

# **THE FRENCH (1500–1526)**

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## Chapter 1

# Universality of Christianity

Universality is one of the essential characteristics of Christianity. It is not so with human religions. They are adapted to a certain people, and to the degree of cultivation they have attained; they keep these nations stationary, or if by any extraordinary circumstance the people attain a fuller growth, their religion is left behind, and by that means becomes useless to them.

There has been an Egyptian, a Grecian, a Latin, and even a Jewish religion; Christianity is the only religion of mankind.

Its starting point in man is sin; and this is a characteristic not peculiar to any one race, but is the heritage of every human being. Hence the Gospel, as satisfying the universal and most elevated wants of our nature, is received as coming from God by the most barbarous and by the most civilized nations. It does not, like the religions of

antiquity, deify national peculiarities; but it does not destroy them as modern cosmopolitanism would do. It does better; it sanctifies, ennobles, and raises them to a holy unity by the new and living principle it communicates to them.

The introduction of Christianity into the world has wrought a great revolution in history. Until then, there had only been a history of nations; now there is a history of mankind; and the idea of a universal education of the human race, accomplished by Jesus Christ, has become the historian's compass, the clue to history, and the hope of the nations.

But Christianity exerts its influence not only on all nations, but also on every period of their history.

At the moment of its appearance, the world was like a torch about to become extinct, and Christianity rekindled it with fire from heaven.

Subsequently, the barbarian tribes, having

rushed upon the Roman empire, had shattered and confounded every thing; and Christianity, stemming that desolating torrent with the cross, subdued by it the savage children of the north, and gave society a new form.

Yet an element of corruption already lay hid in the religion carried by courageous missionaries to those barbarous tribes. Their faith came from Rome almost as much as from the Bible. This element soon gathered strength; man everywhere substituted himself for God, — the essential characteristic of the Romish church; and a renovation of religion became necessary. This Christianity accomplished at the epoch of which we are treating.

The history of the Reformation in the countries that we have hitherto surveyed has shown us the new doctrine rejecting the extravagances of enthusiasts and of the new prophets; but in the country towards which we now turn our attention, infidelity is the shoal which it has to encounter.

Nowhere had bolder protests been made against the superstitions and abuses of the Church: nowhere had there been a more striking development of a certain love of learning, independent of Christianity, which often ends in irreligion. France carried in her bosom two reformations at the same time, — the one of man, the other of God. “Two nations were in her womb, and two manner of people were to be separated from her bowels.” In France, the Reformation had to combat not only with infidelity as well as superstition, but there was a third antagonist which it had not yet encountered, at least in such force, among the people of German origin: this was immorality. The scandals in the Church were very great; debauchery sat on the throne of Francis I and Catherine de Medicis; and the austere virtues of the reformers irritated these “Sardanapaluses.” Everywhere, no doubt, but especially in France, the Reformation was of necessity not only doctrinal and ecclesiastical, but moral also.

Those violent enemies which the Reformation encountered simultaneously in France, gave it a

character altogether peculiar. Nowhere did it so often dwell in dungeons, or so much resemble primitive Christianity in faith, in charity, and in the number of its martyrs. If, in the countries of which we have hitherto spoken, the Reformation was more glorious by its triumphs, in that which is now to engage our attention, it was still more so by its defeats. If elsewhere it could point to thrones and sovereign councils, here it might point to scaffolds and “hill-side” meetings. Whoever knows what constitutes the true glory of Christianity upon earth, and the features that assimilate it to its Head, will study with a livelier feeling of respect and love the often blood-stained history that we now proceed to relate.

The majority of the men who have afterwards glittered on the stage of the world were born in the provinces where their minds first began to expand.

Paris is a tree that presents many flowers and fruits to the eye, but whose roots spread far and wide into the bosom of the earth, to draw from thence the nutritious juices which they transform.

The Reformation also followed this law.

The Alps, which beheld bold and christian men spring up in every canton and almost in every valley of Switzerland, were destined in France also to cover with their lengthened shadows the infancy of some of the first reformers. For ages they had guarded the treasure more or less pure in their high valleys, among the inhabitants of the Piedmontese districts of Luzerne, Angrogne, and La Peyrouse. The truth, which Rome could not reach there, had spread from these valleys to the other side of these mountains, and along their base to Provence and Dauphiny.

The year after the accession of Charles VIII, son of Louis XI, a sickly and timid child, Innocent VIII had assumed the pontifical tiara (1484). He had seven or eight sons by different mothers; and hence, according to an epigram of the times, Rome unanimously saluted him with the name of Father. There was at that time on all the slopes of the Dauphinese Alps, and along the banks of the Durance, a new growth of the old Waldensian

opinions.

“The roots,” says an old chronicler, “were continually putting forth new shoots in every direction.” Bold men called the Roman Church the church of devils, and maintained that it was as profitable to pray in a stable as in a church.

The priests, the bishops, and the Roman legates uttered a cry of alarm, and on the 5th kalends of May (27th April) 1487, Innocent VIII, the father of the Romans, issued a bull against these humble Christians. “To arms,” said the pontiff, “and trample these heretics under foot as venomous serpents.” At the approach of the legate, followed by an army of eighteen thousand men and a number of volunteers, who wished to share the spoils of the Waldenses, the latter abandoned their houses and took refuge in the mountains, caverns, and clefts of the rocks, as the birds flee for shelter when the storm begins to lower. Not a valley, nor a wood, nor a rock, escaped their persecutors; everywhere in this part of the Alps, and particularly on the Italian side, these poor disciples of Christ



were hunted down like beasts of prey. At last the pope's satellites were worn out; their strength was exhausted, their feet could no longer scale the steep retreats of the "heretics," and their arms refused to strike.

In these alpine districts, then disturbed by Romish fanaticism, three leagues from the ancient town of Gap, in the direction of Grenoble, not far from the flowery turf that clothes the table-land of Bayard's mountain, at the foot of the Aiguille and near the pass of Glaize, towards the place where the Buzon takes its rise, stood and still stands a group of houses, half hidden by the surrounding trees, and which bears the name of Farel, — or, in the dialect of the country, Fareau. On an extensive terrace raised above the neighboring cottages might be seen a house of that class which is denominated *Gentilhommiere*, a manor-house. It was surrounded by an orchard which led to the village. Here, in these days of trouble, dwelt a noble family of established piety, known by the name of Farel. In 1489, the very year in which the papacy was employing its severest measures in Dauphiny, was

born in this modest mansion a son who received the name of William. Three brothers, Daniel, Walter, and Claude, and one sister, grew up with William, and shared his sports on the banks of the Buzon and at the foot of the Bayard.

There William's childhood and early youth were passed. His parents were among the most devoted servants of the papacy. "My father and mother believed everything," he tells us himself; "and accordingly they brought up their children in all the observances of Romish devotion." God had bestowed rare qualities on William Farel, such as were fitted to give him a great ascendancy over his fellows. Possessing a penetrating mind and lively imagination, sincere and upright, having a greatness of soul that never allowed him, at whatever risk, to betray the convictions of his heart, he was remarkable also for ardor, fire, indomitable courage, and daring, which never shrunk from any obstacle. But, at the same time, he had all the defects allied to these qualities; and his parents were often compelled to check his impetuosity.

William threw himself with his whole soul into the superstitious habits of his credulous family. “I am horror-struck,” said he, “when I consider the hours, the prayers, and the divine honors, which I myself have offered and caused others to offer to the cross and other such things.” Four leagues to the south of Gap, near Tallard, in a hill that rises above the impetuous stream of the Durance, was a place in great repute, named Sainte Croix (the holy cross). William was only seven or eight years old when his father and mother resolved to take him thither on a pilgrimage.

“The cross in that place,” they told him, “is made of the very wood on which Christ was crucified.” The family began their journey, and at last reached the highly venerated cross, before which they all fell prostrate. After gazing for a time on the sacred wood and the copper of the cross, the latter being made (as the priest told them) of the basin in which Christ washed his apostles’ feet, the pilgrims turned their eyes to a small crucifix attached to the cross: “When the devils send us hail

and thunder,” continued the priest, “this crucifix moves about so violently, that it seems to get loose from the cross, as if desirous of running at the devil, and it continues throwing out sparks of fire against the storm; if it were not for this, nothing would be left upon earth.” The pious pilgrims were deeply moved by the account of these wonderful prodigies. “No one,” continued the priest, “sees or knows aught of these things except myself and this man.” The pilgrims turned their heads, and saw a strange-looking person standing near them. “It was frightful to look at him,” said Farel. White scales covered the pupils of his eyes, “whether they were there in reality, or Satan only made them appear so.” This extraordinary man, whom the incredulous denominated “the priest’s wizard,” on being appealed to by the latter, immediately replied that the prodigy was true. A new episode completed the picture by mingling a suspicion of criminal disorders with these superstitions. “There came up a young woman, intent on other devotion than that of the cross, carrying her infant wrapped in a cloth. Then the priest went up, took hold of the woman and child, and led them into the chapel. I may

safely assert, that never did dancer take a woman and lead her out more lovingly than he did.

But such was our blindness, that neither their looks nor their gestures, even when they had behaved in an unseemly manner before us, appeared otherwise than good and holy. It was clear that the woman and my gallant of a priest understood the miracle thoroughly, and made it a cover to their intercourse.” Such a faithful picture of religion and morals in France at the commencement of the Reformation. Morality and belief were alike poisoned, and both required a powerful renovation. The greater the value attached to external works, the farther men were removed from sanctification of heart; dead ordinances had been everywhere substituted for a christian life, and a strange but not unnatural union had taken place between the most scandalous debauchery and the most superstitious devotion. Theft had been committed before the altar, seduction practiced in the confessional, poison mingled with the consecrated elements, adultery perpetrated at the foot of the cross. Superstition, by destroying belief,

had destroyed morality.

There were, however, numerous exceptions in the Christianity of the middle ages. Even a superstitious faith might be sincere, and of this William Farel is an example. The same zeal that afterwards urged him to travel to so many different places to spread the knowledge of Jesus Christ was at this time attracting him wherever the Church exhibited a miracle or claimed any adoration. Dauphiny had its seven wonders, which long possessed the power of striking the imagination of the people. But the beauties of nature that surrounded him had also their influence in raising his soul to the Creator.

The magnificent chain of the Alps, those summits covered with eternal snow, — those vast rocks, here rearing their sharp peaks to heaven, there stretching their immense and jagged ridges high above the clouds, as if an island was suspended in the air; — all these wonders of creation, which were at this time elevating the soul of Ulrich Zwingle in the Tockenbourg, were

appealing also in mute but powerful language to the heart of William Farel among the mountains of Dauphiny. He thirsted for life, for knowledge, and for light; — he aspired to be something great; — he asked permission to study.

This was a great blow to his father, who thought that a young noble ought to know nothing beyond his rosary and his sword. At this time fame was trumpeting the prowess of a young countryman of William Farel's, a Dauphinese like himself, named Du Terrail, but better known as Bayard, who at the battle of the Tar, on the other side of the Alps, had just given a signal display of courage. "Such sons," it was observed, "are like arrows in the hand of a strong man. Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them!" Accordingly, Farel's father opposed the taste which William manifested for learning. But the young man was not to be shaken. God destined him for nobler conquests than those of Bayard. He persevered in his entreaties, and the old gentleman gave way at last. Farel immediately applied to study with surprising ardor. The masters whom he

found in Dauphiny were of little help to him, and he had to contend with bad methods and the incapability of his teachers. These difficulties excited instead of discouraging him, and he soon surmounted these obstacles. His brothers followed his example. Daniel afterwards entered on the career of politics, and was employed in important negotiations concerning religion. Walter gained the entire confidence of the Count of Furstemberg.

Farel, eager in the pursuit of knowledge, having learnt all that could be acquired in his province, turned his eyes elsewhere. The renown of the university of Paris had long filled the christian world. He desired to see “this mother of all learning, this true lamp of the Church which never knew eclipse, that clear and polished mirror of the faith, dimmed by no cloud, and spotted by no touch.” He obtained the permission of his parents, and set out for the capital of France.



## Chapter 2

# Louis XII and the Assembly of Tours

One day in the year 1510, or shortly after, the young Dauphinese arrived in Paris. The province had made him an ardent follower of the papacy; the capital was to make him something very different. In France the Reformation was not destined to go forth, as in Germany, from a small city. All the movements that agitate the people proceed from the metropolis. A concurrence of providential circumstances made Paris, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, a focus whence a spark of life might easily escape. The young man from the neighborhood of Gap, who arrived there humble and ignorant, was to receive that spark in his heart, and many others.

Louis XII, the father of his people, had just convoked the representatives of the French clergy to meet at Tours. This prince seems to have

anticipated the times of the Reformation; so that had this great revolution taken place during his reign, the whole of France might have become protestant. The assembly of Tours had declared that the king possessed the right of waging war on the pope, and of enforcing the decrees of the Council of Basle. These measures were the object of general conversation in the colleges, the city, and the court; and must have made a deep impression on the mind of young Farel.

Two children were then growing up in the court of Louis XII. One was a prince of tall stature, striking features, who showed little moderation in his character, and followed blindly wherever his passions led him; so that the king was in the habit of saying: "That great boy will spoil all." This was Francis of Angouleme, duke of Valois, and cousin to the king. Boisy, his tutor, had taught him, however, to honor literature.

By the side of Francis was his sister Margaret, his senior by two years, "a princess," says Brantome, "of great mind and ability, both natural

and acquired.” Accordingly, Louis had spared no pains in her education, and the most learned men in the kingdom hastened to acknowledge her as their patroness.

Already, indeed, a group of illustrious men surrounded these two Valois.

William Budoeus, a man giving the run to his passions, fond of the chase, living only for his hawks, his horses, and his hounds, on a sudden, at the age of twenty-three, had stopped short, sold his hunting train, and applied himself to study with the zeal he had formerly displayed in scouring the fields and forests with his dogs; the physician Cop, Francis Vatable, whose knowledge of Hebrew was admired by the Jews themselves; James Tusan, a celebrated Hellenist; and many others, encouraged by Stephen Poncher, bishop of Paris, by Louis Ruze, the civil lieutenant, and by Francis de Luynes, and already protected by the two young Valois, resisted the violent attacks of the Sorbonne, who looked upon the study of Greek and Hebrew as the most deadly heresy. At Paris, as in Germany

and Switzerland, the restoration of sound doctrine was to be preceded by the revival of letters. But in France the hands that thus prepared the materials were not destined to construct the edifice.

Among all the doctors who then adorned the capital, was observed a man of very diminutive stature, of mean appearance, and humble origin, whose intellect, learning, and powerful eloquence had an indefinable attraction for all who heard him. His name was Lefevre; and he was born about at Etaples, a village in Picardy. He had received a rude, or as Theodore Beza calls it, a barbarous education; but his genius had supplied the want of masters; and his piety, learning, and nobility of soul, shone out with so much the brighter lustre. He had traveled much, and it would appear that his desire of acquiring knowledge had led him into Asia and Africa. As early as 1493, Lefevre, then doctor of divinity, was professor in the university of Paris. He immediately occupied a distinguished rank and, in the estimation of Erasmus, was the first. Lefevre saw that he had a task to perform. Although attached to the practices of the Romish

Church, he resolved to attack the barbarism then prevailing in the university; he began to teach the various branches of philosophy with a clearness hitherto unknown. He endeavored to revive the study of languages and learned antiquity. He went farther than this; he perceived that, as regards a work of regeneration, philosophy and learning are insufficient. Abandoning, therefore, scholasticism, which for so many ages had reigned supreme in the schools, he returned to the Bible, and revived in Christendom the study of the Holy Scriptures and evangelical learning. He did not devote his time to dry researches, he went to the heart of the Bible. His eloquence, his candor, his amiability, captivated all hearts.

Serious and fervent in the pulpit, he indulged in a sweet familiarity with his pupils. "He loves me exceedingly," wrote Glarean, one of their number, to his friend Zwingle. "Full of candor and kindness, he often sings, prays, disputes, and laughs at the follies of the world with me." Accordingly, a great number of disciples from every country sat at his feet.

This man, with all his learning, submitted with the simplicity of a child to every observance of the Church. He passed as much time in the churches as in his study, so that a close union seemed destined to unite the aged doctor of Picardy and the young scholar of Dauphiny. When two natures so similar as these meet together, though it be within the wide circuit of a capital, they tend to draw near each other. In his pious pilgrimages, young Farel soon noticed an aged man, and was struck by his devotion. He prostrated himself before the images, and remained long on his knees, praying with fervor and devoutly repeating his hours. "Never," said Farel, "never had I seen a chanter of the mass sing it with greater reverence." This man was Lefevre. William Farel immediately desired to become acquainted with him; and could not restrain his joy when he found himself kindly received by this celebrated man. William had gained his object in coming to the capital. From that time his greatest pleasure was to converse with the doctor of Etaples, to listen to him, to hear his admirable lessons, and to kneel with him devoutly

before the same shrines. Often might the aged Lefevre and his young disciple be seen adorning an image of the Virgin with flowers; and alone, far from all Paris, far from its scholars and its doctors, they murmured in concert the fervent prayers they offered up to Mary. Farel's attachment to Lefevre was noticed by many. The respect felt towards the old doctor was reflected on his young disciple. This illustrious friendship drew the Dauphinese from his obscurity. He soon acquired a reputation for zeal; and many devout rich persons in Paris intrusted him with various sums of money intended for the support of the poorer students. Some time elapsed ere Lefevre and his disciple arrived at a clear perception of the truth. It was not the hope of a rich benefice or a propensity to a dissolute life which bound Farel to the pope; those vulgar ties were not made for souls like his. To him the pope was the visible head of the Church, a sort of deity, by whose commandments souls might be saved.

Whenever he heard any one speaking against this highly venerated pontiff, he would gnash his teeth like a furious wolf, and would have called

down lightning from heaven “to overwhelm the guilty wretch with utter ruin and confusion.” — “I believe,” said he, “in the cross, in pilgrimages, images, vows, and relics. What the priest holds in his hands, puts into the box, and there shuts it up, eats, and gives others to eat, is my only true God, and to me there is no other, either in heaven or upon earth.” — “Satan,” says he in another place, “had so lodged the pope, the papacy, and all that is his in my heart, that even the pope had not so much of it in himself.” Thus, the more Farel appeared to seek God, the more his piety decayed and superstition increased in his soul; everything was going from bad to worse. He has himself described this condition in energetic language: “Alas! how I shudder at myself and at my faults,” said he, “when I think upon it; and how great and wonderful a work of God it is, that man should ever have been dragged from such an abyss!” From this abyss he emerged only by degrees. He had at first studied the profane authors; his piety finding no food there, he began to meditate on the lives of the saints; infatuated as he was before, these legends only made him still more so. He then attached himself to



several doctors of the age; but as he had gone to them in wretchedness, he left them more wretched still. At last he began to study the ancient philosophers, and expected to learn from Aristotle how to be a Christian; again his hopes were disappointed. Books, images, relics, Aristotle, Mary, and the saints — all proved unavailing. His ardent soul wandered from one human wisdom to another, without finding the means of allaying its burning thirst.

Meantime the pope, allowing the writings of the Old and New Testaments to be called The Holy Bible, Farel began to read them, as Luther had done in the cloister at Erfurth; he was amazed at seeing that everything upon earth was different from what is taught in the Scriptures. Perhaps he was on the point of reaching the truth, but on a sudden a thicker darkness plunged him into another abyss. “Satan came suddenly upon me,” said he, “that he might not lose his prize, and dealt with me according to his custom.” A terrible struggle between the Word of God and the word of the Church then took place in his heart. If he met with

any passages of Scripture opposed to the Romish practices, he cast down his eyes, blushed, and dared not believe what he read. "Alas!" said he, fearing to keep his looks fixed on the Bible, "I do not well understand these things; I must give a very different meaning to the Scriptures from that which they seem to have. I must keep to the interpretation of the Church, and indeed of the pope." One day, as he was reading the Bible, a doctor who happened to come in rebuked him sharply. "No man," said he, "ought to read the Holy Scriptures before he has learnt philosophy and taken his degree in arts." This was a preparation the apostles had not required; but Farel believed him. "I was," says he, "the most wretched of men, shutting my eyes lest I should see." From that time the young Dauphinese had a return to his Romish fervor.

The legends of the saints inflamed his imagination. The greater the severity of the monastic rules, the greater was the attraction he felt towards them.

In the midst of the woods near Paris, some

Carthusians inhabited a group of gloomy cells; he visited them with reverence, and shared in their austerities. “I was wholly employed, day and night, in serving the devil,” said he, “after the fashion of that man of sin, the pope. I had my Pantheon in my heart, and such a troop of mediators, saviours, and gods, that I might well have passed for a papal register.” The darkness could not grow deeper; the morning star was soon to arise, and it was destined to appear at Lefevre’s voice. There were already some gleams of light in the doctor of Etaples; an inward conviction told him that the Church could not long remain in its actual position; and often at the very moment of his return from saying mass, or of rising from before some image, the old man would turn towards his youthful disciple, and grasping him by the hand would say in a serious tone of voice: “My dear William, God will renew the world, and you will see it!” Farel did not thoroughly understand these words. Yet Lefevre did not confine himself to this mysterious language; a great change which was then wrought in him was destined to produce a similar effect on his disciple.

The old doctor was engaged in a laborious task; he was carefully collecting the legends of the saints and martyrs, and arranging them according to the order in which their names are found in the calendar. Two months had already been printed, when one of those beams of light which come from heaven, suddenly illuminated his soul. He could not resist the disgust which such puerile superstitions must ever cause in the heart of a Christian. The sublimity of the Word of God made him perceive the paltry nature of these fables. They now appeared to him no better than “brimstone fit to kindle the fire of idolatry.” He abandoned his work, and throwing these legends aside, turned ardently towards the Holy Scriptures. At the moment when Lefevre, quitting the wondrous tales of the saints, laid his hand on the Word of God, a new era began in France, and is the commencement of the Reformation.

In effect, Lefevre, weaned from the fables of the Breviary, began to study the Epistles of St. Paul; the light increased rapidly in his heart, and he

immediately imparted to his disciples that knowledge of the truth which we find in his commentaries. Strange doctrines were those for the school and for the age, which were then first heard in Paris, and disseminated by the press throughout the christian world. We may easily understand that the young disciples who listened to them were aroused, impressed, and changed by them; and that thus, prior to the year 1512, the dawn of a brighter day was preparing for France.

The doctrine of justification by faith, which overthrew by a single blow the subtleties of the schoolmen and the observances of popery, was boldly proclaimed in the bosom of the Sorbonne. "It is God alone," said the doctor, and the vaulted roofs of the university must have been astonished as they re-echoed such strange sounds, "it is God alone, who by his grace, through faith, justifies unto everlasting life. There is a righteousness of works, there is a righteousness of grace; the one cometh from man, the other from God; one is earthly and passeth away, the other is heavenly and eternal; one is the shadow and the sign, the other

the light and the truth; one makes sin known to us that we may escape death, the other reveals grace that we may obtain life.” “What then!” asked his hearers, as they listened to this teaching, which contradicted that of four centuries; “has any one man been ever justified without works?” “One!” answered Lefevre, “they are innumerable. How many people of disorderly lives, who have ardently prayed for the grace of baptism, possessing faith alone in Christ, and who, if they died the moment after, have entered into the life of the blessed without works!” — “If, therefore, we are not justified by works, it is in vain that we perform them,” replied some. The Paris doctor answered, and the other reformers would not perhaps have altogether approved of this reply: “Certainly not! they are not in vain. If I hold a mirror to the sun, its image is reflected; the more I polish and clear it, the brighter is the reflection; but if we allow it to become tarnished, the splendor of the sun is dimmed. It is the same with justification in those who lead an impure life.” In this passage, Lefevre, like Augustine in many, does not perhaps make a sufficient distinction between sanctification and

justification. The doctor of Etaples reminds us strongly of the Bishop of Hippona. Those who lead an unholy life have never received justification, and therefore cannot lose it. But Lefevre may have intended to say that the Christian, when he has fallen into any sin, loses the assurance of salvation, and not salvation itself. If so, there is no objection to be made against his doctrine.

