re-echo painfully, but stopped no one in his work.

The work of Calvin embraced everything. The former disciple of Alciatus was the jurisconsult of Geneva, no less than her divine; the public archives contain many files of law-papers annotated by his hand. In civil cases his sagacity and his legal knowledge are admirable; in criminal cases, his severity, as was to be expected, is great, but great especially towards those who knew the good and voluntarily chose the evil. He wishes that the human judge, like the Supreme Judge, should require much of him to whom much has been given. Often also the jurisconsult had to merge into the diplomatist. Calvin, whom we have already seen interfering in the critical matter of the pretensions of Berne and of the banished Libertines, was the soul, and sometimes the agent of all the negotiations in which Geneva had to take part. He brought to them his customary penetration, his clearness of exposition, his candour, and his uprightness; for never did he admit the idea that there could be two moral codes,—one for the private individual and another for the politician.

But great affairs were far from being the only ones on which the Reformer was consulted; details, curious and strange, have been preserved as to the services sometimes required of him. That Robert Stephens the printer,

should have consulted him on printing, and should even have owed to his counsels a part of his reputation, is readily understood; but if any trade somewhat novel and delicate requested permission to establish itself at Geneva, the Council would send the people to speak with M. Calvin to show him their wares, and to work under his eyes, and, according to his opinion, the authorization was granted or refused. One day, a surgeon comes, and the Council wishes Calvin to be present at the examination he has to undergo. Another day, it is a dentist, whose art is new, for hitherto men had only been drawers of teeth, but he announces himself as taking care of and repairing them. He is sent to M. Calvin, and Calvin receives him, puts himself into his skilful hands, and recommends him to the magistrates. It was he who, already in 1544, had endowed Geneva with a trade of which the profits were a great help in hard times;—Genevese cloths and velvets had a great sale in France until the reign of Henry IV. Sully is much lauded for having established the French manufactures; but Calvin had done no less at Geneva.

Geneva owed also to him regulations which we should simply rank under the head of police, but of which he had understood and had made others understand the connexion with moral order. Cleanliness was then unknown in towns; and, at most, in times of plague a few measures were taken, to be subsequently abandoned. Calvin demanded permanent regulations; and the city assumed an aspect which astonished travellers. The markets were carefully watched over, and nothing damaged or bad appeared without being immediately confiscated. One day, when the accidents which happen to children were spoken of before him, he began to think of the means of preventing them, and a regulation was made in consequence.

For still better reasons there was no civil law made which he had not asked for or approved. Already in 1542, soon after his return, we see him entrusted with the drawing up of the ordinances which were to fix the political state of Geneva; and it was no small thing to reduce to order the elements of a constitution hitherto so far from precise. Calvin was for a democracy strongly governed, but truly and really a democracy, and he repelled whatever might tend to diminish or subvert that principle, which in his view was the only true, and the only logical one. He combated, from this point of view, certain measures proposed in 1542, and which in spite of him, were adopted. He announced that the danger might possibly not appear so long as the State was threatened from without; but, he said, let external security come and complaints will arise, and discord will make its appearance. The dissensions of the eighteenth century were to show that he had been right, but only after a hundred and fifty years; accordingly, whilst we recognize the correctness of that prevision which permitted him to foretell so unerringly, we might ask if the fault then committed was not providentially overruled for good. If Geneva had been more democratic, would she have been sufficiently united to

resist the assaults of every kind which the close of the sixteenth century and the entire seventeenth had in store for her? We are told that she would have escaped the intestine troubles of the eighteenth; but it is first of all necessary to know if the eighteenth century would have found her still standing. The same Providence which had given her Calvin, modified therefore, this once, by the hand of men less wise than he, the views of the Reformer; but, in all the rest, he was the direct instrument of God's designs with regard to her. Not a research has been made in the history of those years, which has not revealed the trace of some idea originated by him, or of some influence exercised by him, a deep, luminous trace, and almost always prolonging itself through the whole history of Geneva; and that is to say through the whole history of the Churches of which Geneva was to remain the metropolis when he was dead.