Thus a new life and a new teaching had penetrated into the university of Paris. The doctrine of faith, formerly preached in Gaul by Pothinus and Irenaeus, was heard there again. From this time there were two parties, two people in this great school of Christendom. Lefevre's lessons and the zeal of his disciples formed the most striking contrast to the scholastic teaching of the majority of the doctors, and the irregular and frivolous lives of most of the students. In the colleges, they were far more busily engaged in learning their parts in comedies, in masquerading, and in mountebank farces, than in studying the oracles of God. In these plays the honor of the great, of the princes, of the king himself, was frequently attacked. The

parliament interfered about this period; and summoning the principals of several colleges before them, forbade those indulgent masters to permit such dramas to be represented in their houses. But a more powerful diversion than the decrees of parliament suddenly came to correct these disorders. Jesus Christ was preached. Great was the uproar on the benches of the university, and the students began to occupy themselves almost as much with the evangelical doctrines as with the quibbles of the school or with comedies. Many of those whose lives were the least irreproachable, adhered however to the doctrine of works; and feeling that the doctrine of faith condemned their way of living, they pretended that St. James was opposed to St. Paul. Lefevre, resolving to defend the treasure he had discovered, showed the agreement of these two apostles: “Does not St. James in his first chapter declare that every good and perfect gift cometh down from above? Now, who will deny that justification is the good and perfect gift?.....If we see a man moving, the respiration that we perceive is to us a sign of life. Thus works are necessary, but only as signs of a



living faith, which is accompanied by justification. Do eye-salves or lotions give light to the eye?.....No! it is the influence of the sun. Well, then, these lotions and these eye-salves are our works. The ray that the sun darts from above is justification itself.” Farel listened earnestly to this teaching. These words of salvation by grace had immediately an indescribable charm for him. Every objection fell: every struggle ceased. No sooner had Lefevre put forward this doctrine than Farel embraced it with all the ardor of his soul. He had undergone labor and conflicts enough to be aware that he could not save himself.

Accordingly, immediately he saw in the Word that God saves freely, he believed. “Lefevre,” said he, “extricated me from the false opinion of human merits, and taught me that everything came from grace: which I believed as soon as it was spoken.” Thus by a conversion as prompt and decisive as that of St. Paul was Farel led to the faith, — that Farel who (as Theodore Beza says), undismayed by difficulties, threats, abuse, or blows, won over to Jesus Christ Montbelliard, Neufchatel, Lausanne,

Aigle, and finally Geneva. Meanwhile Lefevre, continuing his lessons, and delighting, as Luther did, in employing contrasts and paradoxes containing weighty truths, extolled the greatness of the mysteries of redemption: “Ineffable exchange,” exclaimed he, “the innocent One is condemned and the criminal acquitted; the Blessing is cursed, and he who was cursed is blessed; the Life dies, and the dead live; the Glory is covered with shame, and He who was put to shame is covered with glory.” The pious doctor, going still deeper, acknowledged that all salvation proceeds from the sovereignty of God’s love. “Those who are saved,” said he, “are saved by election, by grace, by the will of God, not by their own. Our own election, will, and works, are of no avail: the election of God alone is profitable. When we are converted, it is not our conversion that makes us the elect of God, but the grace, will, and election of God which convert us.” But Lefevre did not confine himself to doctrines alone: if he gave to God the glory, he required obedience from man, and urged the obligations which proceed from the great privileges of the Christian. “If thou art a member of Christ’s

Church, thou art also a member of his body.” said he; “and if thou art a member of Christ’s body, thou art full of the Divinity; for in him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Oh! if men could but understand this privilege, how chastely, purely, and holily would they live, and they would look upon all the glory of this world as disgrace, in comparison with that inner glory which is hidden from the eyes of the flesh.” Lefevre perceived that the office of a teacher of the Word is a lofty station; and he exercised it with unshaken fidelity. The corruption of the times, and particularly that of the clergy, excited his indignation, and became the subject of severe rebuke. “How scandalous it is,” said he, “to see a bishop asking persons to drink with him, gambling, rattling the dice, spending his time with hawks and dogs, and in hunting, hallooing after rooks and deer, and frequenting houses of ill-fame! .....O men deserving a severer punishment than Sardanapalus himself!”

## Chapter 3

# Farel and the Saints

Thus taught Lefevre. Farel listened, trembling with emotion; he received all, and rushed suddenly into the new path that was opening before him.

There was, however, one point of his ancient faith which he could not as yet entirely renounce; this was the invocation of saints. The best spirits often have these relics of darkness, which they cling to after their illumination. Farel was astonished as he heard the illustrious doctor declare that Christ alone should be invoked. "Religion has but one foundation," said Lefevre, "one object, one Head, Jesus Christ, blessed for evermore: alone hath He trodden the wine-press. Let us not then call ourselves after St. Paul, or Apollos, or St. Peter. The cross of Christ alone openeth the gates of heaven, and shutteth the gates of hell." When he heard these words, a fierce conflict took place in Farel's soul. On the one hand, he beheld the multitude of saints with the Church; on the other,

Jesus Christ alone with his master. Now he inclined to one side, now to another; it was his last error and his last battle. He hesitated, he still clung to those venerable men and women at whose feet Rome falls in adoration. At length the decisive blow was struck from above. The scales fell from his eyes.

Jesus alone appeared deserving of his worship. “Then,” said he, “popery was utterly overthrown; I began to detest it as devilish, and the holy Word of God had the chief place in my heart.” Public events accelerated the course of Farel and his friends. Thomas de Vio, who afterwards contended with Luther at Augsburg and at Leipsic, having advanced in one of his works that the pope was the absolute monarch of the Church, Louis XII laid the book before the university in the month of February 1512. James Allmain, one of the youngest doctors, a man of profound genius and indefatigable application, read before the faculty of theology a refutation of the cardinal’s assertions, which was received with the greatest applause. What impression must not such discourses have produced on the minds of Lefevre’s young

disciples! Could they hesitate when the university seemed impatient under the papal yoke? If the main body itself was in motion, ought not they to rush forward as skirmishers and clear the way?

“It was necessary,” said Farel, “that popery should have fallen little by little from my heart; for it did not tumble down at the first shock.” He contemplated the abyss of superstitions in which he had been plunged.

Standing on the brink, he once more surveyed its depth with an anxious eye, and shrunk back with a feeling of terror. “Oh! what horror do I feel at myself and my sins, when I think of these things!” exclaimed he. “O Lord,” he continued, “would that my soul had served thee with a living faith, as thy obedient servants have done; would that it had prayed to and honored thee as much as I have given my heart to the mass and to serve that enchanted wafer, giving it all honor!” In such terms did the youthful Dauphinese deplore his past life, and repeat in tears, as St. Augustine had done before: “I have known Thee too late; too late have I

loved Thee!” Farel had found Jesus Christ; and having reached the port, he was delighted to find repose after such terrible storms. “Now,” said he, “every thing appears to me under a fresh aspect. Scripture is cleared up; prophecy is opened; the apostles shed a strong light upon my soul. A voice, till now unknown, the voice of Christ, my Shepherd, my Master, my Teacher, speaks to me with power.” He was so changed that, “instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf, he came back,” he tells us, “quietly, like a meek and harmless lamb, having his heart entirely withdrawn from the pope, and given to Jesus Christ.” Having escaped from so great an evil, he turned towards the Bible, and began to study Greek and Hebrew with much earnestness. He read the Scriptures constantly, with ever increasing affection, and God enlightened him from day to day. He still continued to attend the churches of the established worship; but what found he there? loud voices, interminable chantings, and words spoken without understanding. Accordingly, when standing in the midst of a crowd that was passing near an image or an altar, he would exclaim, “Thou alone art God!

thou alone art wise! thou alone art good! Nothing must be taken away from thy holy law, and nothing added. For thou alone art the Lord, and thou alone wilt and must command.” Thus fell in his eyes all men and all teachers from the height to which his imagination had raised them, and he now saw nothing in the world but God and his Word. The other doctors of Paris, by their persecutions of Lefevre, had already fallen in his esteem; but ere long Lefevre himself, his beloved guide, was no more than a man like himself. He loved and venerated him still; but God alone became his master.

Of all the reformers, Farel and Luther are perhaps those whose early spiritual developments are best known to us, and who had to pass through the greatest struggles. Quick and ardent, men of conflict and strife, they underwent the severest trials before attaining peace. Farel is the pioneer of the Reformation in France and Switzerland; he rushes into the wood, and hews down the aged giants of the forest with his axe. Calvin came after, like Melancthon, from whom he differs indeed in



character, but whom he resembles in his part as theologian and organizer. These two men, who have something in common with the legislators of antiquity, — the one in its graceful, the other in its severe style, — built up, settled, and gave laws to the territory conquered by the first two reformers. If, however, Luther and Farel approximate in some of their features, we must acknowledge that the latter resembles the Saxon reformer in one aspect only. Besides his superior genius, Luther had, in all that concerned the Church, a moderation and wisdom, an acquaintance with the past, a comprehensive judgment, and even an organizing faculty, that did not exist to the same degree in the Dauphinese reformer.

Farel was not the only young Frenchman into whose mind the new light then beamed. The doctrines that fell from the lips of the illustrious doctor of Etaples fermented among the crowd who listened to his lectures, and in his school were trained the daring soldiers who, in the hour of battle, were to contend even to the foot of the scaffold. They listened, compared, discussed, and

keenly argued on both sides. It is probable that among the small number of scholars who defended the truth was young Peter Robert Olivetan, born at Noyon about the close of the fifteenth century, who afterwards translated the Bible into French from Lefevre's version, and who seems to have been the first to draw the attention of a youth of his family, also a native of Noyon, to the Gospel, and who became the most illustrious chief of the Reformation. Thus in 1512, at a time when Luther had made no impression on the world, and was going to Rome on some trifling monkish business, — at an epoch when Zwingle had not yet begun to apply himself earnestly to sacred learning, and was crossing the Alps with the confederates to fight for the pope, — Paris and France were listening to the teaching of those vital truths from which the Reformation was ordained to issue; and souls prepared to disseminate them were drinking them in with holy thirst.

Hence Theodore Beza, speaking of Lefevre, hails him as the man “who boldly began the revival of the pure religion of Jesus Christ;” and remarks

that, “as in ancient times the school of Isocrates sent forth the best orators, so from the lecture-room of the doctor of Etaples issued many of the best men of the age and of the Church.” The Reformation was not, therefore, in France a foreign importation. It was born on French soil; it germinated in Paris; it put forth its first shoots in the university itself, that second authority in Romish Christendom. God planted the seeds of this work in the simple hearts of a Picard and a Dauphinese, before they had begun to bud forth in any other country upon earth. The Swiss Reformation, as we have seen, was independent of the German Reformation; and in its turn the Reformation in France was independent of that of Switzerland and of Germany. The work commenced at the same time in different countries, without any communication one with the other; as in a battle all the divisions begin to move at the same moment, although one has not told the other to march, but because one and the same command, issuing from a higher power, has been heard by all.

The time had come, the nations were prepared,

and God was everywhere beginning the revival of his Church at the same time. Such facts demonstrate that the great revolution of the sixteenth century was a work of God.

If we look only to dates, we must acknowledge that neither to Switzerland nor to Germany belongs the honor of having begun this work, although, hitherto, these two countries alone have contended for it. This honor belongs to France. This is a truth, a fact that we are anxious to establish, because until now it may possibly have been overlooked. Without dwelling on the influence that Lefevre exercised directly or indirectly on many individuals, and in particular on Calvin himself, as we conjecture, let us reflect on that which he had on one only of his disciples, — on Farel, and on the energetic activity which this servant of God manifested ever afterwards. Can we, after that, resist the conviction, that if Zwingle and Luther had never appeared, there would still have been a reforming movement in France? It is impossible, no doubt, to calculate what might have been its extent; we must even acknowledge that the report

of what was taking place on the other side of the Rhine and the Jura afterwards animated and accelerated the progress of the French reformers. But they were the first awakened by the trumpet that sounded from heaven in the sixteenth century, and they were the first on foot and under arms upon the field of battle.

Nevertheless Luther is the great workman of the sixteenth century, and in the fullest sense the first reformer. Lefevre is not so complete as Calvin, Farel, and Luther. He is of Wittenberg and Geneva, but there is still a tinge of the Sorbonne; he is the first catholic in the reform movement, and the last of the reformers in the catholic movement. He is to the end a sort of go-between, a mediator not altogether free from mystery, destined to remind us of the connection between the old things and the new, which seemed for ever separated by an impassable gulf. Though rejected and persecuted by Rome, he still clings to Rome by a slender thread which he has no desire to break. Lefevre of Etaples has a station apart in the theology of the sixteenth century: he is the link

connecting the ancient times with the modern, and the man in whom the transition is made from the theology of the middle ages to the theology of the Reformation.

## Chapter 4

# Character of Francis I

Thus the whole university was in a state of restlessness. But the Reformation in France was not to be a work of the learned only. It was to take its place among the great ones of the world, and even in the court of the sovereign.

The youthful Francis I of Angouleme had succeeded his father-in-law and cousin Louis XII. His beauty and address, his courage and love of pleasure, made him the first knight of his time. He aspired, however, at being something more; he desired to be a great and even a good king, provided everything would bend to his sovereign pleasure. Valor, a taste for letters, and a love of gallantry, are three terms that will express the character of Francis and the spirit of his age. Two other illustrious kings, Henry IV and especially Louis XIV, presented the same features in after-years. But these princes wanted what the Gospel communicates; and although there had always

existed in the nation elements of holiness and christian elevation we may say that these three great monarchs of modern France have in some measure stamped upon their subjects the impress of their own peculiarities, or rather that they themselves were the faithful images of the character of their people. If the Gospel had entered France with the most illustrious of the Valois family, it would have brought the nation what it does not possess, — a spiritual tendency, a christian holiness, a knowledge of divine things, and would thus have perfected it in what constituted the real strength and greatness of a people.

It was in the reign of Francis I that France and Europe passed from the middle ages to modern times. The new world, which was then in the bud, grew up and entered into possession. Two classes of men imposed their influence on the new state of society. On the one hand were the men of faith, men also of wisdom and holiness; and by their side were the courtly writers, friends of the world and of vice, who by the freedom of their principles



contributed as much to the depravation of morals as the former to their reformation.

If Europe in the days of Francis I had not witnessed the rise of the reformers, and had been handed over by the severe judgment of Providence to the unbelieving innovators, her fate and that of Christianity would have been decided. The danger was great. For some time these two classes of combatants, the antagonists of the pope and the opponents of the Gospel, were mixed up together; and as they both claimed liberty, they appeared to employ the same arms against the same enemies. An unpracticed eye could not distinguish between them amid the dust and clouds of the battle-field.

If the former had allowed themselves to be carried away by the latter, all would have been lost. The enemies of the hierarchy were passing rapidly to the extremes of impiety, and pushing christian society into a frightful abyss; the papacy itself was helping towards this terrible catastrophe, and accelerating by its ambition and its disorders the destruction of the remnants of truth and life still

surviving in the Church. But God raised up the Reformation, and Christianity was saved. The reformers who had shouted liberty, soon called for obedience. The very men who had cast down the throne whence the Roman pontiff issued his oracles, fell prostrate before the Word of God. Then a clear and definite separation took place; nay more, the two bodies engaged in war against each other.

The one party had desired liberty only for themselves, the others had claimed it for the Word of God. The Reformation became the most formidable enemy of that incredulity towards which Rome is often so lenient. After restoring liberty to the Church, the reformers restored religion to the world. Of these two gifts, the latter was the most needed.

The friends of infidelity hoped, for a while, to reckon among their number Margaret of Valois, duchess of Alencon, whom Francis tenderly loved, and always called “sa mignonne,” his darling, as we learn from Brantome. The same tastes, the same

acquirements, distinguished both brother and sister. Possessing, like Francis, a handsome person, Margaret combined with those eminent qualities that make great characters those gentler virtues that win the affections. In the world, in the gay entertainments at the court of the king and of the emperor, she shone like a queen, charming, surprising, and captivating all hearts. Passionately fond of letters, and endowed with a rare genius, she would retire to her closet, and there indulge in the sweet pleasures of thought, study, and learning. But her ruling passion was to do good and prevent evil. When ambassadors had been received by the king, they went and paid their respects to Margaret.

“They were mightily enchanted with her,” says Brantome, “and made a glowing report of her to their own countrymen.” And the king would often refer matters of importance to her, “leaving them solely to her decision.” This celebrated princess was distinguished for the strictness of her morals; but while many confine this strictness to their lips, and are lax in their behavior, Margaret did the contrary. Irreproachable in conduct, she was not

altogether free from censure in her writings. Instead of being surprised at this, we might rather wonder that a woman so dissolute as Louisa of Savoy should have a daughter so pure as Margaret. While visiting different parts of the country with the court, she amused herself with describing the manners of the time, and particularly the disorders of the priests and monks. "I have heard her," says Brantome, "thus narrating tales to my grandmother, who always accompanied her in her litter, as lady-in-waiting, and who had charge of her inkhorn." This Margaret, so beautiful, so full of wit, and living in the atmosphere of a corrupted court, was one of the first to be carried away by the religious movement then beginning in France. But how could the Duchess of Alencon be reached by the Reformation in the midst of so profane a court, and of the licentious tales by which it was amused? Her elevated soul felt wants that the Gospel alone could satisfy; grace works everywhere; and Christianity, which even before an apostle had appeared in Rome already counted followers in the house of Narcissus and in the court of Nero, penetrated rapidly, at the period of its renovation, into the

court of Francis I. High-bred dames and noble lords addressed the princess in the language of faith; and that sun, then rising upon France, shed its earliest beams upon an illustrious head, by which they were immediately reflected on the Duchess of Alencon.

Among the most distinguished noblemen at the court was William of Montbrun, son of Cardinal Briconnet of St. Malo, who had entered the church after the decease of his wife. Count William, who was fond of study, took holy orders, and became successively bishop of Lodeve and of Meaux. Being twice sent ambassador to Rome, he returned to Paris, unseduced by the flattery and pomps of Leo X.

At the period of his return to France, the sap was everywhere beginning to move. Farel, then master of arts, was lecturing in the celebrated college of the Cardinal Lemoine, one of the four principal colleges of the theological faculty in Paris, equal in rank to the Sorbonne. Two fellow-countrymen of Lefevre, Arnaud and Gerard

Roussel, with several others, increased the circle of liberal and generous minds. Briconnet, fresh from the gay entertainments and festivities of Rome, was astonished at what had taken place in Paris during his absence. Thirsting for the truth, he renewed his ancient relations with Lefevre, and passed many precious hours with the doctor of the Sorbonne, with Farel, the two Roussels and their friends.

This illustrious but humble-minded prelate was willing to be instructed by the lowliest Christians, but particularly by the Lord himself. "I am in darkness," said he, "awaiting the grace of the Divine benevolence, from which I am exiled by my demerits." His mind was dazzled, as it were, by the brilliancy of the Gospel. His eyelids drooped before its unequalled brightness. "The eyes of all men," added he, "are insufficient to receive the whole light of this great luminary." Lefevre had recommended the bishop to the Bible; he had pointed to it as the clue which ever leads men back to the primitive truth of Christianity, — to what it was when schools, sects, ordinances, and traditions were unknown, and as the powerful medium by

which the religion of Jesus Christ is renovated. Briconnet read the Bible. "Such is the sweetness of this Divine food," said he, "that it makes the mind insatiable; the more we taste of it, the more we long for it." The simple and mighty truth of salvation charmed him: he found Christ, — he found God himself. "What vessel," said he, "is able to receive the exceeding fullness of this inexhaustible sweetness? But the dwelling extends to our desire to entertain the good guest. Faith is the quartermaster who alone can find room for him, or, more truly, who makes us dwell in him." But at the same time the good bishop, afflicted at seeing this doctrine of life, which the Reformation restored to the world, held in so little estimation at court, in the city, and among the people, exclaimed: "Oh singular and most worthy innovation, and yet to my fellow-men most unacceptable!" It is in this way that evangelical opinions made their way into the midst of the frivolous, dissolute, and literary court of Francis I. Many of the men who composed it, and who enjoyed the entire confidence of the king, as John du Bellay, Budaeus, Cop the court physician, and

even Petit the king's confessor, appeared favorably disposed towards the sentiments of Briconnet and Lefevre. Francis, who loved learning, who invited into his states learned men inclined to Lutheranism, and who thought (as Erasmus says) "in this manner to adorn and illustrate his age in a more magnificent manner than he could have done by trophies, pyramids, or by the most pompous structures," was himself carried away by his sister, by Briconnet, and by the literary men of his court and universities. He would often be present at the discussion of the learned, listening with delight to their conversation at table, and calling them "his children." He prepared the way for the Word of God by founding Hebrew and Greek professorships.

And hence Theodore Beza, when placing his portrait at the head of the reformers, says: "Pious spectator! do not shudder at the sight of this adversary! Ought he not to have a part in this honor, who expelled barbarism from the world, and with firm hand substituted in its stead three languages and sound learning, to be as it were the



portals to the new building that was shortly to be erected?” But there was at the court of Francis I one soul in particular, which seemed prepared to receive the evangelical influence of the doctor of Etaples and the bishop of Meaux. Margaret, yet hesitating and wavering, in the midst of the depraved society that surrounded her, looked for support, and found it in the Gospel. She turned towards this fresh breath that was reanimating the world, and inhaled it with delight as an emanation from heaven. From some of the ladies of her court she learnt what the new doctors were teaching; they lent her their writings, their little books, called in the language of the time, “tracts;” and spoke to her of the “primitive Church, of the pure Word of God, of worshipping in spirit and in truth, of christian liberty which shakes off the yoke of superstition and traditions of men to bind them closer to God alone.” Ere long this princess conversed with Lefevre, Farel, and Roussel; their zeal, their piety, their purity of morals, — all in them struck her imagination; but it was the Bishop of Meaux in particular, who had long enjoyed her friendship, that became her guide in the path of

faith.

Thus, in the midst of the brilliant court of Francis I and of the profligate household of Louisa of Savoy, was accomplished one of those conversions of the heart which although not thoroughly evangelical, are not the fruit of a mere aesthetical religion. Margaret subsequently recorded in her poems the different movements of her soul at this important period of her life; and in them we may trace the path she then trod. We find that the sense of sin had taken strong hold of her, and that she wept over the levity with which she had treated the scandals of the world. She exclaimed: Is there a gulf of ill, so deep and wide That can suffice but e'en a tenth to hide Of my vile sins?

This corruption, of which she had so long been ignorant, she discovered everywhere, now that her eyes were opened.

Well do I feel within me is the root, Without are branch and foliage, flower and fruit. Yet amidst

the alarm caused by the state of her soul, she felt that a God of peace had appeared to her: My God, thou hast come down on earth to me, — To me, although a naked worm I be. And ere long a sense of the love of God in Christ was shed abroad in her heart.

Margaret had found faith, and her enraptured soul indulged in holy transports. Word Divine, Jesus the Salvator, Only Son of the eternal Pater, The first, the last; of all things renovator, Bishop and king, and mighty triumphator, From death by death our liberator.

By faith we're made the sons of the Creator.

From this time a great change took place in the Duchess of Alencon: — Though poor, and weak, and ignorant I be How rich, how strong, how wise I am in Thee! But the power of sin was not yet subdued in her. She found a struggle, a discord in her soul that alarmed her: — In spirit noble, — but in nature slave; Immortal am I, — tending to the grave; Essence of heaven, — and yet of earthly

birth; God's dwelling place, — and yet how little worth.

Margaret, seeking in nature the symbols that might express the wants and affections of her soul, chose for her emblem (says Brantome) the marigold, “which by its rays and leaves, has more affinity with the sun, and turns wherever he goes.” — She added this device: — *Non inferiora secutus*, I seek not things below, “as a sign,” adds the courtly writer, “that she directed all her actions, thoughts, desires, and affections, to that great sun which is God; and hence she was suspected of being attached to the Lutheran religion.” In fact the princess experienced, not long after, the truth of the saying, that all who will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution. At the court, they talked of Margaret's new opinions, and the surprise was great.

What! even the sister of the king takes part with these people! For a moment it might have been thought that Margaret's ruin was certain. She was denounced to Francis I. But the king, who was

tenderly attached to his sister, pretended to think that it was untrue. Margaret's character gradually lessened the opposition. Every one loved her, says Brantome: "she was very kind, mild, gracious, charitable, affable, a great alms-giver, despising nobody, and winning all hearts by her excellent qualities." In the midst of the corruption and frivolity of that age, the mind reposes with delight on this chosen soul, which the grace of God had seized beneath such a load of vanities and grandeur. But her feminine character held her back. If Francis I had felt his sister's convictions, he would no doubt have followed them out. The timid heart of the princess trembled before the anger of the king. She was constantly wavering between her brother and her Savior, and could not resolve to sacrifice either. We cannot recognize her as a Christian who has reached the perfect liberty of the children of God: she is a correct type of those elevated souls, so numerous in every age, particularly among women, who, powerfully attracted towards heaven, have not sufficient strength to detach themselves entirely from the earth.

However, such as she is, she is a pleasing character on the stage of history.

Neither Germany nor England present her parallel. She is a star, slightly clouded no doubt, but shedding an indescribable and gentle radiance, and at the time of which I am treating her rays shone out still more brightly. It is not until later years, when the angry looks of Francis I denounce a mortal hatred against the Reformation, that his frightened sister will screen her holy faith from the light of day. But now she raises her head in the midst of this corrupted court, and appears a bride of Christ. The respect paid to her, the high opinion entertained of her understanding and of her heart, plead the cause of the Gospel at the court of France much better than any preacher could have done. The gentle influence of woman gained admission for the new doctrine. It is perhaps to this period we should trace the inclination of the French nobility to embrace Protestantism. If Francis had followed his sister, if all the nation had opened its gates to Christianity, Margaret's conversion might have

been the saving of France. But while the nobles welcomed the Gospel, the king and the people remained faithful to Rome; and there came a time when it was a cause of serious misfortune to the Reformation to count a Navarre and a Conde among its ranks.

## Chapter 5

# Enemies of the Reformation

Thus already had the Gospel made illustrious conquests in France.

Lefevre, Briconnet, Farel, and Margaret joyfully yielded in Paris to the movement that was already beginning to shake the world. Francis I himself seemed at that time more attracted by the splendor of literature, than repelled by the severity of the Gospel. The friends of the Word of God were entertaining the most pleasing expectations; they thought that the heavenly doctrine would be disseminated without obstacle over their country, at the very moment when a formidable opposition was organizing at court and in the Sorbonne. France, which was to signalize itself among Roman-catholic states for nearly three centuries by its persecutions, rose with pitiless severity against the Reformation. If the seventeenth century was the age of a bloody victory, the sixteenth was that of a cruel struggle.



Probably in no place did the reformed Christians meet with more merciless adversaries on the very spot where they raised the standard of the Gospel.

In Germany, it was in the Romish states that their enemies were found; in Switzerland, in the Romish cantons; but in France, it was face to face. A dissolute woman and a rapacious minister then headed the long list of the enemies of the Reformation.

Louisa of Savoy, mother of the king and of Margaret, notorious for her gallantries, absolute in her will, and surrounded by a train of ladies of honor whose licentiousness began at the court of France a long series of immorality and scandal, naturally took part against the Word of God; she was the more to be feared as she had always preserved an almost unbounded influence over her son. But the Gospel met with a still more formidable adversary in Louisa's favorite, Anthony Duprat, who was nominated chancellor of the

kingdom by her influence. This man, whom a contemporary historian calls the most vicious of all bipeds, was more rapacious than Louisa was dissolute. Having first enriched himself at the expense of justice, he desired subsequently to increase his wealth at the expense of religion, and entered holy orders to gain possession of the richest livings.

Lust and avarice thus characterized these two persons, who, being both devoted to the pope, endeavored to conceal the disorders of their lives by the blood of the heretics. One of their acts was to deliver up the kingdom to the ecclesiastical dominion of the pope. The king, after the battle of Marignan, met Leo X at Bologna, and there was sealed the famous concordat, in virtue of which these two princes divided the spoils of the Church between them. They annulled the supremacy of councils to give it to the pope; and depriving the churches of their right to fill up the vacant bishoprics and livings, conferred it on the king. After this, Francis I, supporting the pontiff's train, proceeded to the minsterchurch of Bologna to

ratify this negotiation. He was sensible of the injustice of the concordat, and turning to Duprat, whispered in his ear: “It is enough to damn us both.” But what was salvation to him? Money and the pope’s alliance were what he wanted.

The parliament vigorously resisted the concordat. The king made its deputies wait several weeks at Amboise, and then calling them before him one day, as he rose from table, he said: “There is a king in France, and I will not have a Venetian senate formed in my dominions.” He then commanded them to depart before sunset. Evangelical liberty had nothing to hope from such a prince. Three days after, the high-chamberlain La Tremouille appeared in parliament, and ordered the concordat to be registered.

Upon this the university put itself in motion. On the 18th of March 1518, a solemn procession, at which all the students and the bachelors with their hoods were present, repaired to the church of Saint Catherine of the Scholars, to implore God to preserve the liberties of the Church and of the

kingdom. “The colleges were closed, strong bodies of the students went armed through the city, threatening and sometimes maltreating the exalted personages who were publishing and carrying out the said concordat by the king’s orders.” The university eventually tolerated the execution of this edict; but without revoking the resolutions on which it had declared its opposition; and from that time, says the Venetian ambassador Correr, “the king began to give away the bishoprics with a liberal hand at the solicitation of the court ladies, and to bestow abbeys on his soldiers; so that at the court of France a trade was carried on in bishoprics and abbeys, as at Venice in pepper and cinnamon.” While Louisa and Duprat were preparing to destroy the Gospel by the destruction of the liberties of the Gallican Church, a fanatical and powerful party was forming against the Bible. Christian truth has always had to encounter two powerful adversaries, the depravity of the world and the fanaticism of the priests. The scholastic Sorbonne and a profligate court were now to march forward hand in hand against the confessors of Jesus Christ. In the early days of the Church the unbelieving Sadducees and

the hypocritical Pharisees were the fiercest enemies of Christianity; and so they have remained through every age. Erelong from the darkness of the schools emerged the most pitiless adversaries of the Gospel. At their head was Noel Bedier, commonly called Beda, a native of Picardy and syndic of the Sorbonne, reputed to be the greatest brawler and most factious spirit of his day. Educated in the dry maxims of scholasticism, matured in the theses and antitheses of the Sorbonne, having a greater veneration for the distinctions of the school than for the Word of God, he was transported with anger against those whose daring mouths ventured to put forth other doctrines. Of a restless disposition, unable to enjoy any repose, always requiring new pursuits, he was a torment to all around him; confusion was his native element; he seemed born for contention; and when he had no adversaries he fell foul of his friends. This impetuous quack filled the university with stupid and violent declamations against literature, against the innovations of the age, and against all those who were not, in his opinion, sufficiently earnest in repressing them. Many

smiled as they listened to him, but others gave credit to the invectives of the blustering orator, and the violence of his character secured him a tyrannical sway in the Sorbonne. He must always have some new enemy to fight, some victim to drag to the scaffold; and accordingly he had created heretics before any existed, and had called for the burning of Merlin, vicar-general of Paris, for having endeavored to justify Origen. But when he saw the new doctors appear, he bounded like a wild beast that suddenly perceives an easy prey within its reach. "There are three thousand monks in one Beda," said the cautious Erasmus. These excesses, however, were prejudicial to his cause. "What!" said the wisest men of the age, "does the Roman Church rest on the shoulders of such an Atlas as this? Whence comes all this disturbance, except from the absurdities of Beda himself?" In effect, the very invectives that frightened weak minds, disgusted more generous spirits. At the court of Francis I was a gentleman of Artois, named Louis de Berquin, then about thirty years of age, and who was never married. The purity of his life, his profound knowledge, which procured him

the title of “the most learned of the nobles,” the openness of his disposition his tender care for the poor, and his unbounded attachment to his friends, distinguished him above his equals.

There was not a more devout observer of the ceremonies of the Church, fasts, festivals, and masses; and he held in the greatest horror all that was denominated heretical. It was a matter of astonishment to witness so much devotion at court.

It seemed as if nothing could make such a man incline to the side of the Reformation; there were, however, one of two features in his character that might lead him to the Gospel. He abhorred every kind of dissimulation, and as he never desired to injure anyone himself, he could not bear to see others injured. The tyranny of Beda and other fanatics, their bickerings and persecutions, filled his generous soul with indignation; and as he never did things by halves, he was accustomed wherever he went, in the city or at the court, “even among the highest personages in the kingdom,” to inveigh with the utmost vehemence against the tyranny of

these doctors, and attack, “in their very nests,” says Theodore Beza, “those odious hornets who were then the terror of the world.” He did not stop here: opposition to injustice led Berquin to inquire after truth. He desired to know that holy Scripture, so dear to the men against whom Beda and his creatures were raging; and he had scarcely begun to read the book, before it won his heart. Berquin immediately joined Margaret, Lefevre, Briconnet, and all those who loved the Word, and in their society tasted of the purest joys. He felt that he had something more to do besides opposing the Sorbonne, and would have loved to communicate the convictions of his soul to all France. He immediately began to write and translate several christian books into French. It seemed to him that every man ought to acknowledge and embrace the truth as promptly as he had done himself. That impetuosity which Beda had exerted in the service of human tradition, Berquin employed in the service of the Word of God. Although younger than the syndic of the Sorbonne, less prudent, and less skillful, he had in his favor the noble enthusiasm of truth. They were two strong



wrestlers about to try which should throw the other. But Berquin had another object in view than a triumph over Beda: he would have desired to pour forth floods of truth over all his countrymen. And hence Theodore Beza says, that France might have found a second Luther in Berquin, if he had found a second elector in Francis I. Numerous obstacles were destined to impede his efforts. Fanaticism finds disciples everywhere; it is a fire that spreads far and near. The monks and ignorant priests took part with the syndic of the Sorbonne. A party-spirit pervaded the whole troop, which was governed by a few intriguing and fanatical leaders, who cleverly took advantage of the insignificance or vanity of their colleagues, to infect them with their own prejudices. At all their meetings these chiefs were the only speakers: they domineered over their party by their violence, and reduced the moderate and weakminded to silence. Hardly had they made any proposition, before these ringleaders exclaimed: "We shall soon see now who are of the Lutheran faction." Did anyone give utterance to a reasonable sentiment, a shuddering fell upon Beda, Lecouturier, Duchesne, and the whole band; and all

cried out at once: “He is worse than Luther.” This manoeuvre was successful; the timid minds that prefer peace to disputation, those who are ready to give up their own opinions for their own advantage, those who do not understand the simplest questions, and, lastly, those who are always carried away by the clamor of others, — all became the willing recruits of Beda and his satellites. Some were silent, others shouted, all submitted to that influence which a proud and tyrannical mind exercises over vulgar souls. Such was the state of this association, which was regarded as so venerable, and which was at that time the most violent enemy of evangelical Christianity. It would often be sufficient to cast a single glance upon the most celebrated bodies to estimate at its just value the war they wage upon truth.

Thus the university which, under Louis XII, had applauded Allmain’s aspirations after independence, abruptly plunged once more, under Duprat and Louisa of Savoy, into fanaticism and servility. If we except the Jansenists and a few

other doctors, a noble and real independence has never existed among the Gallican clergy. They have never done more than oscillate between servility to the court and servility to the pope. If under Louis XII or Louis XIV they had some appearance of liberty, it was because their master in Paris was at strife with their master at Rome. And thus we have an explanation of the change we have pointed out.

The university and the bishops forgot their rights and duties as soon as the king ceased to enjoin their observance.

For a long period Beda had been incensed against Lefevre; the renown of the Picard doctor's lectures irritated his compatriot and ruffled his pride; he would gladly have silenced him. Once already Beda had attacked the doctor of Etaples, and as yet little able to distinguish the evangelical doctrines, he had assailed his colleague on a point which, however strange it may appear, was near sending Lefevre to the scaffold. This doctor had asserted that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, Mary

Magdalen, and the “woman which was a sinner,” of whom Saint Luke speaks in the seventh chapter of his Gospel, were three distinct persons. The Greek fathers had distinguished them: the Latin fathers had confounded them together. This terrible heresy of the three Magdalens set Beda and all his host in motion; Christendom was roused; Fisher, bishop of Rochester, one of the most distinguished prelates of the age, wrote against Lefevre, and the whole Church then declared against an opinion now admitted by every Romancatholic.

Already Lefevre, condemned by the Sorbonne, was prosecuted by the parliament as a heretic, when Francis I, pleased at the opportunity of striking a blow at the Sorbonne and of humbling the monks, rescued him from the hands of his persecutors.

Beda, enraged at seeing his victim snatched from his grasp, resolved to take better aim another time. The name of Luther was beginning to be heard in France. The reformer, after the dispute with Dr. Eck at Leipsic, had agreed to

acknowledge the universities of Erfurth and Paris as his judges. The zeal displayed by the latter university against the concordat, no doubt led him to hope that he should find impartial judges in its members. But the times were changed, and the more decided the theological faculty had been against the encroachments of Rome, the more it was bent on showing its orthodoxy. Beda accordingly found it quite disposed to enter into his views.

On the 20th of January 1520, the treasurer of the French nation bought twenty copies of the conference between Luther and Eck for distribution among the members of the commission who were to make a report on the matter. More than a year was employed in this investigation.

The German Reformation was beginning to create a strong sensation in France. The universities, which were then truly catholic institutions, to which students resorted from every country in Christendom, brought Germany, France, Switzerland, and England, into closer and speedier

relation with each other, as regards theology and philosophy, than those of the present day. The reports prevailing in Paris of Luther's success strengthened the hands of such men as Lefevre, Briconnet, and Farel. Each of his victories increased their courage. Many of the Sorbonne doctors were struck by the admirable truths they found in the writings of the Wittenberg monk. There had already been many a bold confession; but there had also been a terrible resistance. "All Europe," says Crevier, "was waiting for the decision of the university of Paris." The contest appeared doubtful. At length Beda prevailed; and in April 1521, the university decreed that Luther's works should be publicly burnt, and the author compelled to retract.

This was not enough. In fact Luther's disciples had crossed the Rhine more speedily even than his writings. "In a short time," says the Jesuit Maimbourg, "the university was filled with foreigners, who, because they knew a little Hebrew and more Greek, acquired a reputation, insinuated themselves into the houses of persons of quality,

and claimed an insolent liberty of interpreting the Bible.” The faculty, therefore, appointed a deputation to bear their remonstrances to the king.

Francis I, caring little for the quarrels of theologians, was continuing his career of pleasure; and passing from castle to castle, with his gentlemen and the ladies composing his mother’s and his sister’s court, he indulged in every species of disorder, far from the troublesome observation of the citizens of the capital. He thus made his progresses through Brittany, Anjou, Guienne, Angoumois, and Poitou, leading the same sumptuous life in villages and forests, as if he had been at Paris in his palace of Tournelles.

It was one round of tournaments, sham-fights, masquerades, costly entertainments, and banquets, which even those of Lucullus (as Brantome says) could not equal. For a moment, however, he interrupted the course of his pleasures to receive the grave deputies of the Sorbonne; but he saw only men of learning in those whom the faculty pointed out as heretics. Could a prince who boasted

of having put the kings of France hors de page (out of leading-strings), bend his head before a few fanatical doctors? He replied: "I will not have these people molested. To persecute those who teach us, would prevent able scholars from coming into our country." The deputation left the king's presence in great wrath. What will be the consequence? The disease grows stronger every day; already the heretical opinions are denominated "the sentiments of men of genius;" the devouring flame is stealing into the most secret recesses; ere long the conflagration will burst forth, and throughout France the edifice of faith will fall with a terrible crash.

Beda and his party, failing to obtain the king's permission to erect their scaffolds, resort to persecutions of a more invidious nature. There was no kind of annoyance to which the evangelical teachers were not subjected.

Fresh reports and fresh denunciations followed each other daily. The aged Lefevre, tormented by these ignorant zealots, longed for repose. The pious



Briconnet, who was unremitting in his veneration for the doctor of Etaples, offered him an asylum. Lefevre quitted Paris and retired to Meaux.

This was the first victory gained over the Gospel, and it was then seen that if the Romish party cannot succeed in engaging the civil power on its side, there is a secret and fanatical police, by means of which it is enabled to obtain its end.

## Chapter 6

# **Briconnet visits his Diocese**

Thus Paris was beginning to rise against the Reformation, and to trace the outlines of that circumvallation which was destined for more than three centuries to bar the entrance of the reformed worship. It had been God's will that the first beams of light should shine upon the capital; but men immediately arose to extinguish them; the spirit of the Sixteen was already fermenting in the metropolis, and other cities were about to receive the light which Paris rejected.

Briconnet, on returning to his diocese, had manifested the zeal of a Christian and of a bishop. He had visited every parish, and, assembling the deans, the incumbents, and their curates, with the churchwardens and principal parishioners, had inquired into the doctrine and lives of the preachers. At collection time (they answered) the Franciscans of Meaux begin their rounds; a single preacher will visit four or five parishes in a day,

always delivering the same sermon, not to feed the souls of his hearers, but to fill his belly, his purse, and his convent. Their wallets once replenished, their end is gained, the sermons are over, and the monks do not appear again in the churches until the time for another collection has arrived. The only business of these shepherds is to shear their sheep. The majority of the parish priests spent their stipends at Paris. “Alas!” exclaimed the pious bishop, finding a presbytery deserted that he had gone to visit, “are they not traitors who thus desert the service of Jesus Christ?” Briconnet resolved to apply a remedy to these evils, and convoked a synod of all his clergy for the 13th of October 1519. But these worldly priests, who troubled themselves but little about the remonstrances of their bishop, and for whom Paris had so many charms, took advantage of a custom in virtue of which they might substitute one or more curates to tend their flocks in their absence. Out of one hundred and twenty-seven of these curates, there were only fourteen of whom Briconnet could approve upon examination.

Worldly-minded priests, imbecile curates, monks who thought only of their belly; — such was then the condition of the Church. Briconnet interdicted the Franciscans from entering the pulpit; published a mandate on the 27th of October 1520, in which he declared “traitors and deserters all those pastors who, by abandoning their flocks, show plainly that what they love is their fleece and their wool; selected others who were found to be capable, and gave them to the poor sheep, ransomed by the most holy blood of Jesus Christ;” and feeling convinced that the only means of providing able ministers for his diocese was to train them himself, he determined to establish a theological school at Meaux, under the direction of pious and learned doctors. It was necessary to find them, and Beda soon provided them.

This fanatic and his band did not relax their exertions; and, bitterly complaining of the toleration of their government, declared that they would make war on the new doctrines with it, without it, and against it. In vain had Lefevre quitted the capital; did not Farel and his friends

remain behind? Farel, it is true, did not preach, for he was not in holy orders; but at the university and in the city, with professors and priests, students and citizens, he boldly maintained the cause of the Reformation. Others, inspired by his example, were inculcating the Gospel more openly. A celebrated preacher, Martial Mazurier, president of St. Michael's college, threw aside all reserve, depicted the disorders of the age in the darkest and yet truest colors, and it seemed impossible to resist the torrent of his eloquence. The anger of Beda and his theological friends was at its height. "If we tolerate these innovators," said he, "they will invade the whole body, and all will be over with our teaching, our traditions, our places, and the respect felt towards us by France and the whole of Christendom!" The divines of the Sorbonne were the stronger party. Farel, Mazurier, Gerard Roussel, and his brother Arnold, soon found their active exertions everywhere thwarted. The Bishop of Meaux entreated his friends to come and join Lefevre; and these excellent men, hunted down by the Sorbonne, and hoping to form, under Briconnet's protection, a sacred phalanx for the

triumph of the truth, accepted the bishop's invitation, and repaired to Meaux. Thus the light of the Gospel was gradually withdrawn from the capital, where Providence had kindled its earliest sparks. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. It is impossible not to discover that Paris then drew down upon its walls the judgment of God pointed out in these words of Jesus Christ.

Margaret of Valois, successively deprived of Briconnet, Lefevre, and their friends, felt anxious at her lonely position in the midst of Paris and the licentious court of Francis I. A young princess, Philiberta of Savoy, her mother's sister, lived in close intimacy with her. Philiberta, whom the King of France had given in marriage to Julian the Magnificent, brother to Leo X, in confirmation of the concordat, had repaired to Rome after her nuptials, when the pope, delighted at so illustrious an alliance, had expended 150,000 ducats in sumptuous festivities on the occasion. Julian, who then commanded the papal army, died, leaving his

widow only eighteen years of age. She became attached to Margaret, who by her talents and virtues exercised a great influence over all around her. Philiberta's grief opened her heart to the voice of religion. Margaret imparted to her all she read; and the widow of the lieutenantgeneral of the Church began to taste the sweets of the doctrine of salvation. But Philiberta was too inexperienced to support her friend. Margaret often trembled as she thought of her exceeding weakness. If the love she bore the king and the fear she had of displeasing him led her to any action contrary to her conscience, trouble immediately entered into her soul, and turning sorrowfully towards the Lord, she found in him a brother and a master more compassionate and dearer to her than Francis himself. It was then she said to Jesus Christ: — Sweet brother, who, when thou might'st justly chide Thy foolish sister, tak'st her to thy side; And grace and love giv'st her in recompense Of murmurings, injury, and great offense.

Too much, too much, dear brother, thou hast done, Too much, alas! for such a worthless one.

Margaret seeing all her friends retiring to Meaux, looked sadly after them from the midst of the festivities of the court. Everything appeared to be deserting her again. Her husband, the Duke of Alencon, was setting out for the army; her youthful aunt Philiberta was going to Savoy. The duchess turned to Briconnet.

“Monsieur de Meaux,” wrote she, “knowing that One alone is necessary, I apply to you, entreating you to be, by prayer, the means that He will be pleased to guide according to His holy will, M. d’Alencon, who by command of the king is setting out as lieutenant-general in his army, which I fear will not be disbanded without a war. And thinking that, besides the public weal of the kingdom, you have a good title in whatsoever concerns his salvation and mine, I pray for your spiritual aid. Tomorrow, my aunt of Nemours departs for Savoy. I am obliged to meddle with many things that cause me much fear. Wherefore, if you should know that master Michael could undertake a journey hither, it would be a



consolation to me, which I beseech only for the honor of God.” Michael of Aranda, whose aid Margaret sought, was a member of the evangelical society of Meaux, and who subsequently exposed himself to many dangers in preaching the Gospel.

This pious princess beheld with alarm the opposition against truth becoming more formidable every day. Duprat and the creatures of the government, Beda and those of the Sorbonne, filled her with terror.

Briconnet, to encourage her, replied: “It is the war which the gentle Jesus told us in the Gospel he came to send on earth.....and also the fire.....the great fire that transformeth earthliness into heavenliness. I desire with all my heart to aid you, madam, but from my own nothingness expect nothing but the will. Whoso hath faith hope, and love, hath all he requires, and needeth not aid or support.....God alone is all in all, and out of him can nothing be found. To fight, take with you that great giant.....love unspeakable.....The war is led on by love. Jesus demandeth the presence of the

heart: wretched is the man who withdraws from him. Whoso fighteth in person is sure of victory. He often faileth who fighteth by others.” The Bishop of Meaux was beginning to know by personal experience what it is to fight for the Word of God. The theologians and monks, irritated by the asylum he gave to the friend of the Reformation, accused him with such violence that his brother, the Bishop of St. Malo, came to Paris to inquire into the matter. Hence Margaret was the more touched by the consolations that Briconnet addressed to her, and she replied with offers of assistance.

“If in anything,” she wrote, “you think that I can pleasure you or yours, I pray you believe that every trouble will turn to my comfort. May everlasting peace be yours after these long wars you are waging for the faith, in which battle you desire to die.....

Wholly your daughter, Margaret.” It is to be lamented that Briconnet did not die in the contest. Yet he was then full of zeal. Philiberta of Nemours,

respected by all for her sincere devotion, her liberality towards the poor, and the great purity of her life, read with increasing interest the evangelical writings transmitted to her by the Bishop of Meaux. “I have all the tracts that you have sent me,” wrote Margaret to Briconnet, “of which my aunt of Nemours has her part, and I will forward her the last; for she is in Savoy at her brother’s wedding, which is no slight loss to me; wherefore I beseech you have pity on my loneliness.” Unhappily Philiberta did not live long enough to declare herself openly in favor of the Reformation. She died in 1524 at the castle of Virieu le Grand, in Bugey, at the age of twentysix. This was a severe blow to Margaret. Her friend, her sister, she who could fully comprehend her, was taken from her. There was perhaps only one individual, her brother, whose death would have occasioned her more sorrow than this: Such floods of tears fall from my eyes, They hide from view both earth and skies. Margaret, feeling her inability to resist her grief and the seductions of the court, entreated Briconnet to exhort her to the love of God, and the humble bishop replied: — “May the

mild and gentle Jesus, who wills, and who alone is able to effect what he mightily will, in his infinite mercy visit your heart, exhorting you to love him with your whole being. Other than he, madam, none has the power to do this; you must not seek light from darkness, or warmth from cold. By attracting he kindles; and by warmth he attracts to follow him, enlarging the heart. Madam, you write to me to have pity on you, because you are alone. I do not understand that word. Whoso lives in the world and has his heart there is alone; for many and evil go together. But she whose heart sleeps to the world, and is awake to the meek and gentle Jesus, her true and loyal husband, is truly alone, for she lives on the one thing needful; and yet she is not alone, not being forsaken by him who fills and preserves all things. Pity I cannot, and must not, such loneliness, which is more to be esteemed than the whole world, from which I am persuaded that the love of God had saved you, and that you are no longer its child.....Abide, madam, alone in your only One.....who has been pleased to suffer a painful and ignominious death and passion.