XVIII.

One idea, above all, had long pursued him, and he wished not to die before he had seen it realized.

The Reformation was, humanly speaking, the daughter of knowledge, and had everywhere laboured to secure the reign of knowledge. This was to secure what was her own, and thereby that which belonged to the Gospel. Centres of light had everywhere been rekindled or created; and Geneva, thanks to Calvin, had been resplendent among them all. Was the torch to be extinguished when Calvin should be no longer there to hold it? Calvin thought therefore of providing for such a contingency, and, in fact, he did provide for it.

On the 5th of June 1559, eleven days after the opening of that first National Synod at Paris,—which, as we have seen, was presided over by the genius of Calvin,—a festival was celebrated at Geneva; a festival which was austere and yet joyous,—joyous with that joy which follows the accomplishment of great works.—Let us listen to an eye-witness, the Secretary of State, Michel Roset.

“On Monday, the 5th day of June 1559, according to the decision made in the Council; my very honourable Lords Syndics, with several of the Lords Councillors, and myself the Secretary, repaired to the temple of St. Peter, where the ministers of God's Word, learned doctors, scholars, and men of letters were assembled in great number. And after prayer to God was made according to the exhortation and Christian remonstrances of the worthy Jehan Calvin, minister of the word of God; by the command of the said Lords, the laws, order, and statutes of the College, with the form of the confession to be made by the scholars who wish to be received into this University and College, together with the form of oath which is to be taken by the

rector, masters, and lecturers in the same, were published with a loud voice. . . . Then was declared and published the election of the rector, made according to the said laws by the ministers, and confirmed by my very honourable Lords Syndics and Council,—the worthy Theodore Beza, minister of the Word of God, and burgher of this city. Who, after this declaration, made a hortatory oration in the Latin tongue, for the happy commencement of the exercise of his office. The same having finished his speech, the aforesaid worthy Calvin rendered thanks to God, the author of this good, and exhorted every one, as matter of duty, to profit by so great a benefit. And finally, having thanked my said very honourable Lords for their good will, this happy day was finished by the thanksgivings and prayers of all to our God and Father, to whose honour and glory be ascribed all things.”

This ceremony had its political importance. The Emperor Charles IV., two centuries before, had offered Geneva a university, but on condition that the Count of Savoy should be its patron or protector. Geneva understood what she should have to fear from new power bestowed upon the prince whose yoke she had shaken off, and in spite of all the advantages promised by such an establishment, she refused. What she had refused at the hands of a prince, she now established of her own authority, and the institution became a distinctive monument of her independence.

But this was Geneva in view of the past; Calvin probably thought far more of the present and of the future. The present was Geneva as the Reformation had made her; the future was Geneva continuing and consolidating the work

Great, however, would be the error of him who should picture to himself Calvin organizing, at a large outlay of men and of money, a university properly so called. Let us not forget that Geneva was a republic of fifteen or twenty thousand souls, that she had been long ruined by war, and condemned afterwards during a perpetually doubtful peace, to constant military expenditure, and also called incessantly to maintain multitudes of exiles. Calvin had asked of the magistrates only what he could reasonably expect: five professors, himself included, were to compose the academy. Two were to teach theology, one Hebrew, one Greek, one Philosophy, or, as was commonly said, *the Arts*. As for medicine and law, Calvin announced in his discourse of the 5th of June, that they would be provided for afterwards. This promise was fulfilled, so far as law was concerned, in 1565, one year after his death.