“Madam, in commending myself to your good graces, I entreat you not to use any more such words as in your last letters. Of God alone you are the daughter and bride: other father you should not seek.....I exhort and admonish you, that you will be such and as good a daughter to him, as he is a good Father to you.....and forasmuch as you cannot attain to this, because the finite cannot correspond to infinity, I pray that he will vouchsafe to increase your strength, that you may love and serve him with your whole heart.” Notwithstanding these exhortations, Margaret was not consoled. She bitterly regretted the spiritual guides whom she had lost; the new pastors forced upon her to bring her back did not possess her confidence and whatever the bishop might say, she felt herself alone in the midst of the court, and all around her appeared dark and desolate.

“As a sheep in a strange country,” wrote she to Briconnet, “wandering about, not knowing where to find its pasture, through lack of knowing its new shepherds, naturally lifts its head to catch the breeze from that quarter where the chief shepherd

was once accustomed to give her sweet nourishment, in such sort am I constrained to pray for your charity.....Come down from the high mountain, and in pity regard, among this benighted people, the blindest of all thy fold.

“Margaret.” The Bishop of Meaux, in his reply, taking up the image of the stray sheep under which Margaret had depicted herself, uses it to describe the mysteries of salvation under the figure of a wood: “The sheep entering the forest, led by the Holy Ghost,” said he, “is immediately enchanted by the goodness, beauty, straightness, length, breadth, depth, and height, and the fragrant and invigorating sweetness of this forest.....and when it has looked all around, has seen only Him in all, and all in Him; and moving rapidly through its depths, finds it so pleasant, that the way is life, and joy, and consolation.” The bishop then shows her the sheep searching in vain for the limits of the forest (an image of the soul that would fathom the mysteries of God), meeting with lofty mountains, which it endeavors to scale, finding everywhere “inaccessible and incomprehensible infinity.” He

then teaches her the road by which the soul, inquiring after God, surmounts all these difficulties; he shows how the sheep in the midst of the hirelings finds “the cabin of the great Shepherd,” and “enters on the wing of meditation by faith;” all is made smooth, all is explained; and she begins to sing: “I have found him whom my soul loveth.” Thus wrote the Bishop of Meaux. At that period he was burning with zeal, and would gladly have seen all France regenerated by the Gospel.

Often would his mind dwell especially on those three great individuals who seemed to preside over the destinies of its people, — the king, his mother, and his sister. He thought that if the royal family were enlightened, all the people would be so, and the priests, stirred to rivalry, would at last awaken from their lethargy. “Madam,” wrote he to Margaret, “I humbly entreat Almighty God, that he will be pleased of his goodness to kindle a fire in the hearts of the king, of his mother, and in your own.....so that from you there may go forth a light burning and shining on the rest of the nation; and

particularly that class by whose coldness all others are frozen.” Margaret did not share these hopes. She speaks neither of her brother nor of her mother; they were subjects she dared not touch upon; but, replying to the bishop in January 1522, with a heart wrung by the indifference and worldliness of those around her, she said: “The times are so cold, my heart so icy;” and signs her letter, “your frozen, thirsty, and hungry daughter, “Margaret.” This letter did not discourage Briconnet, but it made him ponder; and feeling how much he, who desired to re-animate others, required to be animated himself, he commended himself to the prayers of Margaret and of Madam de Nemours. “Madam,” wrote he, with great simplicity, “I beseech you to awaken the poor slumberer with your prayers.” Such in 1521 were the sentiments interchanged at the court of France. A strange correspondence, no doubt, and which, after more than three centuries, a manuscript in the Royal Library has revealed to us. Was this influence of the Reformation in such high places a benefit to it or a misfortune? The sting of truth penetrated the court; but perhaps it only served to



arouse the drowsy beast, and exciting his rage, caused it to spring with deadlier fury on the humblest of the flock.

## Chapter 7

# Beginning of the Church at Meaux

The time was indeed approaching when the storm should burst upon the Reformation; but it was first to scatter a few more seeds and to gather in a few more sheaves. This city of Meaux, renowned a century and a half later by the sublime defender of the Gallican system against the autocratic pretensions of Rome, was called to be the first town of France where regenerated Christianity should establish its dominion. It was then the field on which the laborers were prodigal of their exertions and their seed, and where already the ears were falling before the reapers. Briconnet, less sunk in slumber than he had said, was animating, inspecting, and directing all.

His fortune equalled his zeal; never did man devote his wealth to nobler uses, and never did such noble devotedness promise at first to bear

such glorious fruits. The most pious teachers, transferred from Paris to Meaux, from that time acted with more liberty. There was freedom of speech, and great was the stride then taken by the Reformation in France. Lefevre energetically expounded that Gospel with which he would have rejoiced to fill the world. He exclaimed: “Kings, princes, nobles, people, all nations should think and aspire after Christ alone. Every priest should resemble that archangel whom John saw in the Apocalypse, flying through the air, holding the everlasting Gospel in his hand, and carrying it to every people, nation, tongue, and king. Come near ye pontiffs, come ye kings, come ye generous hearts!..... Nations, awake to the light of the Gospel, and inhale the heavenly life. The Word of God is all-sufficient.” Such in truth was the motto of that school: **THE WORD OF GOD IS ALLSUFFICIENT.**

In this device the whole Reformation is embodied. “To know Christ and his Word,” said Lefevre, Roussel, and Farel, “is the only living and universal theology.....He who knows that, knows

everything.” The truth was making a deep impression at Meaux. Private meetings took place at first; then conferences; and at last the Gospel was preached in the churches. But a new effort inflicted a still more formidable blow against Rome.

Lefevre desired to enable the Christians of France to read the Holy Scriptures. On the 30th October 1522, he published a French translation of the four Gospels; on the 6th November, the remaining books of the New Testament; on the 12th October 1524, all these books together, at the house of Collin in Meaux; and in 1525, a French version of the Psalms. Thus was begun in France, almost at the same time as in Germany, that printing and dissemination of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue which, three centuries later, was to be so wonderfully developed throughout the world. In France, as on the other side of the Rhine, the Bible had a decisive influence. Experience had taught many Frenchmen, that when they sought to know Divine things, doubt and obscurity encompassed them on every side. In how many

moments and perhaps years in their lives had they been tempted to regard the most certain truths as mere delusions! We need a ray from heaven to enlighten our darkness. Such was the ejaculation of many a soul at the epoch of the Reformation. With longings such as these, numbers received the sacred writings from the hands of Lefevre; they were read in their families and in private; conversations on the Bible became frequent; Christ appeared to those souls so long misled, as the center and the sun of all revelation. No longer did they require demonstrations to prove that Scripture was from God; they knew it, for by it they had been transported from darkness to light.

Such was the course by which so many distinguished persons in France attained a knowledge of God. But there were yet simpler and more common paths, if such can be, by which many of the lower classes were brought to the truth. The city of Meaux was almost wholly inhabited by artisans and dealers in wool. “There was engendered in many,” says a chronicler of the sixteenth century, “so ardent a desire of knowing

the way of salvation, that artisans, fullers, and wool-combers took no other recreation, as they worked with their hands, than to talk with each other of the Word of God, and to comfort themselves with the same. Sundays and holidays especially were devoted to the reading of Scripture, and inquiring into the good pleasure of the Lord.” Briconnet rejoiced to see piety take the place of superstition in his diocese.

“Lefevre, aided by the renown of his great learning,” says a contemporary historian, “contrived so to cajole and circumvent Messire Guillaume Briconnet with his plausible talk, that he caused him to turn aside grievously, so that it has been impossible up to this day to free the city and diocese of Meaux from that pestilent doctrine, where it has so marvelously increased. The misleading that good bishop was a great injury, as until then he had been so devoted to God and to the Virgin Mary.” Yet all were not so grievously turned aside, as the Franciscan says, whom we have just quoted. The city was divided into two parties. On the one side were the monks of St.

Francis and the friends of the Romish doctrine; on the other, Briconnet, Lefevre, Farel, and all those who loved the new preaching. A man of the poorer classes, by name Leclerc, was one of the most servile adherents of the monks; but his wife and two sons, Peter and John, had received the Gospel with eagerness, and John, who was a woolcarder, soon distinguished himself among the new Christians. James Pavanne, a learned and youthful Picard, “a man of great sincerity and uprightness,” whom Briconnet had invited to Meaux, showed an ardent zeal for the Reformation. Meaux had become a focus of light. Persons called thither by business heard the Gospel, and carried it back to their homes. It was not in the city alone that men were examining the Scriptures; “many of the villages did the same,” says a chronicle, “so that in this diocese an image of the renovated Church was seen to shine forth.” The environs of Meaux were covered with rich crops, and at harvest season a crowd of laborers flocked thither from the surrounding countries.

Resting from their toils in the middle of the

day, they conversed with the people of the place, who spoke to them of other seed-times and other harvests. Many peasants from Thierache, and particularly from Landouzy, persevered, on their return home, in the doctrines they had heard, and ere long an evangelical church was formed in this district, which is one of the oldest churches in the kingdom. “The renown of this great blessing spread through France,” says the chronicler. Briconnet himself proclaimed the Gospel from the pulpit, and endeavored to scatter around him “that infinite, sweet, mild, true, and only light (to use his own words) which dazzles and enlightens every creature capable of receiving it, and which, while it enlightens him, raises him by adoption to the dignity of a 1106 son of God.” He besought his flock to lend no ear to those who would turn them aside from the Word. “Though an angel from heaven,” said he, “should preach any other Gospel, do not listen to him.” Sometimes gloomy thoughts would prey upon his soul. He was not sure of himself: he shrunk back in alarm, as he dwelt upon the fatal consequences of his unfaithfulness; and forewarning his hearers, he said to them: “Even



should I, your bishop, change my language and my doctrine, beware of changing like me.” At that moment nothing seemed to indicate the possibility of such a misfortune. “Not only was the Word of God preached,” says the chronicle, “but it was followed; all works of charity and love were practiced there; the morals were reformed and superstitions laid low.” Still clinging to the idea of gaining over the king and his mother, the bishop sent to Margaret “the epistles of St. Paul, translated and splendidly illuminated, most humbly entreating her to present them to the king; which cannot but be most pleasing from your hands,” added the good bishop.

“They are a royal dish,” continued he, “fattening without corruption, and healing all manner of sickness. The more we taste them, the more we hunger after them with desire unsatiated, and that never cloy.” What more welcome message could Margaret receive? The moment seemed favorable. Michael Aranda was at Paris, detained by order of the king’s mother, for whom he was translating portions of the Holy Scripture.

But Margaret would have preferred that Briconnet should present this book himself to her brother. “You would do well to come here,” wrote she, “for you know the confidence that Madam and the king place in you.” Thus, probably, was the Word of God placed at that time (in 1522 and 1523) under the eyes of Francis I and Louisa of Savoy. They came into contact with that Gospel which they were afterwards to persecute. We do not find that this Word produced any salutary effect upon them. An impulse of curiosity led them to open that Bible which was then making so much noise; but they closed it as soon as they had opened it.

Margaret herself found it hard to contend against the worldliness by which she was everywhere surrounded. Her tender affection towards her brother, the obedience she owed to her mother, and the flatteries lavished on her by the court, all seemed to conspire against the love she had vowed to Christ.

Christ was alone against many. Sometimes Margaret’s soul, assailed by so many adversaries,

and stunned by the noise of the world, turned aside from its Master. Then, becoming sensible of her faults, the princess would shut herself up in her apartments, and giving way to her sorrow, utter cries very different from the joyous sounds with which Francis and the young lords, the companions of his debauchery, filled the royal palaces in the midst of their entertainments and festivities: — Left you I have, to follow pleasure's voice, Left you I have, and for an evil choice, Left you I have, and whither am I come?..... Then turning towards Meaux, Margaret would exclaim in her anguish: "I return to you, to M. Fabry (Lefevre) and all your gentlemen, beseeching you, by your prayers, to obtain of the unspeakable Mercy an alarum for the poor weak and sleepy one, to arouse her from her heavy and deadly slumber." Thus had Meaux become a focus whence the light of the Gospel emanated.

The friends of the Reformation indulged in flattering illusions. Who could resist the Gospel if the power of Francis cleared the way? The corrupting influence of the court would then be

changed into a holy influence, and France would acquire a moral strength that would render her the benefactress of the world.

But, on their side, the friends of Rome had taken the alarm. Among those at Meaux was a Jacobin monk named Roma. One day, as Lefevre, Farel, and their friends were talking with him and some other of the papal partisans, Lefevre could not suppress his anticipations. “The Gospel is already gaining the hearts of the great and of the people,” said he, “and in a short time, spreading all over France, it will everywhere throw down the inventions of men.” The aged doctor was animated; his eyes sparkled; his worn-out voice grew sonorous; one might have compared him to the aged Simeon returning thanks to the Lord, because his eyes had seen His salvation. Lefevre’s friends shared in his emotion: their amazed opponents were dumb. On a sudden Roma started up impetuously, and exclaimed in the tone of a popular tribune: “Then I and all the other religioners will preach a crusade; we will raise the people; and if the king permits the preaching of

your Gospel, we will expel him from his kingdom by his own subjects.” Thus did a monk venture to rise up against the knightly monarch. The Franciscans applauded this language. They must not allow the doctor’s prophecy to be fulfilled. Already the friars were returning daily with diminished offerings. The Franciscans in alarm went about among private families. “These new teachers are heretics,” said they; “they attack the holiest observances, and deny the most sacred mysteries.” Then growing bolder, the most incensed among them issued from their cloister, and proceeded to the bishop’s residence. On being admitted, they said to the prelate: “Crush this heresy, or else the pestilence, which is already desolating the city of Meaux, will spread over the whole kingdom.” Briconnet was moved, and for an instant disturbed by this attack, but he did not give way; he felt too much contempt for these ignorant monks and their interested clamors. He went into the pulpit, justified Lefevre, and called the monks pharisees and hypocrites. Still this opposition had already excited trouble and conflict in his soul; he sought to encourage himself by the persuasion that

such spiritual combats were necessary. “By this warfare,” said he, in his somewhat mystical language, “we arrive at a vivifying death, and by continually mortifying life, we die living, and live dying.” The way would have been surer if, casting himself upon the Savior, as the apostles when tossed by the winds and waves, he had exclaimed; “Lord, help me! or I perish.” The monks of Meaux, enraged at their unfavorable reception by the bishop, resolved to carry their complaints before a higher tribunal. An appeal lay open to them. If the bishop will not give way, he may be reduced to compliance. Their leaders set out for Paris, and concerted measures with Beda and Duchesne. They hastened before the parliament, and denounced the bishop and the heretical teachers. “The city and all the neighborhood,” said they, “are infected with heresy, and its polluted waters flow from the episcopal palace.” Thus did France begin to hear the cry of persecution raised against the Gospel. The sacerdotal and the civil power, the Sorbonne and the parliament, grasped their arms, — arms that were to be stained with blood.

Christianity had taught mankind that there are duties and rights anterior to all civil associations; it had emancipated the religious mind, promoted liberty of conscience, and worked a great change in society; for antiquity, which contemplated the citizen everywhere and the man nowhere, had made religion a mere matter of state. But these ideas of liberty had scarcely been given to the world, ere the papacy corrupted them; for the despotism of the prince it had substituted the despotism of the priest; and not unfrequently it had raised both prince and priest against the christian people. A new emancipation was needed; it took place in the sixteenth century. Wherever the Reformation established itself, it broke the yoke of Rome, and the religious mind was again enfranchised. But so rooted in the nature of man is the disposition to tyrannize over truth, that among many protestant nations, the Church, liberated from the arbitrary power of the priest, has again in our days fallen under the yoke of the civil power; destined, like its founder, to be bandied from one despotism to another, to pass from Caiaphas to Pilate, and from Pilate to Caiaphas.

Briconnet had not the courage necessary for resistance. He would not yield everything, but what he did concede satisfied Rome. "We may well do without Luther's writings," he thought, "if we keep the Gospel; we may easily accede to a certain invocation of the Virgin, if we add that it is only by the mediation of Jesus Christ that she possesses any influence." If beside the truth we place the power of error, the papacy is satisfied. But the sacrifice which Briconnet felt the deepest, and which yet was required of him, was the loss of his friends. If the bishop would escape, he must sacrifice his brethren. Of timid character, but little prepared to give up his riches and his station for Christ's sake, already alarmed, shaken, and cast down, he was still further led astray by treacherous advisers: if the evangelical doctors should quit Meaux (said some), they will carry the Reformation elsewhere. His heart was torn by a painful struggle. At last the wisdom of this world prevailed; he gave way, and, on the 15th of October 1523, published three mandates, the first of which enjoined prayers for the dead, and the



invocation of the Virgin and of the saints; the second forbade any one to buy, borrow, read, possess, or carry about with him Luther's works, and ordered them to be torn in pieces, to be scattered to the winds, or to be burnt; and the last established in express terms the doctrine of purgatory. Then, on the 13th of November in the same year, Briconnet forbade the parish priests and their curates to permit the "Lutherans" to preach. This was not all. The first president of the Parliament of Paris, and Andrew Verjus, councillor in the same court, and before whom Briconnet had shortly afterwards to appear, arrived at Meaux during Lent 1524, no doubt to satisfy themselves of the bishop's proceedings. The poor prelate did all he could to please them. Already on the 29th of January he had taken the images of the saints under his especial protection; he now began to visit his churches, to preach, and to struggle hard in the presence of the first president and of councillor Verjus to "weed out the heresies that were there shooting up." The deputies of the Parliament returned to Paris fully satisfied. This was Briconnet's first fall.

Lefevre was the special object of hostility. His commentary on the four Gospels, and particularly the “Epistle to Christian Readers,” prefixed to it, had inflamed the anger of Beda and his allies. They denounced this writing to the faculty. “Does he not dare to recommend all the faithful to read the Scriptures?” said the fiery syndic. “Does he not tell therein that whoever loves not Christ’s Word is not a Christian; and that the Word of God is sufficient to lead to eternal life?” But Francis I looked on this accusation as a mere theological squabble. He appointed a commission; and Lefevre, having justified himself before it, came off from this attack with all the honors of war.

Farel, who had not so many protectors at court, was compelled to leave Meaux. It would appear that he first repaired to Paris; and that, having unsparingly attacked the errors of Rome, he could remain there no longer, and was forced to retire to Dauphiny, whither he was eager to carry the Gospel.

At the time of the dispersion of the Christians at Meaux, another Frenchman, quitting his native country, crossed the threshold of the Augustine convent at Wittenberg, where Luther resided. This was in January 1523.

Farel was not the only man in the south of France whom God had prepared for his work. A little further to the south than Gap, on the banks of the Rhone, in that city of Avignon called by Petrarch “the third Babylon,” may still be seen the walls of the “apostolic palace,” which the popes and cardinals had long filled with their luxury and debauchery, and which a Roman legate now inhabited, lonely and dejected in the midst of this deserted city, whose narrow filthy streets were seldom trod but by the feet of monks and priests.

The little court of the legate was, however, sometimes enlivened by a beautiful, amiable, and laughing boy, who gambolled about its halls. This was Francis Lambert, son of the secretary of the apostolic palace, born in 1487, two years before Farel. The child was at first astonished at the

irreligion and crimes of these prelates, — “crimes so numerous and so enormous,” says he, “that I cannot describe them.” He became habituated to them, however, by degrees, and it would appear that he was himself seduced by bad example. Yet God had implanted in his heart a desire for holiness. His father being dead, his mother had the charge of his education, and, according to the custom of the times, intrusted him to the care of the Franciscans. The sanctified air of these monks imposed on Francis, and his timid looks followed them respectfully, as he saw them clad in coarse garments, barefoot, or with rude sandals only, moving to and fro, begging in the city and calling on his mother; and if at any time they chanced to smile upon him, he fancied himself (he tells us) almost in heaven. The monks worked upon this disposition, and Francis, attracted by them, assumed the cowl at the age of fifteen. “It was God’s pleasure,” said he in after-years, “that I might make known to the world the impurity of these whited sepulchers.” During the year of his noviciate everything went on smoothly; he was studiously kept in the dark; but no sooner had he

pronounced his vows, than the monks showed themselves in all their deformity, and the halo of sanctity that he had discovered around their heads faded away, and he remained incensed, alarmed, and dejected. Francis soon began to feel a secret strength within him, that drove him forcibly towards the Holy Scriptures, and bound him to believe and to teach the Word of God. In 1517, he was nominated apostolical preacher of the convent, and instead of running about like his colleagues after “fat presents and well-stored tables,” he employed himself in travelling afoot through the deserted country, and calling those ignorant people to conversion whom the fire and sincerity of his language drew around him in crowds. But when, after spending several months in passing through the Comtat Venaissin and the surrounding districts, he returned exhausted to his convent on a mule that had been given him to carry his weakened frame, and went to seek a brief repose in his poor cell, some of the monks received him with coldness, others with raillery, and a third party with anger; and they hastened to sell the animal, which they all agreed in saying was the only profit of these

evangelical journeys.

One day, as brother Francis was preaching in a certain town, with a gravity quite apostolic and the vivacity of a native of the south: “Kindle a fire,” exclaimed he, “before this sacred porch, and there consume the spoils of your luxury, your worldly-mindedness, and your debauchery.” Immediately the whole assembly was in commotion; some lighted up a fire; others ran into their houses and returned with dice, playing-cards, and obscene pictures; and then, like the Christians of Ephesus at the preaching of St. Paul, cast all into the flames. A great crowd was gathered round the fire, and among them some Franciscans, who perceiving an indecent drawing of a young female, cunningly drew it away, and hid it under one of their frocks, “to add fuel to their own flames,” says Lambert. This did not escape the eye of brother Francis; a holy indignation kindled within him, and boldly addressing the monks, he inveighed against their lubricity and theft. Abashed at being discovered, they sunk their heads, gave up the picture, but swore to be revenged. Lambert, surrounded with

debauchery, and become an object of hatred to the monks, felt from time to time an ardent desire to return into the world, which appeared to him infinitely more holy than the cloister: but he found something still better. Luther's works, carried to the fairs of Lyons, descended the Rhone and reached his cell. They were soon taken from him and burnt; but it was too late. The spirit that animated the Augustine of Wittenberg had passed into the Franciscan of Avignon: he was saved.

Vainly until then had he resorted to frequent fasting; vainly had he slept sitting on a stool; vainly had he shunned the looks of woman, worn haircloth next his skin, scourged himself, and so weakened his body that he could scarcely hold himself upright, and sometimes even fainted in the churches and fields as he was preaching to the people. All this, he tells us, could not extinguish the desires and banish the thoughts that preyed upon him, and it was only in faith on the free grace of God and in the sanctity of a married life that he found purity and peace. This is one of those numerous examples which prove that marriage,

being of Divine appointment, is a means of grace and holiness, and that the celibacy of priests and monks, the invention of man, is one of the most effectual agents to foster impurity, sully the imagination, disturb the peace of families, and fill society with innumerable disorders.

At last the friar had made up his mind; he will quit the convent, he will abandon popery, he will leave France. He will go where the streams of the Gospel flow abundant and pure, and he will there plunge into them, and quench the fires that are consuming him. Since all his efforts are unavailing, he will go to Wittenberg, to that great servant of God, whose name alone conjures and affrights the devil, in order that he may find peace. He took advantage of some letters that were to be carried to one of the superiors of the order, and having donned his frock, quitted the Franciscan convent of Avignon in the spring of 1522, after twenty years of struggle. He ascended the Rhone, traversed Lyons, and crossed the forests that cover the lower ridges of the Jura. This tall, thin, ungraceful monk still wore the habit of his order, and rode on an ass,



his bare feet almost touching the ground. We have already seen him pass through Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, and Zurich. In the beginning of 1523, he was at Wittenberg, and embraced Luther. But let us return to France and to the Church of Meaux.

## Chapter 8

# Lefevre and Farel persecuted

Lefevre intimidated, Briconnet drawing back, Farel compelled to fly — here was a beginning of victory. They already imagined at the Sorbonne that they had mastered the movement; the doctors and monks congratulated each other on their triumphs. But this was not enough; blood had not flowed. They set to work again; and blood, since it must be so, was ere long to gratify the fanaticism of Rome.

The evangelical Christians of Meaux, seeing their leaders dispersed, sought to edify one another. The wool-carder, John Leclerc, whom the lessons of the doctors, the reading of the Bible, and some tracts, had instructed in the christian doctrine, signalized himself by his zeal and facility in expounding Scripture. He wa one of those men whom the Spirit of God fills with courage, and soon places at the head of a religious movement.

It was not long before the Church of Meaux regarded him as its minister.

The idea of a universal priesthood, such a living principle among the first Christians, had been reestablished by Luther in the sixteenth century. But this idea seems then to have existed only in theory in the Lutheran church, and to have been really acted upon solely among the reformed Christians. The Lutheran Churches (and here they agree with the Anglican Church) perhaps took a middle course between the Romish and the Reformed Churches. Among the Lutherans, everything proceeded from the pastor or the priest; and nothing was counted valid in the Church that did not flow regularly through its chiefs. But the Reformed Churches, while they maintained the Divine appointment of the ministry, which some sects deny, approached nearer to the primitive condition of the apostolical communities. From the times of which we are speaking, they recognized and proclaimed that the christian flocks ought not simply to receive what the pastor gives; that the members of the Church, as well as its leaders,

possess the key of that treasure whence the latter derive their instruction, for the Bible is in the hands of all; that the graces of God, the spirit of faith, of wisdom, of consolation, of light, are not bestowed on the pastor only; that every man is called upon to employ the gift he has received for the good of all; and that a certain gift, necessary to the edification of the Church, may be refused to a minister, and yet granted to one of his flock.

Thus the passive state of the Church was then changed into a state of general activity; and in France, especially, this revolution was accomplished. In other countries, the reformers were almost exclusively pastors and doctors; but in France men of learning had from the very beginning pious men of the people for their allies. In that country God selected for his first workmen a doctor of the Sorbonne and a woolcomber.

The wool-comber Leclerc began to visit from house to house, confirming the disciples. But not stopping short at these ordinary cares, he would fain have seen the edifice of popery overthrown,

and France, from the midst of these ruins, turning with a cry of joy towards the Gospel. His unguarded zeal may remind us of that Hottinger at Zurich, and of Carlstadt at Wittenberg. He wrote a proclamation against the Antichrist of Rome, announcing that the Lord was about to destroy it by the breath of his mouth. He then boldly posted his “placards” on the gates of the cathedral.

Presently all was in confusion around that ancient edifice. The faithful were amazed; the priests exasperated. What! a fellow whose employment is wool-combing dares measure himself with the pope! The Franciscans were outrageous, and demanded that this once at least a terrible example should be made. Leclerc was thrown into prison.

His trial was finished in a few days, under the eyes of Briconnet himself, who was now to witness and tolerate all that was done. The carder was condemned to be whipped three days successively through the city, and on the third to be branded on the forehead. This sad spectacle soon began.

Leclerc was led through the streets with his hands bound, his back bare, and the executioners inflicted on him the blows he had drawn upon himself by rising up against the Bishop of Rome. An immense crowd followed in the track marked by the martyr's blood. Some yelled with rage against the heretic; others by their silence gave him no unequivocal marks of their tender compassion. One woman encouraged the unhappy man by her looks and words: she was his mother.

At last, on the third day, when the blood-stained procession was ended, they halted with Leclerc at the usual place of execution. The hangman prepared the fire, heated the iron that was to stamp its burning mark on the evangelist, and approaching him, branded him on the forehead as a heretic. A shriek was heard, but it did not proceed from the martyr. His mother, a spectator of the dreadful scene, and wrung with anguish, endured a bitter strife: it was the enthusiasm of faith struggling in her heart with maternal love; faith prevailed at last, and she exclaimed with a voice

that made the adversaries tremble: “Glory to Jesus Christ and to his witnesses!” Thus did that Frenchwoman of the sixteenth century fulfill the commandment of the Son of God: “He that loveth his son more than me is not worthy of me.” Such boldness, and at such a moment, merited signal punishment; but this christian mother had appalled the hearts both of priests and soldiers. All their fury was controlled by a stronger arm than theirs. The crowd, respectfully making way, allowed the martyr’s mother slowly to regain her humble dwelling. The monks, and even the town-sergeants, gazed on her without moving. “Not one of her enemies dared lay hands upon her,” said Theodore Beza. After this execution, Leclerc, being set at liberty, retired to Rosay in Brie, a small town about six leagues from Meaux, and subsequently to Metz, where we shall meet with him again.

The adversaries were triumphant. “The Cordeliers having re-captured the pulpits, propagated their lies and trumpery as usual.” But the poor workmen of the city, prevented from hearing the Word in regular assemblies, “began to

meet in secret,” says our chronicler, “after the manner of the sons of the prophets in the time of Ahab, and of the Christians of the primitive Church; and, as opportunity offered, they assembled at one time in a house, at another in some cave, sometimes also in a vineyard or in a wood. There, he amongst them who was most versed in the Holy Scriptures exhorted the rest; and this done, they all prayed together with great courage, supporting each other by the hope that the Gospel would be revived in France, and that the tyranny of Antichrist would come to an end.” — There is no power that can arrest the progress of truth.

But one victim only was not enough; and if the first against whom the persecution was let loose was a wool-comber, the second was a gentleman of the court. It was necessary to frighten the nobles as well as the people.

Their reverences of the Sorbonne of Paris could not think of being outstripped by the Franciscans of Meaux. Berquin, “the most learned of the nobles,”



had derived fresh courage from the Holy Scriptures, and after having attacked “the hornets of the Sorbonne” in certain epigrams, had openly accused them of impiety. Beda and Duchesne, who had not ventured to reply in their usual manner to the witticisms of the king’s gentleman, changed their mind, as soon as they discovered serious convictions latent behind these attacks. Berquin had become a Christian: his ruin was determined on. Beda and Duchesne, having seized some of his translations, found in them matter to burn more heretics than one. “He maintains,” said they, “that it is wrong to invoke the Virgin Mary in place of the Holy Ghost, and to call her the source of all grace. He inveighs against the practice of calling her our hope, our life, and says that these titles belong only to the Son of God.” There were other matters besides these. Berquin’s study was like a bookseller’s shop, whence works of corruption were circulated through the whole kingdom.

The Common-places of Melancthon, in particular, served, by the elegance of their style, to shake the faith of the literary men in France. This

pious noble, living only amidst his folios and his tracts, had become, out of christian charity, translator, corrector, printer, and bookseller.....It was essential to check this formidable torrent at its very source.

One day, as Berquin was quietly seated at his studies, among his beloved books, his house was suddenly surrounded by the sergeants-at-arms, who knocked violently at the door. They were the Sorbonne and its agents, who, furnished with authority from the parliament, were making a domiciliary visit. Beda, the formidable syndic, was at their head, and never did inquisitor perform his duty better; accompanied by his satellites, he entered Berquin's library, told him his business, ordered a watchful eye to be kept upon him, and began his search. Not a book escaped his piercing glance, and an exact inventory of the whole was drawn up by his orders.

Here was a treatise by Melancthon, there a book by Carlstadt; farther on, a work of Luther's. Here were heretical books translated from Latin

into French by Berquin himself; there, others of his own composition. All the works that Beda seized, except two, were filled with Lutheran errors. He left the house, carrying off his booty, and more elated than ever was general laden with the spoils of vanquished nations. Berquin saw that a great storm had burst upon him but his courage did not falter. He despised his enemies too much to fear them. Meanwhile Beda lost no time. On the 13th of May 1523, the parliament issued a decree that all the books seized in Berquin's house should be laid before the faculty of theology. The opinion of the Sorbonne was soon pronounced; on the 25th of June it condemned all the works, with the exception of the two already mentioned, to be burnt as heretical, and ordered that Berquin should abjure his errors. The parliament ratified this decision.

The nobleman appeared before this formidable body. He knew that the next step might be to the scaffold; but, like Luther at Worms, he remained firm. Vainly did the parliament order him to retract. Berquin was not one of those who fall away after having been made partakers of the Holy

Ghost. Whosoever is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. Every fall proves that the previous conversion has been only apparent or partial; but Berquin's conversion was real. He replied with firmness to the court before which he stood. The parliament, more severe than the Diet of Worms had been, ordered its officers to seize the accused, and take him to the prison of the Conciergerie. This was on the 1st of August 1523. On the 5th the parliament handed over the heretic to the Bishop of Paris, in order that this prelate might take cognizance of the affair, and that, assisted by the doctors and councillors, he should pronounce sentence on the culprit. He was transferred to the episcopal prison. Thus was Berquin passed from court to court and from one prison to another. Beda, Duchesne, and their cabal had their victim in their grasp; but the court still cherished a grudge against the Sorbonne, and Francis was more powerful than Beda. This transaction excited great indignation among the nobles. Do these monks and priests forget what the sword of a gentleman is worth? "Of what is he accused?" said they to Francis I; "of blaming the

custom of invoking the Virgin in place of the Holy Ghost? But Erasmus and many others blame it likewise. Is it for such trifles that they imprison a king's officer? This attack is aimed at literature, true religion, the nobility, chivalry, nay the crown itself." The king was glad to have another opportunity of vexing the whole company. He issued letters transferring the cause to the royal council, and on the 8th of August an usher appeared at the bishop's prison with an order from the king to set Berquin at liberty.

The question now was whether the monks would give way. Francis I, who had anticipated some resistance, said to the agent commissioned to execute his orders: "If you meet with any resistance, I authorize you to break open the gates." This language was clear. The monks and the Sorbonne submitted to the affront, and Berquin being restored to liberty appeared before the king's council, by which he was acquitted. Thus did Francis I humiliate the Church. Berquin imagined that France, under his reign, might emancipate herself from the papacy, and had thoughts of

renewing the war. For this purpose he entered into communication with Erasmus, who at once recognized him as a man of worth. But, ever timid and temporizing, the philosopher said to him: “Beware of treading on a hornet’s nest, and pursue your studies in peace.

Above all, do not mix me up with your affair; that would neither serve you nor me.” This rebuff did not discourage Berquin; if the mightiest genius of the age draws back, he will put his trust in God who never falters. God’s work will be done either with or without the aid of man. “Berquin,” said Erasmus, “had some resemblance to the palm-tree; he rose up again, and became proud and towering against those who sought to alarm him.” Such were not all who had embraced the evangelical doctrine. Martial Mazurier had been one of the most zealous preachers. He was accused of teaching very erroneous opinions, and even of having committed certain acts of violence while at Meaux.

“This Marital Mazurier, being at Meaux,” says a manuscript of that city, which we have already

quoted, “going to the church of the reverend Grayfriars, and seeing the image of St.

Francis, with the five wounds, outside the convent-gate, where that of St.

Roch now stands, threw it down and broke it in pieces.” Mazurier was apprehended, and sent to the Conciergerie, where he suddenly fell into deep reflection and severe anguish. It was the morality rather than the doctrine of the Gospel that had attracted him to the ranks of the reformers; and morality left him without strength. Alarmed at the prospect of the stake, and decidedly of opinion that in France the victory would remain on the side of Rome, he easily persuaded himself that he would enjoy more influence and honor by returning to the papacy. Accordingly he retracted what he had taught, and caused doctrines the very opposite of those he had previously held to be preached in his parish; and subsequently joining the most fanatical doctors, and particularly the celebrated Ignatius Loyola, he became from that time the most zealous supporter of the papal cause. From the days of the

Emperor Julian, apostates, after their infidelity, have always become the most merciless persecutors of the doctrines they had once professed.

Mazurier soon found an opportunity of showing his zeal. The youthful James Pavanne had also been thrown into prison. Martial hoped that, by making him fall like himself, he might cover his own shame. The youth, amiability, learning, and uprightness of Pavanne, created a general interest in his favor, and Mazurier imagined that he would himself be less culpable, if he could persuade Master James to follow his example. He visited him in prison, and began his manoeuvres by pretending that he had advanced further than Pavanne in the knowledge of the truth: “You are mistaken, James,” he often repeated to him; “you have not gone to the depths of the sea; you only know the surface of the waters.” Nothing was spared, neither sophistry, promises, nor threats. The unhappy youth, seduced, agitated, and shaken, sunk at last under these perfidious attacks, and publicly retracted his pretended errors on the



morrow of Christmas-day 1524. But from that hour a spirit of dejection and remorse was sent on Pavanne by the Almighty. A deep sadness preyed upon him, and he was continually sighing. "Alas!" repeated he, "there is nothing but bitterness for me in life." Sad wages of unbelief!

Nevertheless, among those who had received the Word of God in France, were men of more intrepid spirit than Mazurier and Pavanne. About the end of the year 1523, Leclerc had withdrawn to Metz in Lorraine, and there, says Theodore Beza, he had followed the example of Saint Paul at Corinth, who, while working at his trade as a tentmaker, persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. Leclerc, still pursuing his occupation as a woolcarder, instructed the people of his own condition; and many of them had been really converted. Thus did this humble artisan lay the foundation of a church which afterwards became celebrated.

Leclerc was not the first individual who had endeavored to shed the new light of the Gospel

over Metz. A scholar, renowned in that age for his skill in the occult sciences, Master Agrippa of Nettesheim, “a marvelously learned clerk, of small stature, who had spent much time in travel, who spoke every language, and had studied every science,” had fixed his residence at Metz, and had even become syndic of the city. Agrippa had procured Luther’s works, and communicated them to his friends, and among others to Master John, priest of Sainte-Croix, himself a great clerk, and with whom Master Agrippa was very intimate. Many of the clergy, nobility, and citizens, stirred by the courage Luther had shown at Worms, were gained over to his cause, and already in March 1522, an evangelical placard extolling what Luther had done was posted in large letters on a corner of the episcopal palace, and excited much public attention. But when Leclerc arrived, the flames, for an instant overpowered, sprung up with renewed energy. In the council-room, in the hall of the chapter, and in the homes of the citizens, the conversation turned perpetually on the Lutheran business. “Many great clerks and learned persons were daily questioning, discussing, and debating

this matter, and for the most part taking Luther's side, and already preaching and proclaiming that accursed sect." Ere long the evangelical cause received a powerful reinforcement. "About this same time (1524)," says the chronicle, "there came to Metz an Augustine friar named John Chaistellain (Chatelain), a man declining in years, and of agreeable manners, a great preacher and very eloquent, a wondrous comforter to the poorer sort. By which means he gained the good-will of most of the people (not of all), especially of the majority of the priests and great rabbins, against whom the said friar John preached daily, setting forth their vices and their sins, saying that they abused the poor people, by which great animosity was stirred up." John Chatelain, an Augustine monk of Tournay, and doctor of divinity, had been brought to the knowledge of God by his intercourse with the Augustines of Antwerp. The doctrine of Christ, when preached by him attired in chasuble and stole, appeared less extraordinary to the inhabitants of Metz, than when it fell from the lips of a poor artisan, who laid aside the comb with which he carded his wool, to explain a French version of the

Gospel.

Everything was fermenting in Metz during that famous Lent of 1524, when a new character appeared on the stage, a priest, a doctor, an ex-friar, and (what had never yet been seen in France or Lorraine) having a wife with him. This was Lambert of Avignon.

On Lambert's arrival at Wittenberg, which had been the object of his journey on leaving the convent, he was well received by Luther, and the reformer had hastened to recommend to Spalatin and to the elector this friar, who, "on account of persecution, had chosen poverty and exile.....He pleases me in all respects," added Luther. Lambert had begun to lecture on the prophet Hosea at the university, before an auditory who could not conceal their surprise at hearing such things from the mouth of a Gaul. And then, with eyes ever turned towards his native land, he had begun to translate into French and Italian several evangelical pamphlets published by Luther and other doctors. He was not the only Frenchman at Wittenberg: he

there met with counts, knights, nobles, and others come from France to see the elector and to converse with Luther, “the overseer of the works that were accomplishing in the world.” These Frenchmen mutually encouraged each other, and, as is usual with emigrants, exaggerated the state of affairs, imagining that a speedy revolution would lead to the triumph in their own country of the cause which they had so much at heart. “Almost the whole of Gaul is stirring,” wrote Lambert to the Elector of Saxony. “Although in France the truth has no master and no leader, its friends are very numerous. One thing alone checked these Frenchmen at Wittenberg: the printing of the pamphlets intended for their countrymen. “Would that I could find some one,” exclaimed Lambert, “that could print not only in Latin, but in French and even in Italian.” This was the posture of affairs when certain strangers appeared: they were from Hamburg. “We come to ask you for some French treatises,” said they to Lambert; “for we have some one in Hamburg who will print them carefully.” It would appear that there were also a number of French emigrants at Hamburg, and a printer among

the rest. Lambert could not restrain his joy; but there was still another difficulty: “And how,” said he, “can we convey these books into France from the banks of the Elbe?” — “By sea; by the vessels that sail to and fro,” replied the Hamburgers. “Every necessary arrangement has been made.” Thus the Gospel had hardly been restored to the Church, before the ocean became an instrument of its dissemination. The Lord hath made a way in the sea. Yet this could not suffice; every Frenchman returning into France was to carry a few books with him, although the scaffold might be the reward of his enterprise. Now there is more talking, then there was more action. A young French nobleman, Claude of Taureau, who left Wittenberg in May 1523, took with him a great number of evangelical treatises and letters which Lambert had written to many of the most conspicuous men of France and Savoy. On the 13th of July 1523, Lambert, then at the age of thirty-six, “determined (in his own words) to flee the paths of impurity as he had always done,” entered into the holy bonds of wedlock, two years before Luther, and the first of the French monks or priests. When married, he

called to mind that he ought not to think “how he might please his wife, but how he might please the Lord.” Christina, the daughter of a worthy citizen of Herzberg, was ready to be the companion of his sufferings.

Lambert told his Wittenberg friends that he intended returning to France.

Luther and Melancthon were terrified at the thought. “It is rather from France to Germany,” said Luther, “than from Germany to France, that you should go.” Lambert, all whose thoughts were in France, paid no attention to the reformer’s advice. And yet Luther’s sentiments could not fail to make some impression on him. Should he go to Zurich, whither Luther urges him? or to France or Lorraine, where Farel and, as he believes, Christ himself are calling him? He was in great perplexity. At Zurich he would find peace and safety; in France peril and death. His rest was broken, he could find no repose; he wandered through the streets of Wittenberg with downcast eyes, and his wife could not restore him to serenity.

At last he fell on his knees, and called upon the Lord to put an end to his struggle, by making known His will in the casting of lots. He took two slips of paper; on one he wrote France, on the other Switzerland; he closed his eyes and drew; the lot had fallen on France. Again he fell on his knees: "O God," said he, "if thou wilt not close these lips that desire to utter thy praise, deign to make known thy pleasure." Again he tried, and the answer still was France. And some hours after, recollecting (said he) that Gideon, when called to march against the Midianites, had thrice asked for a sign from heaven near the oak of Ophrah, he prayed God a third time, and a third time the lot replied France. From that hour he hesitated no longer, and Luther, who could not put such confidence in the lot, for the sake of peace, ceased urging his objections, and Lambert, in the month of February or March 1524, taking his wife with him, departed for Strasburg, whence he repaired to Metz.

He soon became intimate with Chatelain, whom he called "his Jonathan," and appearing before a meeting commissioned to inquire into his



doctrines: "Suffer me to preach in public," said the man of Avignon, "and I will forthwith publish one hundred and sixteen theses explanatory of my doctrine, and which I will defend against all manner of persons." The Chamber of XIII, messieurs the clerks, and messeigneurs of justice, before whom Lambert had been called, were frightened at such a request, and refused permission; and shortly after, the whole troop of Antichrist was in commotion, said Lambert; canons, monks, inquisitors, the bishop's officials, and all their partisans, endeavored to seize and throw him into the dungeon of some cloister. The magistrates protected Lambert, but intimated that he had better leave the city. Lambert obeyed. "I will flee," said he to his Master, "but will still confess thy name! Whenever it be thy good pleasure, I will endure death. I am in thy hands; I flee, and yet I flee not; it is the flight which becometh all those who are made perfect." Lambert had not been a fortnight in Metz. He was to learn that God makes known his will by other means than the drawing of lots. It was not for France that this monk from the banks of the Rhone

was destined; we shall soon behold him playing an important part in Germany, as reformer of Hesse. He returned to Strasburg, leaving Chatelain and Leclerc at Metz.

Owing to the zeal of these two men the light of the Gospel spread more and more through the whole city. A very devout woman, named Toussaint, of the middle rank, had a son called Peter, with whom, in the midst of his sports, she would often converse in a serious strain.

Everywhere, even in the homes of the townspeople, something extraordinary was expected. One day the child, indulging in the amusements natural to his age, was riding on a stick in his mother's room, when the latter, conversing with her friends on the things of God, said to them with an agitated voice: "Antichrist will soon come with great power, and destroy those who have been converted at the preaching of Elias." These words being frequently repeated attracted the child's attention, and he recollected them long after. Peter Toussaint was no longer a

child when the doctor of theology and the wool-comber were preaching the Gospel at Metz. His relations and friends, surprised at his youthful genius, hoped to see him one day filling an eminent station in the Church. One of his uncles, his father's brother, was dean of Metz; it was the highest dignity in the chapter. The Cardinal John of Lorraine, son of Duke Rene, who maintained a large establishment, testified much regard for the dean and his nephew. The latter, notwithstanding his youth, had just obtained a prebend, when he began to lend an attentive ear to the Gospel. Might not the preaching of Chatelain and Leclerc be that of Elias? It is true, Antichrist is already arming against it in every quarter. But it matters not.

“Let us lift up our heads to the Lord,” said he, “for he will come and will not tarry.” The evangelical doctrine was making its way into the first families of Metz. The chevalier D’Esch, a man highly respected, and the dean’s intimate friend, had just been converted. The friends of the Gospel rejoiced. “The knight, our worthy master,”.....repeated Peter, adding with noble

candor; “if however, we are permitted to have a master upon earth.” Thus Metz was about to become a focus of light, when the imprudent zeal of Leclerc suddenly arrested this slow but sure progress, and aroused a storm that threatened utter ruin to the rising church. The common people of Metz continued walking in their old superstitions, and Leclerc’s heart was vexed at seeing this great city plunged in “idolatry.” One of their great festivals was approaching. About a league from the city stood a chapel containing images of the Virgin and of the most celebrated saints of the country, and whither all the inhabitants of Metz were in the habit of making a pilgrimage on a certain day in the year, to worship the images and to obtain the pardon of their sins.

The eve of the festival had arrived: Leclerc’s pious and courageous soul was violently agitated. Has not God said: Thou shalt not bow down to their gods; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images? Leclerc thought that this command was addressed to him, and without consulting either Chatelain, Esch, or

any of those whom he might have suspected would have dissuaded him, quitted the city in the evening, just as night was coming on, and approached the chapel. There he pondered a while sitting silently before the statues. He still had it in his power to withdraw; but.....to-morrow, in a few hours, the whole city that should worship God alone will be kneeling down before these blocks of wood and stone. A struggle ensued in the wool-comber's bosom, like that which we trace in so many Christians of the primitive ages of the Church.

What matters it to him that what he sees are the images of saints, and not of heathen gods and goddesses? Does not the worship which the people pay to these images belong to God alone? Like Polyeucte before the idols in the temple, his heart shudders, his courage revives: Ne perdons plus de temps, le sacrifice est pret, Allons y du vrai Dieu soutenir l'interet; Allons fouler aux pieds ce foudre ridicule, Dont arme un bois pourri ce peuple trop credule; Allons en eclairer l'aveuglement fatal, Allons briser ces dieux de pierre et de metal; Abandonnons nos jours a cette ardeur celeste —

Faisons triompher Dieu; — qu'il dispose du reste.  
Corneille, Polyeucte.

Leclerc arose, approached the images, took them down and broke them in pieces, indignantly scattering their fragments before the altar. He doubted not that the Spirit of the Lord had excited him to this action, and Theodore Beza thinks the same. After this, Leclerc returned to Metz, which he entered at daybreak, unnoticed save by a few persons as he was entering the gates. Meanwhile all were in motion in the ancient city; bells were ringing; the brotherhoods were assembling; and the whole population of Metz, headed by the canons, priests, and monks, went forth in solemn procession; they recited prayers or sung hymns to the saints they were going to adore; crosses and banners moved on in due order, and instruments of music or drums responded to the voices of the faithful. At length, after nearly an hour's march, the procession reached the place of pilgrimage. But what was the astonishment of the priest, when advancing, censor in hand, they discovered the images they had come to worship mutilated and

covering the earth with their fragments. They recoiled with horror, and announced this sacrilegious act to the crowd. Suddenly the chanting ceased, the instruments were silent, the banners lowered, and the whole multitude was in a state of indescribable agitation. The canons, priests, and monks endeavored to inflame their minds, and excited the people to search for the criminal, and demand his death. But one cry burst from every lip: “Death, death to the sacrilegious wretch!” They returned to Metz in haste and in disorder.