But in his mind, the Academy was only to be the topstone of an edifice of which all the parts, or nearly all, were yet to be erected. It was necessary that sound and intelligent preparatory studies should mould generations capable of profiting by the superior instruction which was to be offered to them. We have seen Farel, as early as 1536, getting a college established, but that college, with its one master, supported by two assistants, had never pros-

pered. An institution without such deficiencies was required, a series of distinct classes, each under its own tutor. Calvin asked for seven. But, a suitable building was also required, and here the money question asserted itself unpleasantly. 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 ten thousand 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 severely from quartan-ague, dragging himself slowly over the works, encouraging the workmen, and contemplating with joy the rapid progress of the edifice. The 5th of June 1559, the College was ready to receive both pupils and masters.

XIX.

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 that 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 it 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!

That secret, moreover, is also inscribed on all the pages of the rules of the constitution, promulgated at St Peter's, at the ceremony of the 5th of June.

It is easy to make regulations in which piety acts a part; but it is less easy to place it and to maintain it in the centre, so that all should radiate from it and return to it, and that nothing should be done, even out of the primary circle, of which piety should not still be the centre. This was the problem which Calvin had to solve, and the sequel showed that he had applied himself to it admirably.

But after all, however excellent the regulations, it was to be a college for a small city, and an academy with five professors. Why was their inauguration to mark an era, whilst history has lost, or scarcely mentions, other dates which seemed destined to awaken echoes more loud and long?

Two causes may be indicated: the circumstances and the man. But these two causes are connected. If it may be said that the inauguration of Geneva, as learner and teacher, would, but for the circumstances, have been only an

insignificant fact, it must also be acknowledged that those same circumstances owed in great part to the man,—to Calvin,—their long and mighty fruitfulness. During seventeen years, Calvin alone had in himself constituted the whole academy of Geneva. This fact, instead of condemning it to die with him, had prepared it, on the contrary, to live indefinitely from his life. Calvin was not its founder, but its father. Let us remember, too, that the academy of Geneva was not an isolated work, and a separate creation. The true creation of Calvin was Geneva as a whole, and the academy was only one of the parts of that whole so strongly and so closely linked together. Geneva, the teacher, was none other than religious Geneva; religious Geneva none other than moral and political Geneva; and all this was Calvin. She was therefore to be guarded, not only within, by her strong unity, but, without, by the perseverance of the nations in seeking in her him whose features were graven in their memory, and the thought of whom was, in their mind, identified with that of Geneva. Both worlds, the Protestant and the Romish, were alike to compel her, the one by love and the other by hatred, to remain the city of Calvin, and to be incapable of becoming anything else, if she did not wish to be nothing.

And here, again, is another element of the parallel between the French and German reformers, which, at every step we take, develops itself. After having freely recognised the superiority of the latter on more points than one, why should we hesitate to say that here Calvin seems to us decidedly the superior? He has left—we no longer speak of Geneva, but of the whole Calvinistic world on the two shores of the ocean,—a deeper impress. Luther is surrounded by a poetic halo; he lived, and still lives, in millions of hearts which he has won by his engaging and original individuality. But, after all, Luther had not to create a people: he was but the highest expression of the aspirations, ideas, and genius of Germany; and he had only to reveal himself

to her for her, in some sort, to find herself all to him and all in him. Calvin not only had to conquer, but, for conquest to be possible, he had to effect a transformation. He wished for new men; *new*, doubtless, above all, in the evangelical sense of the word, but new, also, as reproducing his own characteristics and his own genius. He had less power over their hearts; but their souls he marked with his seal, which can be recognised, after three centuries, in all those who claim to be his, and even amongst those who deny him, or whom he would have denied! To conquer after this manner is to create.

But let us not give him praise which he would not have accepted. God alone creates; a man is great only because God thinks fit to accomplish great things by his instrumentality. Never did any great man understand this better than Calvin. It cost him no effort to refer all the glory to God; nothing indicates that he was ever tempted to appropriate to himself the smallest portion of it. Luther, in many a passage, complacently dwells on the thought, that a petty monk, as he says, has so well made the Pope to tremble, and so well stirred the whole world. Calvin will never say any such thing; he never even seems to say it even in the deepest recesses of his heart: everywhere you perceive the man who applies to all things,—to the smallest as to the greatest,—the idea that it is God who does all and is all. Read again, from this point of view, the very pages in which he appeared to you the haughtiest and most despotic,—and see if, even there, he is anything other than the workman referring all, and in all sincerity, to his master.