Leclerc was known to all; many times he had called the images idols.

Besides had he not been seen at daybreak returning from the direction of the chapel. He was seized; he immediately confessed his crime, and conjured the people to worship God alone. But this language still further exasperated the fury of the multitude, who would have dragged him to instant death. When led before his judges, he boldly declared that Jesus Christ, God manifest in the flesh, should alone be adored. He was sentenced to

be burnt alive, and taken out to the place of execution.

Here a fearful scene awaited him. The cruelty of his persecutors had been contriving all that could render his punishment more horrible. Near the scaffold men were heating pincers that were to serve as the instruments of their rage. Leclerc, firm and calm, heard unmoved the wild yells of the monks and people. They began by cutting off his right hand; then taking up the burning pincers, they tore off his nose; after this, they lacerated his arms, and when they had thus mangled them in several places, they concluded by burning his breasts. While his enemies were in this manner wreaking their vengeance on his body, Leclerc's mind was at rest.

He recited solemnly and with a loud voice these words of David: Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they



handle not; feet have they, but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in the Lord; he is their help and their shield. (Psalm 115:4-9). The sight of such fortitude daunted the enemies, and strengthened the faithful; the people, who had before shown so much anger, were astonished and touched with compassion. After these tortures Leclerc was burnt by a slow fire, in conformity with his sentence. Such was the death of the first martyr of the Gospel in France.

But the priests of Metz were not satisfied. In vain had they endeavored to shake the constancy of Chatelain. “He is deaf as an adder,” said they, “and refuses to hear the truth.” He was seized by the creatures of the Cardinal of Lorraine and carried to the castle of Nommeny.

He was then degraded by the bishop’s officers, who stripped him of his priestly vestments, and scraped his fingers with a piece of glass, saying: “By this scraping, we deprive thee of the power to

sacrifice, consecrate, and bless, which thou receivedst by the anointing of hands.” Then, throwing over him a layman’s dress, they surrendered him to the secular power, which condemned him to be burnt alive. The pile was soon erected, and the minister of Christ consumed by the flames. “Lutheranism spread not the less through the whole district of Metz,” say the authors of the history of the Gallican Church, who in other respects highly approve of this severity.

As soon as this storm began to beat upon the Church at Metz, tribulation had entered into Toussaint’s family. His uncle, the dean, without taking an active part in the measures directed against Leclerc and Chatelain, shuddered at the thought that his nephew was one of their party. His mother’s alarm was greater still. There was not a moment to lose; the liberty and life of all who had lent their ear to the Gospel were endangered.

The blood that the inquisitors had shed had only increased their thirst: more scaffolds would ere long be raised. Peter Toussaint, the knight Esch,

and many others, hastily quitted Metz, and sought refuge at Basle.

## Chapter 9

# Farel and his Brothers

Thus violently did the gale of persecution blow at Meaux and at Metz.

The north of France rejected the Gospel: the Gospel for a while gave way.

But the Reformation only changed its ground; and the provinces of the south-east became the scene of action.

Farel, who had taken refuge at the foot of the Alps, was there laboring with great activity. It was of little moment to him to enjoy the sweets of domestic life in the bosom of his family. The rumor of what had taken place at Meaux and at Paris had filled his brothers with a certain degree of terror; but an unknown power was drawing them towards the new and admirable things on which William conversed with them. The latter besought them with all the impetuosity of his zeal to be

converted to the Gospel; and Daniel, Walter, and Claude were at last won over to that God whom their brother announced. They did not at first abandon the religious worship of their forefathers; but, when persecution arose, they courageously sacrificed their friends, their property, and their country to worship Jesus Christ in freedom. The brothers of Luther and Zwingli do not appear to have been so decidedly converted to the Gospel; the French Reform from its very commencement had a more tender and domestic character.

Farel did not confine his exhortations to his brethren; he proclaimed the truth to his relations and friends at Gap and in the neighborhood. It would even appear, if we may credit a manuscript, that, profiting by the friendship of certain clergymen, he began to preach the Gospel in several churches; but other authorities positively declare that he did not at this time ascend the pulpit. However this may be, the doctrine he professed caused great agitation. The multitude and the clergy desired to silence him. “What new and strange heresy is this?” said they; “must all the

practices of piety be counted vain? He is neither monk nor priest: he has no business to preach.” Ere long all the civil and ecclesiastical powers of Gap combined against Farel. He was evidently an agent of that sect which the whole country is opposing. “Let us cast this firebrand of discord far from us,” they exclaimed. Farel was summoned to appear, harshly treated, and violently expelled from the city. He did not, however, abandon his native country: were there not in the fields, the villages, the banks of the Durance, of the Guisanne, and of the Isere many souls that stood in need of the Gospel? and if he incurred any danger, could he not find an asylum in those forests, caverns, and steep rocks that he had so often traversed in his youth? He began, therefore, to go through the country preaching in private houses and in solitary fields, and seeking an asylum in the woods and on the brink of torrents. This was a school in which God trained him for other labors. “The crosses, persecutions, and machinations of Satan, of which I was forewarned, have not been wanting,” said he; “they are even much severer than I could have borne of myself; but God is my father; He has

provided and always will provide me the strength which I require.” A great number of the inhabitants of these rural districts received the truth from his lips. Thus the persecution that had driven Farel from Paris and from Meaux, contributed to the spread of the Reformation in the provinces of the Saone, of the Rhone, and of the Alps. Every age has witnessed the fulfillment of the saying of the Scripture: They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Among the Frenchmen who were at that time gained over to the Gospel was a gentleman of Dauphiny, the chevalier Anemond de Coct, younger son of the auditor of Coct, lord of Chatelard. He was active, ardent, and lively, sincerely pious, and a foe to relics, processions, and the clergy; he received the evangelical doctrine with great alacrity, and was soon entirely devoted to it. He could not endure forms in religion, and would gladly have abolished all the ceremonies of the Church. The religion of the heart, the inward worship, was in his view the only true one. “Never,” said he, “has my spirit found any rest in externals. The sum of Christianity is comprised in these words: John truly baptized

with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost; ye must put on the new man.” Coct, endued with all the vivacity of a Frenchman, spoke and wrote at one time in Latin, at another in French. He read and quoted Donatus, Thomas Aquinas, Juvenal, and the Bible! His style was abrupt, passing suddenly from one idea to another. Ever in motion, he presented himself wherever a door seemed open to the Gospel, or a celebrated doctor was to be heard.

By his cordiality he won the hearts of all his acquaintances. “He is distinguished by rank and learning,” said Zwingle at a later period, “but more distinguished still for piety and affability.” Anemond is the type of many of the reformed Frenchmen. Vivacity, simple-heartedness, zeal sometimes carried even to imprudence, are the qualities often found in those of his fellow-countrymen who embraced the Gospel. But at the opposite extreme of the French character we find the serious features of Calvin, a weighty counterpoise to the levity of Coct. Calvin and Anemond are the two poles between which



revolves the whole religious world in France.

No sooner had Anemond received the knowledge of Jesus Christ from Farel, than he sought himself to gain converts to that doctrine of spirit and of life. His father was dead; his elder brother, of harsh and haughty temper, disdainfully repelled him. Lawrence, the youngest of the family, and who loved him sincerely, seemed but half to understand him.

Anemond, finding himself rejected by his own kindred, turned his activity to another quarter.

Hitherto the awakening in Dauphiny had been confined solely to the laity.

Farel, Anemond, and their friends, desired to see a priest at the head of this movement, which seemed as if it would shake the provinces of the Alps.

There dwelt at Grenoble a minorite priest, Peter Seville by name, a preacher of great eloquence, of

an honest and good heart, not taking counsel with flesh and blood, and whom God was gradually attracting to him. Sebville soon became aware that there is no infallible teacher but the Word of God; and, abandoning the doctrines that are supported on human testimony alone, he determined in his own mind to preach the Word “purely, clearly, and holily.” In these three words the whole of the Reformation is summed up. Coct and Farel were delighted as they heard this new preacher of grace raising his eloquent voice in their province, and thought that their own presence would henceforward be less necessary.

The more the awakening spread, the more violent became the opposition.

Anemond, desirous of becoming acquainted with Luther and Zwingle, and of visiting those countries where the Reformation had originated, and indignant at the rejection of the Gospel by his fellowcountrymen, resolved to bid farewell to his home and his family. He made his will, disposing of his property, at that time in the hands of his

elder brother, the lord of Chatelard, in favor of his brother Lawrence; and then quitting Dauphiny and France, he made his way with all the impetuosity of the south, through countries which it was no easy matter in that age to traverse, and passing through Switzerland, hardly stopping at Basle, he arrived at Wittenberg, where Luther was residing. This was shortly after the second Diet of Nuremberg. The French gentleman accosted the Saxon doctor with his usual vivacity; talked with him enthusiastically about the Gospel, and eagerly laid before him the plans he had formed for the propagation of the truth. The gravity of the Saxon smiled at the southern imagination of the chevalier; and Luther, notwithstanding certain prejudices against the French character, was fascinated and carried away by Anemond. He was affected by the thought that this gentleman had come from France to Wittenberg for the sake of the Gospel. "Assuredly," said the reformer to his friends, "this French knight is an excellent, learned, and pious man." The young noble produced the same impression on Zwingle and on Luther.

Anemond, seeing what Luther and Zwingli had done, thought that if they would turn their attention to France and Savoy, nothing could resist them.

Accordingly, as he could not prevail on them to go thither, he begged them at least to write. In particular, he requested Luther to address a letter to Duke Charles of Savoy, brother to Louisa and Philiberta, and uncle to Francis I and Margaret. "This prince," said he to the doctor, "feels great attraction towards piety and true religion, and loves to converse on the Reformation with some of the persons about his court. He is just the man to understand you; for his motto is this: *Nihil deest timentibus Deum*, and this device is yours also. Injured in turns by the empire and by France, humiliated, vexed, and always in danger, his heart stands in need of God and of his grace: all that he wants is a powerful impulse. If he were won to the Gospel, he would have an immense influence on Switzerland, Savoy, and France. Write to him, I beseech you." Luther was wholly German in character, and would have found himself ill at ease out of Germany; yet, animated by a true

catholicism, he stretched out his hands as soon as he saw brethren, and in every place when there was any word of exhortation to be given, he took care that it should be heard. He sometimes wrote on the same day to the farthest parts of Europe, to the Low Countries, to Savoy, and to Livonia.

“Assuredly,” replied he to Anemond’s request, “a love for the Gospel is a rare gift, and an inestimable jewel in a prince.” And he addressed a letter to the duke, which Anemond probably carried as far as Switzerland.

“May your highness pardon me,” wrote Luther, “If I, a weak and despised man, presume to address you; or rather ascribe this boldness to the glory of the Gospel; for I cannot see that glorious light rising and shining in any quarter without exulting at the joyful sight.....It is my desire that my Lord Jesus Christ should gain many souls by the example of your most serene highness. And for this reason I desire to set our doctrine before you.....We believe that the commencement of salvation and the sum of Christianity is faith in

Christ, who by his blood alone, and not by our works, has made atonement for sin, and put an end to the dominion of death.

We believe that this faith is a gift of God, and that it is created by the Holy Ghost in our hearts, and not found by our own labors.

For faith is a living thing, which spiritually begetteth the man, and maketh him a new creature.” Luther then proceeded to the consequences of faith, and showed how it could not be possessed without sweeping away the whole scaffolding of false doctrines and human works that the Church had so laboriously raised.

“If grace,” said he, “is obtained by Christ’s blood, it is not by our own works. This is the reason why all the labors of all the cloisters are unavailing, and these institutions should be abolished, as being contrary to the blood of Jesus Christ, and leading men to trust in their own good works. Ingrafted in Christ, nothing remains for us but to do good, for having become good trees, we

should bear witness to it by good fruits.

“Gracious prince and lord,” said Luther in conclusion. “may your highness, who has made so happy a beginning, help to propagate this doctrine; not with the power of the sword, which would injure the Gospel, but by inviting into your states learned doctors who may preach the Word. It is by the breath of his mouth that Jesus will destroy Antichrist, in order that, as Daniel says (chap. 8:ver. 25), he may be broken without hand. For this reason, most serene prince, may your highness fan the spark that has been kindled in your heart; may a flame go forth from the house of Savoy, as in former times from the house of Joseph;(Dass ein Feuer von dem Hause Sophoy ausgehe. L. Epp. 2:406.) may all France be consumed like stubble before that fire; may it burn, blaze, and purify, so that this illustrious kingdom may truly be called most christian, for which it is indebted, up to this hour, solely to the rivers of blood shed in the service of Antichrist.” Thus did Luther endeavor to diffuse the Gospel in France. We are ignorant of the effect produced on the prince by this letter; but

we do not see that he ever showed any desire to separate from Rome. In 1522, he requested Adrian VI to stand godfather to his eldest son; and, shortly after, the pope promised a cardinal's hat for his second son. Anemond, after making an effort to see the court and the Elector of Saxony, and having received a letter from Luther for this purpose, returned to Basle, more decided than ever to expose his life for the Gospel. In his ardor, he would have rejoiced to possess the power of rousing the whole of France. "All that I am," said he, "all that I shall be, all that I have, all that I shall have, I am determined to consecrate to the glory of God." Anemond found his compatriot Farel at Basle. Anemond's letters had excited in him a great desire to see the reformers of Switzerland and Germany. Moreover, Farel required a sphere of activity in which he could more freely exert his strength. He therefore quitted that France which already offered nothing but scaffolds and the stake for the preachers of the unadulterated Gospel. Following byroads and concealing himself in the woods, he escaped, although with difficulty, from the hands of his enemies. Often had he lost his



way. At last he reached Switzerland at the beginning of 1524. There he was destined to spend his life in the service of the Gospel, and it was then that France began to send into Helvetia those noble-minded evangelists who were to establish the Reformation in Switzerland Romande, and to give it a new and powerful impulse in other parts of the confederation and in the whole world.

## Chapter 10

# Catholicity of the Reformation

The catholicity of the Reformation is a noble feature in its character. The Germans pass into Switzerland; the French into Germany; in latter times men from England and Scotland pass over to the continent, and doctors from the continent into Great Britain. The reformers in the different countries spring up almost independently of one another; but no sooner are they born than they hold out the hand of fellowship. There is among them one sole faith, one spirit, one Lord. It had been an error, in our opinion, to write, as hitherto, the history of the Reformation for a single country; the work is one, and from their very origin the Protestant Churches form “a whole body, fitly jointed together.” Many refugees from France and Lorraine at this time formed at Basle a French Church, whose members had escaped from the scaffold. They had spoken there of Farel, of Lefevre, and of the occurrences at Meaux; and when the former arrived in Switzerland, he was

already known as one of the most devoted champions of the Gospel.

He was immediately taken to Oecolampadius, who had returned to Basle some time before. Rarely does it happen that two men of more opposite character are brought together. Oecolampadius charmed by his mildness, Farel carried away his hearers by his impetuosity: but from the first moment these two men felt themselves united for ever. It was another meeting of a Luther and Melancthon. Oecolampadius received Farel into his house, gave him an humble chamber, a frugal table, and introduced him to his friends; and it was not long before the learning, piety, and courage of the young Frenchman gained every heart. Pellican, Imeli, Wolfhard, and other ministers of Basle felt themselves strengthened in the faith by his energetic language. Oecolampadius was at that time much depressed in spirit: "Alas!" said he to Zwingle, "I speak in vain, and see not the least reason to hope. Perhaps among the Turks I might meet with greater success! ..... Alas!" added he with a deep sigh, "I lay the blame on myself

alone.” But the more he saw of Farel, the more his heart cheered up, and the courage he received from the Dauphinese became the groundwork of an undying affection. “O my dear Farel,” said he, “I hope that the Lord will make our friendship immortal, and if we cannot live together here below, our joy will only be the greater when we shall be united at Christ’s right hand in heaven.” Pious and affecting thoughts!.....Farel’s arrival was for Switzerland evidently a succor from on high.

But while this Frenchman was delighted with Oecolampadius, he shrank coldly and with noble pride from a man at whose feet all the nations of Christendom fell prostrate. The prince of the schools, he from whom every one coveted a word or a look, the master of the age — Erasmus — was neglected by Farel. The young Dauphinese had refused to go and pay homage to the old sage of Rotterdam, despising those men who are only by halves on the side of the truth, and who, though clearly aware of the consequences of error, are full of forbearance towards those who propagate it. Thus we witness in Farel that decision which has

become one of the distinctive characters of the Reformation in France and French Switzerland, and which some have called stiffness, exclusiveness, and intolerance. A controversy, arising out of the commentaries of the doctor of Etaples, had begun between the two great doctors of the age, and at every entertainment the guests would take part with Erasmus against Lefevre, and Lefevre against Erasmus. Farel hesitated not to take his master's side. But what had especially annoyed him was the cowardice of the philosopher of Rotterdam with regard to the evangelical Christians.

Erasmus shut his door against them. Good! Farel will not go and beg for admission. This was a trifling sacrifice to him, as he felt that Erasmus possessed not that piety of heart which is the foundation of all true theology. "Frobenius's wife knows more of theology than he does," said Farel; and indignant at the conduct of Erasmus, who had written advising the pope how to set about extinguishing the Lutheran conflagration, he boldly affirmed that Erasmus desired to stifle the Gospel.

This independence in young Farel exasperated the illustrious scholar.

Princes, kings, doctors, bishops, popes, reformers, priests, men of the world — all were ready to pay him their tribute of admiration; even Luther had treated him with a certain forbearance; and this Dauphinese, unknown to fame and an exile, dared brave his power. Such insolent freedom caused Erasmus more annoyance than the homage of the whole world could give him pleasure; and accordingly he neglected no opportunity of venting his ill humor on Farel; besides, by attacking so notorious a heretic, he was clearing himself in the eyes of the Romanists from all suspicion of heresy.

“I have never met with any thing more false, more violent, and more seditious than this man,” said he; “his heart is full of vanity, his tongue overflowing with malice.” But the anger of Erasmus was not confined to Farel; it was directed against all the French refugees in Basle, whose frankness and decision offended him. They had

little respect of persons; and if the truth was not openly professed, they cared not for the man, however exalted might be his genius. They were possibly wanting in some measure in the suavity of the Gospel; but their fidelity reminds us of the vigor of the ancient prophets; and it is gratifying to meet with men who do not bow down before what the world adores. Erasmus, amazed at this lofty disdain, complained of it to every one. “What!” wrote he to Melancthon, “shall we reject pontiffs and bishops, to have more cruel, scurvy, and furious tyrants in their place;.....for such it is that France has sent us.” — “Some Frenchmen,” wrote he to the pope’s secretary, in a letter accompanying his book on Free Will, “are still more out of their wits than even the Germans. They have five expressions always in their mouths: Gospel, Word of God, Faith, Christ, Holy Ghost; and yet I doubt whether they be not urged on by the spirit of Satan.” Instead of Farellus he would often write Fallicus, thus designating one of the frankest men of his day with the epithets of cheat and deceiver.

The vexation and anger of Erasmus were at

their height, when it was reported to him that Farel had called him a Balaam. Farel believed that Erasmus, like this prophet, allowed himself (perhaps unconsciously) to be swayed by presents to curse the people of God. The learned Dutchman, unable longer to contain himself, resolved to chastise the impudent Dauphinese; and one day, as Farel was talking with several friends on the doctrines of Christianity in the presence of Erasmus, the latter, rudely interrupting him, said: “Why do you call me Balaam?” Farel, at first astonished by so abrupt a question, soon recovered himself and answered, that it was not he who had given him that title. On being pressed to name the offender, he said it was Du Blet of Lyons, a refugee at Basle like himself. “It may be he who made use of the word,” replied Erasmus, “but it was you who taught him.” And then, ashamed of having lost his temper, he quickly turned the conversation to another subject. “Why,” said he to Farel, “do you assert that we ought not to invoke the saints? Is it because it is not enjoined in Holy Scripture?” — “Yes!” replied the Frenchman. — “Well then!” resumed Erasmus, “I call upon you to



prove by Scripture that we ought to invoke the Holy Ghost.” Farel made this simple and true reply: “If He is God, we must invoke Him.” — “I dropped the conversation,” says Erasmus, “for night was coming on.” From that hour, whenever the name of Farel fell from his pen, he represented him as a hateful person, who ought by all means to be shunned. The reformer’s letters, on the contrary, are full of moderation as regards Erasmus. The Gospel is milder than philosophy, even in the most fiery temper.

The evangelical doctrine already counted many friends in Basle, both in the council and among the people; but the doctors of the university opposed it to the utmost of their power. Oecolampadius, and Stor pastor of Liestal, had maintained some theses against them. Farel thought it his duty also to profess in Switzerland the great principle of the evangelical school of Paris and of Meaux: The Word of God is all-sufficient. He requested permission of the university to maintain certain theses, “the rather to be reprov’d,” added he, “if I am in error, than to teach others;” but the

university refused.

Upon this Farel addressed the council; and the council issued a public notice that a christian man, named William Farel, having by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost drawn up certain articles in conformity with the Gospel, they had given him leave to maintain them in Latin. The university forbade all priests and students to be present at the disputation; but the council sent out a proclamation to the contrary effect.

The following are some of the thirteen propositions put forth by Farel: “Christ has given us the most perfect rule of life: no one has the right to take anything from it, or to add anything thereto.

“To live according to any other precepts than those of Christ, leads directly to impiety.

“The real ministry of priests is to attend to the ministering of the Word; and for them there is no higher dignity.

“To deprive the glad-tidings of Christ of their certainty, is to destroy them.

“He who hopes to be justified by his own power, and by his own merits, and not by faith, sets himself up as God.

“Jesus Christ, whom all things obey, is our polestar, and the only star that we ought to follow.” Thus did this “Frenchman” stand up in Basle. It was a child of the mountains of Dauphiny, brought up in Paris at the feet of Lefevre, who thus boldly set forth in that illustrious university of Switzerland, and in the presence of Erasmus, the great principles of the Reformation. Two leading ideas pervaded Farel’s theses: one, that of a return to Holy Scripture; the other, of a return to faith: two things which the Papacy at the beginning of the 18th century distinctly condemned as impious and heretical in the famous constitution Unigenitus, and which, closely connected with each other, do in fact subvert the whole of the papal system. If faith in Christ is the beginning and end of Christianity, it follows that we must cleave to the

Word of Christ, and not to the voice of the Church. Nay more: if faith in Christ unites souls, where is the necessity of an external bond? Is it with croziers, bulls, and tiaras, that their holy unity is formed? Faith joins in spiritual and true unity all those in whose hearts it takes up its abode. Thus vanished at a single blow the triple delusion of meritorious works, human tradition, and false unity; and this is the sum of Roman-catholicism.

The disputation began in Latin. Farel and Oecolampadius set forth and proved their articles, calling repeatedly on their adversaries to reply; but not one of them appeared. These sophists as Oecolampadius terms them, acted the braggart, — but in dark holes and corners. The people, therefore, began to despise the cowardice of the priests and to detest their tyranny. Thus Farel took his stand among the defenders of the Reformation. They were greatly delighted to see a Frenchman combine so much learning and piety, and already began to anticipate the noblest triumphs. “He is strong enough,” said they, “to destroy the whole Sorbonne single-handed.” His candor, sincerity,

and frankness captivated every heart. But amidst all his activity, he did not forget that every mission should begin with our own souls. The gentle Oecolampadius made a compact with the ardent Farel, by which they mutually engaged to practice humility and meekness in their familiar conversations. These bold men, even on the field of battle, were fitting themselves for the duties of peace. It should be observed, however, that the impetuosity of a Luther and a Farel were necessary virtues. Some effort is required when the world is to be moved and the Church renovated. In our days we are too apt to forget this truth, which the meekest men then acknowledged. "There are certain men," wrote Oecolampadius to Luther when introducing Farel to him, "who would have his zeal against the enemies of the truth more moderate; but I cannot help seeing in this same zeal an admirable virtue, which, if seasonable exerted, is no less needed than gentleness itself." Posterity had ratified the judgment of Oecolampadius.