XX.

We are drawing near to the end of our task, for we have already related the history of the years which he had yet to live after 1559.

Death could not seize him unawares; even had he thought less of it as a Christian, the harsh voice of sickness was there to warn him almost uninterruptedly. With the assistance of his own letters and those of his friends, the sad chronology of his ailments might be reconstructed. Yet he scarcely ever enters into details; one single letter is entirely devoted to the subject, but it is a sort of memoir which his friends obliged him to write to the physicians of Montpellier, whom, unknown to him, they had consulted. Everywhere else, if he alludes to his health, it is cursorily; he does not say, with the Stoic, that pain is not an evil, but he never does it the honour to devote to it more than a sentence or half a sentence. When the rupture occurred between him and M. de Falais, who had become the friend of Bolsec, he says to him: “I write you this present, as preparing myself to appear before God, who afflicts me anew with a malady which is as the mirror of death before my eyes.” At other times, the registers of the Council furnish us with occasional data. In January 1546, the Council is informed “of the sickness of M. Calvin, *who hath no*

resources,” and allots him ten crowns. Calvin refuses them. The Councillors then decide on buying with the ten crowns a cask of good wine to be conveyed to his house, and express the desire “that M. Calvin should take it in good part.” Calvin, not to give offence to *my Lords*, accepts, but he afterwards employs ten crowns of his salary “for the relief of the poorest ministers.” In 1556, as he had become very sensitive to cold, the Council sent him some firewood, which he insisted upon paying for, but the Council would not hear of it. In 1560, another cask of wine was sent, seeing, says the register, “that he has none good,” and this time Calvin accepted it. Some historians have had the heart to reproach him because of these few presents which were offered him during a ministry of six-and-twenty years, and, almost all, refused or paid for, though they were all sufficiently justified by the deplorable state of his health. But what has not furnished accusations against Calvin? It is doubtful whether one man could be named whose life has been more obstinately defamed in its minutest details; and in presence of the many infamous stories circulated as to the cause of his ailments, we can understand that other historians have thought themselves moderate, if they accused him only of making use of them to get good wine or money. He also refused during his last illness the quarter’s salary which was brought to him. He had not earned it, he said, how could he accept it? This disinterestedness greatly struck his enemies, who were then more equitable than those of the present day. This is the characteristic which even the pope, Pius IV., on hearing of his death, pointed out in him: “that which made the strength of that heretic,” said he, “was that money was nothing to him.” Calvin’s strength had a very different cause assuredly, and one of which his indifference to money was only a consequence; but it is pleasant to prove to the end the perfect unity of his life. Evidence was now afforded that the sick man who refused his pay, had not the means to defray the expense of a protracted malady; and if death had tarried longer, he must either have accepted the money of the republic, or sell his library and furniture, the only property the Reformer left. He never saved, and never could have saved. Even in his best years, he writes to Viret in 1549, he could scarcely make both ends meet, on account of that “heavy burthen of passers-by,” to which allusion was made by the register when his salary was settled. But, he adds, that for two years provisions had been dear, and he had been obliged to contract some debts. “Nevertheless, I say not this by way of complaint: God is good to me, because I have all that suffices for my desires.” This did not prevent people from being found, if not at Geneva yet elsewhere, who accused him of avarice; accordingly, he says in his preface to the Psalms: “If there are any whom, in my lifetime, I cannot persuade that I am not rich and moneyed, my death will show it at last.” One day, a stranger knocks at his door, and it is Calvin himself who opens it. The stranger can scarcely believe his eyes. He had pictured to himself a sort of

palace and courtier-like servants. Calvin smiled at his surprise, and then it was his turn to be surprised. The stranger was no other than Sadolet, the cardinal, who had been so roughly treated by him in 1540, and the cardinal had expected to find a cardinal's retinue, at the very least

XXI.