In the month of May 1524, Farel, with some friends from Lyons, visited Schaffhausen, Zurich,

and Constance. Zwingle and Myconius gladly welcomed this exile from France, and Farel remembered their kindness all his life. But in his return to Basle he found Erasmus and his other enemies at work, and received orders to quit the city. In vain did his friends loudly give utterance to their displeasure at such an abuse of authority; he was compelled to quit the territory of Switzerland, already at this early period, the asylum and refuge of the persecuted. "It is thus we exercise hospitality," said the indignant Oecolampadius, "we true children of Sodom!" At Basle, Farel had contracted a close friendship with the Chevalier Esch, who resolved to bear him company, and they set out with letters for Luther and Capito from Oecolampadius, to whom the doctor of Basle commended Farel as "that William who had toiled so much in the work of God." At Strasburg, Farel formed an intimacy with Capito, Bucer, and Hedio; but it does not appear that he went so far as Wittenberg.

## Chapter 11

# New Campaign

God usually withdraws his servants from the field of battle, only to bring them back stronger and better armed. Farel and his friends of Meaux, Metz, Lyons, and Dauphiny, driven from France by persecution, had been retempered in Switzerland and Germany among the elder reformers; and now, like an army at first dispersed by the enemy, but immediately rallied, they were turning round and marching forward in the name of the Lord. It was not only on the frontiers that these friends of the Gospel were assembling; in France also they were regaining courage, and preparing to renew the attack. The bugles were already sounding the reveille; the soldiers were girding on their arms, and gathering together to multiply their attacks; their leaders were planning the order of battle; the signal, "Jesus, his Word, and his grace," more potent in the hour of battle than the sound of warlike music, filled all hearts with the same enthusiasm; and everything was preparing in

France for a second campaign, to be signalized by new victories, and new and greater reverses.

Montbeliard was then calling for a laborer in the Gospel. The youthful Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg, a violent and cruel prince, having been dispossessed of his states by the Swabian league in 1519, had taken refuge in this earldom, his only remaining possession. In Switzerland he became acquainted with the reformers; his misfortunes had proved salutary to him; and he took delight in the Gospel. Oecolampadius intimated to Farel that a door was opened at Montbeliard, and the latter secretly repaired to Basle.

Farel had not regularly entered on the ministry of the Word; but we find in him, at this period of his life, all that is necessary to constitute a minister of the Lord. He did not lightly and of his own prompting enter the service of the Church. "Considering my weakness," said he, "I should not have dared preach, waiting for the Lord to send more suitable persons." But God at this time



addressed him in a threefold call. As soon as he had reached Basle, Oecolampadius, touched with the wants of France, entreated him to devote himself to it. “Behold,” said he, “how little is Jesus Christ known to all those who speak the French language. Will you not give them some instruction in their own tongue, that they may better understand the Scriptures?” At the same time, the people of Montbeliard invited him among them, and the prince gave his consent to this call. Was not this a triple call from God?.....”I did not think,” said he, “that it was lawful for me to resist. I obeyed in God’s name.” Concealed in the house of Oecolampadius, struggling against the responsibility offered to him, and yet obliged to submit to so clear a manifestation of the will of God, Farel accepted this charge, and Oecolampadius set him apart, calling upon the name of the Lord, and addressing his friend in language full of wisdom. “The more you are inclined to violence,” said he, “the more should you practice gentleness; temper your lion’s courage with the meekness of the dove.” Farel responded to this appeal with all his soul.

Thus Farel, once the zealous follower of the old Church, was about to become a servant of God in the new. If Rome imperatively requires in a valid ordination the imposition of the hands of a bishop who descends from the apostles in uninterrupted succession, it is because she places human traditions above the Word of God. In every church where the authority of the Word is not absolute, some other authority must needs be sought. And then, what is more natural than to ask of the most venerated of God's ministers, that which they cannot find in God himself? If we do not speak in the name of Jesus Christ, is it not something at least to speak in the name of Saint John or of Saint Paul? He who speaks in the name of antiquity is stronger than the rationalist who speaks only in his own name.

But the christian minister has a still higher authority: he preaches, not because he descends for St. Chrysostom or St. Peter, but because the Word that he proclaims comes down from God himself. The idea of succession, venerable as it may appear,

is not the less a human system, substituted for the system of God. In Farel's ordination there was no human succession.

Nay more: we do not see in it that which is necessary in the Lord's fold, where every thing should be done decently and in order, and whose God is not a God of confusion. He was not regularly ordained by the Church: but extraordinary times justify extraordinary measures. At this memorable epoch God himself interposed. He consecrated by marvelous dispensations those whom he called to the regeneration of the world. In Farel's ordination we see the infallible Word of God, given to a man of God, that he might bear it to the world, — the call of God and of the people, — the consecration of the heart, and a solemn appointment by one of the ministers of the Church; and all this was the best substitute of which his case admitted for the full and formal seal of the Church on his ministry. Farel took his departure for Montbeliard in company with Esch.

Farel thus found himself stationed as it were at

an advanced post. Behind him, Basle and Strasburg supported him with their advice and their printing-presses; before him lay the provinces of Franche Comte, Burgundy, Lorraine, the Lyonnais, and the rest of France, where men of God were beginning to struggle against error in the midst of profound darkness. He immediately began to preach Jesus Christ, and to exhort the faithful not to permit themselves to be turned aside from the Holy Scriptures either by threats or stratagems. Beginning, long before Calvin, the work that this reformer was to accomplish on a much larger scale, Farel was at Montbeliard, like a general on a hill whose piercing eye glances over the field of battle, cheering those who are actively engaged with the enemy, rallying those ranks which the impetuosity of the charge has broken, and animating by his courage those who hang back. Erasmus immediately wrote to his Roman-catholic friends, that a Frenchman, escaped from France, was making a great disturbance in these regions. Farel's labors were not unfruitful. "On every side," wrote he to a fellowcountryman, "men are springing up who devote all their powers and their lives to

extend Christ's kingdom as widely as possible." The friends of the Gospel gave thanks to God that his blessed Word shone brighter every day in all parts of France. The adversaries were astounded. "The faction," wrote Erasmus to the Bishop of Rochester, "is spreading daily, and is penetrating Savoy, Lorraine, and France." For some time Lyons appeared to be the center of evangelical action within the kingdom, as Basle was without. Francis I, marching towards the south on an expedition against Charles V, had arrived in this city with his mother, his sister, and the court. Margaret brought with her many gentlemen devoted to the Gospel. "All other people she had removed from about her person," says a letter written at this time. While Francis I was hurrying through Lyons an army composed of 14,000 Swiss, 10 French, and 1500 lances of the nobility, to repel the invasion of the imperialists into Provence; while this great city re-echoed with the noise of arms, the tramp of horses, and the sound of the trumpet, the friends of the Gospel were marching to more peaceful conquests. They desired to attempt in Lyons what they had been unable to do

in Paris. Perhaps, at a distance from the Sorbonne and from the parliament, the Word of God might have freer course? Perhaps the second city in the kingdom was destined to become the first for the Gospel. Was it not there that about four centuries previously the excellent Peter Waldo had begun to proclaim the Divine Word? Even then he had shaken all France. And now that God had prepared everything for the emancipation of his Church, might there not be hopes of more extended and more decisive success? Thus the people of Lyons, who were not generally, indeed, “poor men,” as in the twelfth century, were beginning more courageously to handle “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Among those who surrounded Margaret was her almoner, Michael d’Arande. The duchess caused the Gospel to be publicly preached at Lyons; and Master Michael proclaimed the Word of God with courage and purity before a great number of hearers, attracted partly by the charm that attends the glad tidings wherever they are published, and partly also by the favor in which the preaching and the preacher were held by the king’s beloved sister. Anthony

Papillon, a man of highly cultivated mind, an elegant Latin scholar, a friend of Erasmus, “the first in France for knowledge of the Gospel,” accompanied the princess also. At Margaret’s request he had translated Luther’s work on monastic vows, “in consequence of which he had much ado with those Parisian vermin,” says Seville; but Margaret had protected him against the attacks of the Sorbonne, and procured him the appointment of headmaster of requests to the dauphin, with a seat in the Great Council. He was not less useful to the Gospel by his devotedness than by his prudence. A merchant, named Vaugris, and especially a gentleman named Anthony du Blet, a friend of Farel’s, took the lead in the Reformation at Lyons. The latter person, a man of great activity, served as a bond of union between the Christians scattered throughout those countries, and placed them in communication with Basle.

While the armed hosts of Francis I had merely passed through Lyons, the spiritual soldiers of Jesus Christ halted there with Margaret; and leaving the former to carry the war into Provence

and the plains of Italy, they began the fight of the Gospel in Lyons itself.

But they did not confine their efforts to the city. They looked all around them; the campaign was opened on several points at the same time; and the Christians of Lyons encouraged by their exertions and their labors all those who confessed Christ in the surrounding provinces. They did more: they went and proclaimed it in places where it was as yet unknown. The new doctrine ascended the Saone, and an evangelist passed through the narrow and irregular streets of Macon. Michael d'Arande himself visited that place in 1524, and, aided by Margaret's name, obtained permission to preach in this city, which was destined at a later period to be filled with blood, and become for ever memorable for its sauteries. After exploring the districts of the Saone, the Christians of Lyons, ever on the watch, extended their incursions in the direction of the Alps. There was at Lyons a Dominican named Maigret, who had been compelled to quit Dauphiny, where he had boldly preached the new doctrine, and who earnestly



requested that some one would go and encourage his brethren of Grenoble and Gap. Papillon and Du Blet repaired thither. A violent storm had just broken out there against Seville and his preachings. The Dominicans had moved heaven and earth; and maddened at seeing so many evangelist escape them (as Farel, Anemond, and Maigret), they would fain have crushed those who remained within their reach. They therefore called for Seville's arrest. The friends of the Gospel in Grenoble were alarmed; must Seville also be taken from them!.....Margaret interceded with her brother; many of the most distinguished personages at Grenoble, the king's advocate among others, open or secret friends to the Gospel, exerted themselves in behalf of the evangelical grayfriar, and at length their united efforts rescued him from the fury of his adversaries. But if Seville's life was saved, his mouth was stopped. "Remain silent," said they, "or you will be led to the scaffold." — "Silence has been imposed on me," he wrote to Anemond de Coct, "under pain of death." These threats alarmed even those of whom the most favorable hopes had been entertained. The

king's advocate and other friends of the Gospel now showed nothing but coldness. Many returned to the Romish worship, pretending to adore God secretly in their hearts, and to give a spiritual signification to the outward observances of Romanism. A melancholy delusion, leading from infidelity to infidelity. There is no hypocrisy that cannot be justified in the same manner. The unbeliever, by means of his systems of myths and allegories, will preach Christ from the christian pulpit; and a philosopher will be able, by a little ingenuity, to find in an abominable superstition among the pagans, the type of a pure and elevated idea. In religion the first thing is truth. Some of the Grenoble Christians, among whom were Amadeus Galbert, and a cousin of Anemond's, still clung fast to their faith. These pious men would meet secretly with Seville at each other's houses, and talk together about the Gospel. They repaired to some secluded spot; they visited some brother by night; or met in secret to pray to Christ, as thieves lurking for a guilty purpose. Often would a false alarm disturb the humble assembly. The adversaries consented to wink at these secret conventicles; but

they had sworn that the stake should be the lot of any one who ventured to speak of the Word of God in public. Such was the state of affairs when Du Blet and Papillon arrived at Grenoble. Finding that Sebville had been silenced, they exhorted him to go and preach the Gospel at Lyons. The Lent of the following year would present a favorable opportunity for proclaiming the Gospel to a numerous crowd. Michael d'Arande, Maigret, and Sebville, proposed to fight at the head of the Gospel army. Everything was thus preparing for a striking manifestation of evangelical truth in the second city of France. The rumor of this evangelical Lent extended as far as Switzerland. "Sebville is free, and will preach the Lent sermons at Saint Paul's in Lyons," wrote Anemond to Farel. But a great disaster, which threw all France into confusion, intervened and prevented this spiritual combat. It is during peace that the conquests of the Gospel are achieved. The defeat of Pavia, which took place in the month of February, disconcerted the daring project of the reformers.

Meantime, without waiting for Sebville,

Maigret had begun early in the winter to preach salvation by Jesus Christ alone, in despite of the strenuous opposition of the priests and monks of Lyons. In these sermons there was not a word of the worship of the creature, of saints, of the virgin, of the power of the priesthood. The great mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh," was alone proclaimed. The old heresies of the poor men of Lyons are reappearing, it was said, and in a more dangerous form than ever! But notwithstanding this opposition, Maigret continued his ministry; the faith that animated his soul found utterance in words of power: it is in the nature of truth to embolden the hearts of those who have received it. Yet Rome was destined to prevail at Lyons as at Grenoble. Maigret was arrested, notwithstanding Margaret's protection, dragged through the streets, and cast into prison. The merchant Vaugris, who then quitted the city on his road to Switzerland, spread the news everywhere on his passage. All were astonished and depressed. One thought, however, gave confidence to the friends of the Reformation: "Maigret is taken," said they, "but Madame d'Alencon is there; praised be

God!” It was not long before they were compelled to renounce even this hope.

The Sorbonne had condemned several of this faithful minister’s propositions. Margaret, whose position became daily more difficult, found the boldness of the partisans of the Reformation and the hatred of the powerful increasing side by side. Francis I began to grow impatient at the zeal of these evangelists: he looked upon them as mere fanatics whom it was good policy to repress. Margaret, thus fluctuating between desire to serve her brethren and her inability to protect them, sent them word to avoid running into fresh dangers, as she could no longer intercede with the king in their favor. The friends of the Gospel believed that this determination was not irrevocable. “God has given her grace,” said they, “to say and write only what is necessary to poor souls.” But if this human support is taken away, Christ still remains. It is well that the soul should be stripped of all other protection, that it may rely upon God alone.

## Chapter 12

# The French at Basle

The exertions of the friends of the Gospel in France were paralyzed. The men in power were beginning to show their hostility to Christianity; Margaret was growing alarmed; terrible news would soon be coming across the Alps and plunging the nation into mourning, filling it with one thought only — of saving the king, of saving France. But if the Christians of Lyons were checked in their labors, were there not soldiers at Basle who had escaped from the battle and who were ready to begin the fight again. The exiles from France have never forgotten her. Driven from their country for nearly three centuries by the fanaticism of Rome, their latest descendants have been seen carrying to the cities and fields of their ancestors those treasures of which the pope still deprives them. At the very moment when the soldiers of Christ in France were mournfully laying down their arms, the refugees at Basle were preparing for the combat. As they saw the

monarchy of Saint Louis and of Charlemagne falling from the hands of Francis I, shall they not feel urged to lay hold of a kingdom which cannot be moved. Farel, Anemond, Esch, Toussaint, and their friends formed an evangelical society in Switzerland with the view of rescuing their country from its spiritual darkness. Intelligence reached them from every quarter, that there was an increasing thirst for God's Word in France; it was desirable to take advantage of this, and to water and sow while it was yet seedtime.

Oecolampadius, Zwingle, and Oswald Myconius, were continually exhorting them to do this, giving the right hand of fellowship, and communicating to them a portion of their own faith. In January 1525, the Swiss schoolmaster wrote to the French chevalier: "Banished as you are from your country by the tyranny of Antichrist, even your presence among us proves that you have acted boldly in the cause of the Gospel.

The tyranny of christian bishops will at length induce the people to look upon them as deceivers.

Stand firm; the time is not far distant when we shall enter the haven of repose, whether we be struck down by our tyrants, or they themselves be struck down; all then will be well for us, provided we have been faithful to Christ Jesus.” These encouragements were of great value to the French refugees; but a blow inflicted by these very Christians of Switzerland and Germany, who sought to cheer them, cruelly wrung their hearts. Recently escaped from the scaffold or the burning pile, they saw with dismay the evangelical Christians on the other side of the Rhine disturbing the repose they enjoyed by their lamentable differences. The discussions on the Lord’s Supper had begun. Deeply moved and agitated, feeling strongly the necessity of brotherly unity, the French would have made every sacrifice to conciliate these divided sentiments. This became their leading idea. At the epoch of the Reformation, none had greater need than they of christian unity; of this Calvin was afterwards a proof. “Would to God that I might purchase peace, concord, and union in Jesus Christ at the cost of my life, which in truth is of little worth,” said Peter Toussaint. The



French, whose discernment was correct and prompt, saw immediately that these rising dissensions would check the work of the Reformation. "All things would go on more prosperously than many persons imagine, if we were but agreed among ourselves. Numbers would gladly come to the light; but when they see these divisions among the learned, they stand hesitating and confused." The French were the first to suggest conciliatory advances. "Why," wrote they from Strasburg, "is not Bucer or some other learned man sent to Luther? The longer we wait the greater will these dissensions become." Their fears grew stronger every day. At length, finding all their exertions of no avail, these Christians mournfully turned their eyes away from Germany, and fixed them solely upon France.

France — the conversion of France, thenceforth exclusively occupied the hearts of these generous men whom history, that has inscribed on her pages the names of so many individuals vainly puffed up with their own glory, has for three centuries passed over in silence. Thrown on a foreign land, they fell

on their knees, and daily, in silence and obscurity, invoked God in behalf of the country of their forefathers. Prayer was the power by which the Gospel spread through the kingdom, and the great instrument by which the conquests of the Reformation were gained.

But these Frenchmen were not merely men of prayer: never has the evangelical army contained combatants more ready to sacrifice their lives in the day of battle. They felt the importance of scattering the Holy Scriptures and pious books in their country, still overshadowed with the gloom of superstition. A spirit of inquiry was breathing over the whole kingdom: it seemed necessary on all sides to spread the sails to the wind.

Anemond, ever prompt in action, and Michael Bentin, a refugee like himself, resolved to unite their zeal, their talents, their resources, and their labors. Bentin wished to establish a printing press at Basle, and the chevalier, to profit by the little German he knew, to translate the best works of the Reformers into French. “Oh,” said they, rejoicing

in their plans, “would to God that France were filled with evangelical volumes, so that everywhere, in the cottages of the poor, in the palaces of the nobles, in cloisters and presbyteries, nay, in the inmost sanctuary of the heart, a powerful testimony might be borne to the grace of Jesus Christ!” (Opto enim Gallium evangelecus valuenibus abundare cocto Farel Neufchatel.) Funds were necessary for such an undertaking, and the refugees had nothing. Vaugris was then at Basle; on his departure Anemond gave him a letter for the brethren of Lyons, many of whom abounded in the riches of this world, and who, although oppressed, were faithful to the Gospel; he requested them to send him some assistance; but that did not suffice; the French wished to establish several presses at Basle, that should be worked night and day, so as to inundate France with the Word of God. At Meaux, at Metz, and in other places, were men rich and powerful enough to support this enterprise. No one could address Frenchmen with so much authority as Farel himself, and it was to him that Anemond applied. It does not appear that the chevalier’s project was

realized, but the work was done by others. The presses of Basle were constantly occupied in printing French works; they were forwarded to Farel, and by him introduced into France with unceasing activity. One of the first writings sent by this Religious Tract Society was Luther's Explanation of the Lord's Prayer.

“We are retailing the Pater at four deniers of Basle each,” wrote Vaugris to Farel, “but we sell them wholesale at the rate of two florins the two hundred, which comes to something less.” Anemond sent to Farel from Basle all the useful books that appeared or that arrived from Germany; at one time a work on the appointment of Gospel ministers, at another a treatise on the education of children. Farel examined these works; he composed, translated or got others to translate them into French, and seemed at one and the same time entirely devoted to active exertions and to the labors of the study. Anemond urged on and superintended the printing; and these epistles, prayers, books, and broadsheets, were the means of the regeneration of the age. While profligacy

descended from the throne, and darkness from the steps of the alter, these unnoticed writings alone diffused throughout the nation beams of light and seeds of holiness.

But it was especially God's Word that the evangelical merchant of Lyons was calling for in the name of his fellow-countrymen. These people of the sixteenth century, so hungering for intellectual food, were to receive in their own tongue those ancient monuments of the first ages of the world, in which the new breath of primitive humanity respire, and those holy oracles of the Gospel times in which shines forth the fullness of the revelation of Christ. Vaugris wrote to Farel: "I beseech you, if possible, to have the New Testament translated by some person who can do it efficiently: it would be a great blessing for France, Burgundy, and Savoy.

And if you want proper type, I will have some brought from Paris or Lyons; but if there be any good types at Basle, it will be all the better." Lefevre had already published at Meaux, but in

detached portions, the books of the New Testament in French. Vaugris wished for some one to revise it thoroughly, and to superintend a complete edition. Lefevre undertook to do so, and he published it, as we have already seen, on the 12th of October 1524. An uncle of Vaugris, named Conrard, also a refugee at Basle, immediately procured a copy. The Chevalier Coct happening to be at a friend's house on the 18th of November, there saw the book, and was filled with joy. "Lose no time in reprinting it," said he, "for I doubt not a great number will be called for." Thus was the Word of God offered to France in opposition to the traditions of the Church, which Rome still continues to present to her.

"How can we distinguish what is of man in your traditions, and what is of God," said the reformers, "except by the Scriptures of God? The maxims of the Fathers, the decretals of the pontiffs, cannot be the rule of our faith.

They show us what was the opinion of these old doctors; but the Word alone teaches us what is

the judgment of God. We must submit everything to the rule of Scripture.” Such were the principal means by which these writings were circulated.

Farel and his friends consigned the books to certain pedlars or colporteurs, simple and pious men, who, laden with their precious burden, passed from town to town, from village to village, and from house to house, in Franche Comte, Lorraine, Burgundy, and the adjoining provinces, knocking at every door. They procured the books at a low rate, “that they might be the more eager to sell them.” Thus as early as 1524 there existed in Basle a Bible society, a tract society, and an association of colporteurs, for the benefit of France. It is a mistake to conceive that these efforts date only from our own age; they go back in essentials not only to the times of the Reformation, but still farther to the primitive ages of the Church.

## Chapter 13

# Progress at Montbellard

The attention which Farel bestowed on France did not divert his attention from the place where he was residing. Arriving at Montbellard about the end of July 1524, he had hardly sown the seed, before the first fruits of the harvest (to use the words of Oecolampadius) began to appear. Farel wrote to his friend with great exultation. "It is an easy thing," replied the doctor of Basle, "to instil a few dogmas into the ears of our auditors; but to change their hearts is in the power of God alone." The Chevalier de Coct, delighted with this intelligence, ran with his usual vivacity to Peter Toussaint. "I shall set off tomorrow to visit Farel," said he hastily. Toussaint, more calm, was writing to the evangelist of Montbellard: "Be careful," said he to Farel; "you are engaged in an important cause; it must not be polluted by the counsels of men. The mighty ones promise you their favor, their support, and heaps of gold.....But to put your trust in these things, is deserting Christ and



walking in darkness.” Toussaint was finishing this letter when the chevalier entered; the latter took it and departed for Montbeliard.

He found the city in great commotion. Many of the nobles were alarmed, and said as they looked contemptuously at Farel: “What does this sorry fellow want with us? Would to God he had never come! He cannot stay here, for he will ruin us all, as well as himself.” The lords who had taken refuge with the duke at Montbeliard, feared that the disturbance, which everywhere accompanied the Reformation, would attract the attention of Ferdinand and Charles V, and that they would be expelled from their last asylum. But it was the clergy in particular who resisted Farel. The superior of the Franciscans of Besancon had hastened to Montbeliard, and formed a plan of defense in conjunction with the clergy of the place. On the following Sunday, Farel had hardly begun to preach, before they interrupted him, calling him liar and heretic. In an instant the whole assembly was in an uproar. The audience rose up, and called for silence.