Calvin had never entirely recovered from the violent attack of quartan ague from which we saw him suffering in 1559; indeed, he had not properly attended to it, for, Beza tells us, when forced to suspend his preaching and his lectures, he nevertheless "laboured at home in spite of every remonstrance, so much so, that during this time he began and completed his last revision of the *Christian Institutes* in French and Latin." The following years therefore witnessed the increase of all his ailments. Pains in his head, pains in his legs, pains in his stomach, spitting of blood, difficulty of breathing, the gout, and stone,—in fine, nothing was wanting to his long torture, which was scarcely interrupted by a few days less intolerable. It was towards the middle of 1563 that the fatal issue began to be no longer doubtful. A letter from the bishop of London, written in June, shows us how anxiously the progress of this alarming decay was watched at a distance. The bishop conjures Calvin to work a little less, and to preserve himself for the Church, which so greatly needs him. Many others daily gave him the same advice. He heeded it little; work, while it eventually aggravated his sufferings, served powerfully to divert him from them, and, besides, he did not think himself at liberty to refuse what was not absolutely impossible. He continued to preach, though preaching fatigued him dreadfully, and he might easily have found a substitute in that office. But on the 6th of February 1564, a violent fit of coughing stopped his utterance, and the blood gushed into his mouth. He was obliged to come down from the pulpit, and his flock understood but too well that he would never enter it again.

The following weeks were terrible. At times he remained for several days without taking any food, and only swallowing with much difficulty a little cold water. Every day might have been his last. On the 10th of March the Council ordered public prayers "for the health of M. Calvin, who has been long indisposed, and is even in danger of death." But God willed that the Christian should show himself as eminent as the theologian, and Calvin was prepared for this trial of his faith. He had never murmured at the miserable health which cut him off in his best years, nor did he murmur during those days of agony which were completing the destruction of his earthly tabernacle. The critical moments in his disease were perceived only by the increased pallor of his features, the quivering of his clasped hands, and the

words of submission which came to his lips. This agony was to last for nearly four months.

“Nevertheless,” Beza tells us, “he did not cease to work. For in this last malady he translated from Latin into French his *Harmony on Moses*, revised the translation of *Genesis*, wrote upon the book of *Joshua*, and finally, revised and corrected the greater part of his French annotations on the New Testament, which others had previously put together. Besides this, he never spared himself in the business of the churches, answering both by word of mouth and by writing when it was necessary, though on our part we remonstrated with him for having so little consideration for himself. But his ordinary answer was that what he did was as nothing, and that we should suffer that God should find him watching and working as he might, till his last breath.”

On Easter day (2d April), he caused himself to be carried to church. Truly it was a solemn hour when he was seen approaching the Lord’s Table. Never had his finest sermons had half the eloquence of the spectacle presented by that shattered frame, that look in which life had rallied all its energy, and that hand which was stretched out towards the sacred symbols, not, as on a famous day, to take them from the profane, but to receive them humbly from the hands of a pastor and a friend, who was more moved and trembling than himself. That friend and pastor was he whose words we just now quoted, and from whom, ere we terminate, we shall have to quote more than once.

XXII.

But the communicant of the 2d of April was still, and could not but be till his latest day, the pastor and father of the Church of Geneva.

He wished to speak once more to the magistrates, and asked an audience of them. The Council decided on going to his house, and the humble dwelling of the Rue des Chanoines witnessed the arrival of the twenty-five *lords* of the city in all the pomp of public ceremony. Their registers have preserved the summary of Calvin’s words, which were modest and affectionate, but sound and full of meaning, like all he ever said or wrote. He reminded them of the blessings which God had granted to Geneva, and of the perils from which He had saved her. Other perils might come, and God would still save her, but on condition that she remained faithful. It was for them as magistrates to set her an example of fidelity. Geneva is a post of honour; and could those who kept it dishonour it? In conclusion, Calvin commended them by a fervent prayer to the Author of all grace, and “thereupon,” says Beza, “having begged them one and all to pardon him his faults, he held out his hand to them. I know not if there could have been a sadder sight for these magistrates, who all considered him, and rightly, for his office’ sake, as the mouth of the

Lord, and for his affection, as their own father, and indeed several of them he had known and trained up from their youth.”

On the morrow, he wished to see the pastors, and the Company therefore visited him in a body. He addressed to them a discourse, says his historian, “the substance of which was, that they should persevere in doing their duty well after his death, and that they should not lose courage; that God would protect the city and Church, although they were menaced in different quarters; that they should be united; that they should recognise how much they were indebted to the Church of Geneva, into which God had called them; that those who might wish to leave her would indeed find excuses upon earth, but that God would not suffer Himself to be mocked.” He then reminded them of his exile, his return, the struggles of every kind which he had had to sustain, and how, finally, he had seen the blessing of God upon his labour. “Let every one, therefore, be confirmed in his vocation, and maintain good order; let the people be well looked after, and kept obedient to the doctrine, for it would render us very guilty before God, if, when things have advanced so far, they afterwards fell into disorder, owing to our negligence.” He then declared, as on the previous day to the magistrates, that he knew well that disease had sometimes rendered him morose, hard to please, and even irascible; but that he asked pardon of God in the first place, and then of his brethren; “and finally,” Beza adds, “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.”

A few days before, he had made his will. In the first part, he blesses God for having called him to know the Gospel and to make it known, humbling himself for not having laboured more abundantly. In the second place, he distributes to his nephews and nieces the approximative produce of the sale of his books and furniture, two hundred and twenty-five crowns, which is “all the property God hath given me,” he says, “according as I have been able to rate and estimate it.”¹ Ten crowns are to be given to the college, and ten to the fund for “poor strangers,” or refugees. His brother Antoine is named joint-executor with Laurent de Normandie, his fellow-countryman and old friend.

XXIII.

Another friend, the oldest of all except Cordier, was missing at his death-bed, and that was Farel. On the 2d of May, Calvin received a letter in which Farel announced that he wished to see him again, and that he was going to set out. See him again! Farel is nearly eighty years of age, and Calvin is going to die; can they not wait to see each other again elsewhere? So Calvin

¹ The sale brought in three hundred crowns.

thought, and he dictated immediately the following note;—"May it be well with thee, very good and dear Brother, and since it pleaseth God, that thou shouldst remain after me, remember our constant union of which the fruit awaiteth us in heaven, as it hath been profitable to the Church of God. I will not that thou fatigue thyself for me. I breathe with much difficulty, and I am expecting from hour to hour to breathe my last. But it is enough if I live and die in Christ, who is gain to His people both in life and in death. Once more, adieu to thee and to all the brethren thy colleagues." But Farel was already on his way: dusty and exhausted, for he had come from Neuchâtel on foot,—Calvin saw him enter his chamber. What did they say to each other? We regret that the seriousness of history will not allow fancy to supply the place of documents, for here it would be easy to invent. All the happiness which can be enjoyed by two veterans in remembering their campaigns together, we see sparkling in the eyes of those two soldiers of the gospel. Before each other, and before God, they can say with the Apostle, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken." They can congratulate each other upon their speedy entrance there where there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor labour, nor struggle; though they would be ready, if God willed it, to enter the lists again, even if it were to meet with greater trouble yet, and a very different death. How many common friends have disappeared from this world's stage! How many labourers have been consumed by the work! But the Master is One who is able, of the very stones, to raise up children and helpers. Who then should presume to think himself necessary to the Lord's designs? The greatest workman, if a Christian, will humble himself in his misery, and when the hour is come for him to sleep in the tomb, he will fall asleep without regret, giving back the work to Him from whom he had received it as a momentary trust. Farel departed comforted, strengthened, and, perhaps, for the first time, jealous of the traveller of 1536.

But death still tarried. The 19th of May, or the Friday before Whitsunday, brought round what were called the *censures*, which he had instituted. The clergy assembled on that day to admonish each other fraternally and afterwards partook together of a modest repast. Calvin desired that this repast should be prepared at his house, and, when the hour was come, had himself carried into the room. "My Brethren," he said, "I am come to see you for the last time, for, save this once, I shall never sit again at table. Then he offered prayer, but not without difficulty, and ate a little, endeavouring," says Beza, "to enliven us." But, continues he, "before the end of the supper, he requested to be carried back to his chamber, which was close by, saying these words with as cheerful a face as he could:—'A partition between us need not prevent my union in spirit with you.'" He spoke truly. He sat no more at table, nor did he even rise again. The bed to which he returned was to be his death-bed.

The following days, his friend tells us, were nothing but a perpetual prayer. He often repeated these words of the Psalmist,—“O Lord, I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it,” or these words of Isaiah, “I did mourn as a dove.” Gradually his “assiduous prayers and consolations” became “rather sighs than intelligible words, but they were accompanied by such an eye that the look alone testified with what faith and hope he was supplied.” On the 27th of May, “it seemed that he spoke more loudly and more easily, but it was the last effort of nature.” Towards eight o’clock in the evening, he expired, and “so it was, that on that day, at the same moment, the sun set, and the greatest light on earth in the Church of God was withdrawn to heaven.”

XXIV.

And the day following, at two o’clock, an immense procession of citizens and strangers accompanied him to the cemetery. The Church wept for her head, and the State for her chief citizen and her surest protector after God. His defects, which had already been effaced by his glory and his services, had completely disappeared in the pure halo with which death encircles the Christian’s brow; and willingly would all those multitudes have graven upon a magnificent monument the testimony of their unreserved admiration, their deep gratitude, and their profound veneration. But he had enjoined that everything should be done “after the customary fashion,” and that customary fashion, which was observed almost down to the present day, was that no monument should be raised upon any grave, however illustrious the deceased might be. The earth alone, therefore, covered the remains of Calvin, and he had no other official epitaph than this half line inscribed by the side of his name in the Consistorial register—“*Went to God, Saturday the 27th*” Were his bones left longer in peace than those of the vulgar dead? None can say. At all events, for more than two centuries that grave has been dug over again and again like the rest by the sexton’s spade; and for less than twenty years a small black stone has marked the spot where Calvin *perhaps* reposed, for it is only a tradition.

Strangers have been seen who are indignant at that small stone; but others contemplate it with more emotion than would have been called forth by a splendid mausoleum, even though it unquestionably pointed out the spot. Such an abandonment of the perishable being brings you face to face with the thinking, living, immortal being in another world—already immortal on earth by the profound and ineffaceable traces which God has given him to leave upon it. You contemplate him in his work; you follow him through the three centuries which have seen him so mighty over so many minds and so many souls, even of those who have been trained to hate him; and there you

understand how the city created in his image should have felt no more than he did the need of marking out his last resting-place. For her as for him the spirit was all, and the body nought. Calvin was not dead: Calvin was going simply to carry on, when absent in the body, that reign which his genius and faith had founded. Thus thought, with the Genevese, all those who already peopled his vast empire, and all those who were yet to people it, and death, in causing the man to disappear, did but exalt the Reformer.

But the man, in spite of his faults, has not the less remained one of the fairest types of faith, of earnest piety, of devotedness, and of courage. Amid modem laxity, there is no character of which the contemplation is more instructive; for there is no man of whom it has been said with greater justice, in the words of an apostle, "*he endured as seeing Him, who is invisible.*"

THE END.