The duke hurried to the spot, seized both Farel and the superior, and ordered the latter either to prove or to retract his charges. The Franciscan adopted the last alternative, and an official account of the whole affair was published. This attack excited Farel all the more; he thought it was now his duty to unmask without scruple those interested priests; and drawing the sword of the Word, he plied it vigorously. He was more inclined to imitate Jesus when he expelled the money-changers from the temple and overthrew their tables, than when the spirit of prophecy declared of him: He shall neither strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

Oecolampadius was affrighted. These two men were perfect types of two characters diametrically opposed to each other, and yet both worthy of admiration. “You were sent,” wrote Oecolampadius to Farel, “to draw men gently to the truth, and not to drag them with violence; to spread the Gospel, and not to curse them. Physicians resort to amputation only when other

means have failed. Act the part of a physician, and not of an executioner. It is not enough, in my opinion, to be gentle towards the friends of the Gospel; you must likewise gain over the adversaries. If the wolves are driven from the sheepfold, let the sheep at least hear the voice of the shepherd. Pour oil and wine into the wounds, and conduct yourself as an evangelist, not as a judge or a tyrant.” The report of these labors spread into France and Lorraine, and the Sorbonne and the Cardinal Guise were beginning to be alarmed at this meeting of refugees at Basle and Montbeliard. They would willingly have broken up a troublesome alliance; for error knows no greater triumph than when attracting some deserter to its standard. Already had Martial Mazurier and others given the papal party in France an opportunity of rejoicing over shameful defections; but if they could succeed in seducing one of these confessors of Christ, who had taken refuge on the banks of the Rhine, and who had suffered so much for the name of the Lord, how great would be the victory for the Roman hierarchy! They therefore planted their batteries, and the youngest of these refugees was

the object of their attack.

The dean, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and all those who joined the crowded meetings held in this prelate's mansion, deplored the sad fate of Peter Toussaint, who had once promised so fair. He is at Basle, said they, in the house of Oecolampadius, living with one of the leaders of this heresy!

They wrote to him with fervor, and as if they would rescue him from eternal condemnation. These letters were the more painful to the young man, because he could not help recognizing in them the marks of sincere affection. One of his relations, probably the dean himself, urged him to remove to Paris, to Metz, or to any other place in the world, provided it were far away from these Lutherans. This relation, bearing in mind all that Toussaint owed to him, doubted not that he would immediately comply; but when he found his efforts useless, his affection changed into violent hatred. At the same time this resistance exasperated the whole family and all his friends against the young refugee. They went to his mother, who was "under

the power of the monks;" the priests crowded round her, frightening and persuading her that her son had committed crimes that they could not mention without shuddering. Upon this the afflicted mother wrote a touching letter to her son, "full of weeping" (said he), and in which she described her misery in heart-rending language. "Oh! wretched mother!" said she, "Oh! unnatural son! cursed be the breasts that suckled thee, and the knees that bare thee!" The unhappy Toussaint was distracted: What should he do? He could not return into France. By leaving Basle and going to Zurich or Wittenberg, beyond the reach of his family, he would only add to their sorrow.

Oecolampadius advised a middle course: "Leave my house," said he. With a heart full of sadness, he adopted the suggestion, and went to live with an ignorant and obscure priest, one well adapted to reassure his relations. What a change for Toussaint! He never met his host save at meals, at which times they were continually discussing matters of faith; and as soon as the repast was over, Toussaint retired to his chamber, where alone, far

from noise and controversy, he carefully studied the Word of God. “The Lord is my witness,” said he, “that in this valley of tears I have but one desire, that of seeing Christ’s kingdom extended, so that all with one mouth may glorify God.” One circumstance occurred which consoled Toussaint. The enemies of the Gospel were daily growing stronger in Metz. At his entreaty, the Chevalier d’Esch departed in the month of January 1525, to encourage the evangelical Christians in this city. He traversed the forests of the Vosges, and reached the place where Leclerc had laid down his life, carrying with him several books with which Farel had provided him. It was not only to Lorraine that these Frenchmen turned their eyes. The Chevalier de Coct received letters from one of Farel’s brothers, depicting the state of Dauphiny in the gloomiest colors. He carefully avoided showing them lest he should alarm the weak-hearted, and was content with ardently seeking from God the support of his almighty hands. In December 1524, Peter Verrier, a Dauphinese messenger arrived on horseback at Montbeliard with commissions for Anemond and Farel. The chevalier, with his usual

vivacity, immediately resolved on returning to France. “If Peter has brought any money,” wrote he to Farel, “keep it; if he has brought any letters, open and copy them, and then forward them to me. Do not, however, sell the horse, but take care of it, for perchance I may need it. I am inclined to enter France secretly, and go to Jacobus Faber (Lefevre) and Arandius. Write and tell me what you think of it.” Such was the confidence and open-heartedness that existed between these refugees. The one opened the other’s letters, and received his money. It is true that de Coct was already indebted thirty-six crowns to Farel, whose purse was always open to his friends. There was more zeal than discretion in the chevalier’s desire to re-enter France. He was of too imprudent a character not to expose himself to certain death. This Farel no doubt explained to him. He left Basle, and withdrew to a small town, where he had “great hopes of acquiring the German language, God willing.” Farel continued preaching the Gospel in Montbeliard. His soul was vexed as he beheld the majority of the people in this city entirely given up to the worship of images. It was, in his opinion, a revival of the old pagan idolatry.

Yet the exhortations of Oecolampadius, and the fear of compromising the truth, would perhaps have long restrained him, but for an unforeseen circumstance. One day about the end of February (it was the feast of Saint Anthony) Farel was walking on the banks of a little river that runs through the city, beneath a lofty rock on which the citadel is built, when, on reaching the bridge, he met a procession, which was crossing it, reciting prayers to St. Anthony, and headed by two priests bearing the image of this saint. Farel suddenly found himself face to face with these superstitions, without, however, having sought for them. A violent struggle took place in his soul. Shall he give way? shall he hide himself?

Would not this be a cowardly act of unbelief? These lifeless images, borne on the shoulders of ignorant priests, made his blood boil. Farel boldly advanced, snatched the shrine of the holy hermit from the priest's arms, and threw it over the bridge into the river. And then, turning to the awestricken crowd, he exclaimed: "Poor idolaters, will ye never



forsake your idolatry!” The priests and people stood motionless with astonishment. A religious fear seemed to rivet them to the spot. But they soon recovered from their stupor. “The image is drowning,” exclaimed one of the crowd; and transports and shouts of rage succeeded their death-like silence. The multitude would have rushed on the sacrilegious wretch who had just thrown the object of their adoration into the water. But Farel, we know not how, escaped their violence. There is a reason, we are aware, to regret that the reformer should have been hurried into the commission of an act that tended rather to check the progress of the truth. No one should think himself authorized to attack with violence any institution sanctioned by the public authority. There is, however, in the zeal of the reformer something more noble than that cold prudence so common among men, which shrinks before the least danger, and fears to make the least sacrifice for the advancement of God’s kingdom. Farel was not ignorant that by this proceeding he was exposing himself to the fate of Leclerc. But his own conscience bore witness that he desired only to promote the glory of God, and

this made him superior to all fear.

After this affair of the bridge, which is a characteristic feature in Farel's history, the reformer was obliged to hide himself, and he quitted the town soon after. He took refuge at Basle with Oecolampadius; but ever preserved that attachment for Montbeliard which a servant of God never ceases to entertain for the first fruits of his ministry. Sad tidings awaited Farel at Basle. If he was a fugitive, his friend Anemond de Coct was seriously ill. Farel immediately sent him four gold crowns; but a letter written by Oswald Myconius on the 25th of March, announced the death of the chevalier. "Let us so live," said Oswald, "that we may enter into that rest into which we hope the soul of Anemond has already entered." Thus did Anemond descend to a premature grave; still young, full of activity and strength, willing to undertake every labor to evangelize France, and who was in himself a host. God's ways are not our ways. Not long before, and in the neighborhood of Zurich, another chevalier, Ulrich Hutten, had breathed his last. There is some similarity in the

characters of the German and French knights, but the piety and christian virtues of the Dauphinese place him far above the witty and intrepid enemy of the pope and of the monks.

Shortly after Anemond's death, Farel, unable to remain in Basle, whence he had been once banished, joined his friends Capito and Bucer at Strasburg.

Strasburg, an imperial city, at whose head was Sturm, one of the most distinguished men in Germany, and which contained many celebrated doctors within its walls, was as it were an advanced post of the Reformation, thrown beyond the Rhine, and in which the persecuted Christians of France and Lorraine took refuge, and from whence they hoped to win these countries to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Lambert's pious ambition was to become for France what Luther was for Germany, and accordingly he had no sooner reached Strasburg after quitting Metz, than he made his preparations, waiting for the moment when he should be enabled to carry the sword of the Gospel into the very heart

of that country which he loved so tenderly. He first appealed to Frances I. “The pope,” said he, “if he had his way, would change every king into a beggar. Lend your ear to the truth, most excellent prince, and God will make you great among the princes of the earth. Woe be to all the nations whose master is the pope. Oh, Avignon, city of my birth, art thou not the wretched daughter of Babylon? Given over to a legate, not of holiness, but of impiety and heresy; thou seest lewd sports, immodest dances, and adultery multiply within thy walls, and all around thy fields are laid waste by daily hunting parties, and thy poor laborers oppressed.

“O most christian king, thy people thirst for the Word of God.” At the same time addressing the pope, he said, “Erelong that powerful France which thou are wont to call thy arm will separate from thee.” Such were Lambert’s illusions!

Finding that his epistle had produced no effect, he wrote a second in a still more earnest tone. “What!” said he, “the Arabians, Chaldeans,

Greeks, and Jews possess the Word of God in their own language, and the French, Germans, Italians, and Spaniards cannot have it in theirs! Let God but speak to the nations in the language of the people, and the empire of pride will crumble into dust.” These anticipations were not realized. At Montbeliard and Basle, as at Lyons, the ranks of the reformers had suffered. Some of the most devoted combatants had been taken off by death, others by persecution and exile.

In vain did the warriors of the Gospel mount everywhere to the assault; everywhere they were beaten back. But if the forces they had concentrated, first at Meaux, then at Lyons, and afterwards at Basle, were dispersed in succession, there still remained combatants here and there, who in Lorraine, at Meaux, and even in Paris, struggled more or less openly to uphold the Word of God in France. Though the Reformation saw its columns broken, it still had its isolated champions. Against these the Sorbonne and the parliament were about to turn their anger. They would not have remaining on the soil of France, a single one of these noble

minded men who had undertaken to plant in it the standard of Jesus Christ; and unheard of misfortunes seemed now to be conspiring with the enemies of the Reformation, and to aid them in the accomplishment of their task.

## Chapter 14

# Francis made Prisoner at Pavia

During the latter period of Farel's sojourn at Montbeliard, great events were passing on the theater of the world. Lannoy and Pescara, Charles's generals, having quitted France on the approach of Francis I, this prince had crossed the Alps, and blockaded Pavia. On the 24th of February 1525, he was attacked by Pescara. Bonnivet, La Tremouille, Palisse, and Lescure died fighting round their sovereign. The Duke of Alencon, Margaret's husband, the first prince of the blood, had fled with the rear-guard, and gone to die of shame and grief at Lyons; and Francis, thrown from his horse, had surrendered his sword to Charles Lannoy, vice-roy of Naples, who received it kneeling. The King of France was prisoner to the emperor.

His captivity seemed the greatest of misfortunes. "Nothing is left me but honor and

life,” wrote the king to his mother. But no one felt a keener sorrow than Margaret. The glory of her country tarnished, France without a monarch and exposed to the greatest dangers, her beloved brother the captive of his haughty enemy, her husband dishonored and dead.....What bitter thoughts were these!.....But she had a comforter; and while her brother to console himself repeated: “Tout est perdu, fors l’honneur, all is lost save honor!” she was able to say: — Fors Jesus seul, mon frere, fils de Dieu! Save Christ alone, dear brother, Son of God!

Margaret thought that in the hour of trial Francis might receive the Word of God. A few months before, the king had already betrayed religious sentiments on the death of his daughter the Princess Charlotte. The Duchess of Alencon, having concealed the child’s sickness from him, Francis, who no doubt suspected something, dreamed three several times that his daughter said to him: “Farewell, my king, I am going to paradise.” He guessed that she was dead, and gave way to “extreme grief,” but wrote to his sister that



“he would rather die than desire to have her in this world contrary to the will of God, whose name be blessed.” Margaret thought that the terrible disaster of Pavia would complete what the first trial had begun; and most earnestly desiring that the Word of God might be with Francis in his prison, she wrote a very touching letter, which deserves to be preserved, to Marshal Montmorency, who had been taken prisoner along with the king. It is very probable that she speaks of herself and Bishop Briconnet in the graceful allegory which serves as an introduction to her request: — “Dear cousin, there is a certain very devout hermit who for these three years past has been constantly urging a man whom I know to pray to God for the king, which he has done; and he is assured that if it pleases the king by way of devotion, daily, when in his closet, to read the epistles of St. Paul, he will be delivered to the glory of God; for He promises in His Gospel, that whosoever loveth the truth, the truth shall make him free. And forasmuch as I think he has them not, I send you mine, begging you to entreat him on my part that he will read them, and I firmly believe that the Holy Ghost, which abideth in the

letter, will do by him as great things as he has done by those who wrote them; for God is not less powerful or good than He has been, and his promises never deceive. He has humbled you by captivity, but he has not forsaken you, giving you patience and hope in his goodness, which is always accompanied by consolation and a more perfect knowledge of Him, which I am sure is better than the king ever knows, having his mind less at liberty, on account of the imprisonment of the body.

“Your good Cousin, MARGARET.” In such language did Margaret of Valois, full of anxiety for the salvation of her brother’s soul, address the king after the battle of Pavia. It is unfortunate that her letter and the Epistles of St. Paul were not sent direct to Francis; she could not have selected a worse medium than Montmorency.

The letters which the king wrote from the Castle of Pizzighitone, where he was confined, afforded his sister some little consolation. At the beginning of April she wrote to him: “After the

sorrow of the Passion this has been a Holy Ghost (i.e. a Pentecost), seeing the grace that our Lord has shown you.” ut unhappily the prisoner did not find in the Word of God that truth which maketh free, and which Margaret so earnestly desired he might possess.

All France, princes, parliament, and people, was overwhelmed with consternation. Erelong, as in the first three ages of the Church, the calamity that had befallen the country was imputed to the Christians; and fanatical cries were heard on every side calling for blood, as a means of averting still greater disasters. The moment, therefore, was favorable; it was not enough to have dislodged the evangelical Christians from the three strong positions they had taken; it was necessary to take advantage of the general panic, to strike while the iron was hot, and sweep the whole kingdom clear of that opposition which had become so formidable to the papacy.

At the head of this conspiracy and of these clamors were Beda, Duchesne, and Lecouturier.

These irreconcilable enemies of the Gospel flattered themselves they might easily obtain from public terror the victims that had been hitherto refused them. They instantly employed every device; conversations, fanatical harangues, lamentations, threats, defamatory writings, to excite the anger of the nation, and particularly of their governors. They vomited fire and flame against their adversaries, and covered them with the most scurrilous abuse. All means were good in their eyes; they picked out a few words here and there, neglecting the context that might explain the passage quoted; substituted expressions of their own for those of the doctors they criminated, and omitted or added, according as it was necessary to blacken their adversaries' characters. We have this on the testimony of Erasmus himself.

Nothing excited their wrath so much as the fundamental doctrine of Christianity and of the Reformation, — salvation by grace. “When I see these three men,” said Beda, “Lefevre, Erasmus, and Luther, in other respects endowed with so penetrating a genius, uniting and conspiring against

meritorious works, and resting all the weight of salvation on faith alone, I am no longer astonished that thousands of men, seduced by these doctrines, have learned to say: ‘Why should I fast and mortify my body?’ Let us banish from France this hateful doctrine of grace. This neglect of good works is a fatal delusion from the devil.” In such language did the Syndic of the Sorbonne endeavor to fight against the faith. He was destined to find supporters in a debauched court, and in another part of the nation more respectable, but not less opposed to the Gospel; I mean those grave men, those rigid moralists, who, devoted to the study of laws and forms of jurisprudence, regard Christianity as no more than a system of legislation; the Church, as a moral police; and who, unable to adapt to those principles of jurisprudence which absorb their whole thoughts the doctrines of the spiritual inability of man, of the new birth, and of justification by faith, look upon them as fanciful dreams, dangerous to public morals and the prosperity of the state. This hostile tendency to the doctrine of grace was manifested in the sixteenth century by two very different excesses; in Italy and

Poland by the doctrine of Socinus, the descendant of an illustrious family of lawyers at Sienna; and in France by the persecuting decrees and burning piles of the parliament.

The parliament, in fact, despising the great truths of the Gospel which the reformers announced, and thinking themselves called upon to do something in so overwhelming a catastrophe, presented an address to Louisa of Savoy, full of strong remonstrances on the conduct of the government with regard to the new doctrine. "Heresy," said they, "has raised its head among us, and the king, by neglecting to bring the heretics to the scaffold, has drawn down the wrath of heaven upon the nation." At the same time the pulpits resounded with lamentations, threats, and maledictions; prompt and exemplary punishments were loudly called for.

Martial Mazurier was particularly distinguished among the preachers of Paris; and endeavoring by his violence to efface the recollection of his former connection with the partisans of the Reformation,

he declaimed against the “secret disciples of Luther.” “Do you know the rapid operation of this poison?” exclaimed he. “Do you know its potency? Well may we tremble for France; as it works with inconceivable activity, and in a short time may destroy thousands of souls.” It was not difficult to excite the regent against the partisans of the Reformation. Her daughter Margaret, the first personage of the court, Louisa of Savoy herself, who had always been so devoted to the Roman pontiff, were pointed at by certain fanatics as countenancing Lefevre, Berquin, and the other innovators. Had she not read their tracts and their translations of the Bible? The queen-mother desired to clear herself of such outrageous suspicions. Already she had despatched her confessor to the Sorbonne to consult that body on the means of extirpating this heresy.

“The damnable doctrine of Luther,” said she to the faculty, “is every day gaining new adherents.” The faculty smiled on the receipt of this message.

Till then, its representations had not been

listened to, and now their advice was humbly solicited in the matter. At length they held within their grasp that heresy they had so long desired to stifle. They commissioned Noel Beda to return an immediate answer to the regent. "Seeing that the sermons, the discussions, the books with which we have so often opposed heresy, have failed in destroying it," said the fanatical syndic, "all the writings of the heretics should be prohibited by a royal proclamation; and if this means does not suffice, we must employ force and constraint against the persons of these false doctors; for those who resist the light must be subdued by torture and by terror." But Louisa had not waited for this reply. Francis had scarcely fallen into the hands of the emperor before she wrote to the pope to know his pleasure concerning the heretics. It was of great importance to Louisa's policy to secure the favor of a pontiff who could raise all Italy against the victor of Pavia, and she was ready to conciliate him at the cost of a little French blood. The pope, delighted that he could wreak his vengeance in the "most christian kingdom" against a heresy that he could not destroy either in Switzerland or



Germany, gave immediate orders for the introduction of the Inquisition into France, and addressed a brief to the parliament. At the same time Duprat, whom the pontiff had created cardinal, and on whom he had conferred the archbishopric of Sens, and a rich abbey, labored to respond to the favors of the court of Rome by the display of indefatigable animosity against the heretics. Thus the pope, the regent, the doctors of the Sorbonne, the parliament, and the chancellor, with the most ignorant and fanatical part of the nation, were conspiring together to ruin the Gospel and put its confessors to death.

The parliament took the lead. Nothing less than the first body in the kingdom was required to begin the campaign against this doctrine, and moreover, was it not their peculiar business, since the public safety was at stake? Accordingly the parliament, “influenced by a holy zeal and fervor against these novelties, issued a decree to the effect that the Bishop of Paris and the other prelates should be bound to commission Messieurs Philip Pot, president of requests, and Andrew Verjus,

councillor, and Messieurs William Duchesne and Nicholas Leclerc, doctors of divinity, to institute and conduct the trial of those who should be tainted with the Lutheran doctrine.

“And that it might appear that these commissioners were acting rather under the authority of the Church than of the parliament, it has pleased his holiness to send his brief of the 20th of May 1525, approving of the appointment of the said commissioners.

“In consequence of which, all those who were declared Lutherans by the bishop or ecclesiastical judges to these deputies, were delivered over to the secular arm, that is to say, to the aforesaid parliament, which thereupon condemned them to be burnt alive.” This is the language of a manuscript of the time.

Such was the terrible commission of inquiry appointed during the captivity of Francis I against the evangelical Christians of France on the ground of public safety. It was composed of two laymen

and two ecclesiastics, and one of the latter was Duchesne, after Beda, the most fanatical doctor of the Sorbonne. They had sufficient modesty not to place him at their head, but his influence was only the more secure on that account.

Thus the machine was wound up; its springs were well prepared; death would be the result of each of its blows. It now became a question on whom they should make their first attack. Beda, Duchesne, and Leclerc, assisted by Philip Pot the president, and Andrew Verjus the councillor, met to deliberate on this important point. Was there not the Count of Montbrun, the old friend of Louis XII, and formerly ambassador at Rome, — Briconnet, bishop of Meaux? The committee of public safety, assembled in Paris in 1525, thought that by commencing with a man in so exalted a station, they would be sure to spread dismay throughout the kingdom. This was a sufficient reason, and the venerable bishop was impeached.

It is true that Briconnet had given guarantees of submission to Rome, to the parliament, and to the

popular superstitions; but it was strongly suspected that he had done so merely to ward off the blow about to fall upon him, and that he was still countenancing heresy in secret. It would appear that, after giving way, he had partly regained his courage; — a circumstance quite in harmony with these irresolute characters, who are tossed about and driven to and fro, as the waves of the sea by the wind.

Several acts were ascribed to him in different places that would have been the most signal retraction of his unhappy decrees of 1523 and 1524. The more eminent his rank in the Church and in the State, the more fatal was his example, and the more necessary also was it to obtain from him a striking recantation of his errors, or to inflict upon him a still more notorious punishment. The commission of inquiry eagerly collected the evidence against him. They took account of the kindly reception the bishop had given to the heretics; they stated that, a week after the superior of the Cordeliers had preached in St. Martin's Church at Meaux, conformably to the instructions

of the Sorbonne, to restore sound doctrine, Briconnet himself had gone into the pulpit, and publicly refuted the orator, calling him and the other Grayfriars bigots, hypocrites, and false prophets; and that, not content with this public affront, he had, through his official, summoned the superior to appear before him in person. It would even appear from a manuscript of the times that the bishop had gone much farther, and that in the autumn of 1524, accompanied by Lefevre of Etaples, he had spent three months in travelling through his diocese, and had burnt all the images, save the crucifix alone. Such daring conduct, which would prove Briconnet to have possessed great boldness combined with much timidity, cannot if it be true, fix upon him the blame attached to other image-breakers; for he was at the head of that Church whose superstitions he was reforming, and was acting in the sphere of his rights and duties. Be that as it may, Briconnet could not fail of being guilty in the eyes of the enemies of the Gospel. He had not only attacked the Church in general; he had grappled with the Sorbonne itself, that body whose supreme law was its own glory and preservation.

Accordingly it was delighted on hearing of the examination instituted against its adversary; and John Bochart, one of the most celebrated advocates of the times, supporting the charge against Briconnet before the parliament, cried out, elevating his voice: “Against the Faculty, neither the Bishop of Meaux nor any private individual may raise his head or open his mouth. Nor is the Faculty called upon to enter into discussion, to produce and set forth its reasons before the said bishop, who ought not to resist the wisdom of that holy society, which he should regard as aided of God.” In consequence of this requisition, the parliament issued a decree on the 3rd October 1525, by which, after authorizing the arrest of all those who had been informed against, it ordered that the bishop should be interrogated by James Menager and Andrew Verjus, councillors of the court, touching the facts of which he was accused. This decree of the parliament amazed the bishop. Briconnet, the ambassador of two kings — Briconnet, a bishop and a prince, the friend of Louis XII and Francis I — to submit to an examination by two councillors of the court!.....He

who had hoped that God would kindle in the heart of the king, of his mother, and of his sister, a fire that would spread over the whole nation, now saw the nation turning against him to extinguish the flame which he had received from heaven. The king is a prisoner, his mother is at the head of the enemies of the Gospel, and Margaret, alarmed at the misfortunes that burst upon France, dares not ward off the blows that are about to fall on her dearest friends, and directed first against that spiritual father who has so often consoled her; or, if she dares, she cannot.

Quite recently she had written to Briconnet a letter full of pious outpourings: "Oh! that my poor, lifeless heart could feel some spark of love, with which I desire it were burnt to ashes." But now it was a question of literal burning. This mystic language was no longer in season; and whoever now desired to confess his faith, must brave the scaffold. The poor bishop, who had so earnestly hoped to see an evangelical reform gradually and gently making its way into every heart, was frightened, and trembled as he saw that he must

now purchase it at the cost of his life.

Never perhaps had this terrible thought occurred to him, and he recoiled from it in agony and affright.

Yet Briconnet had still one hope: if he were permitted to appear before the assembled chambers of parliament, as became a person of his rank, in that august and numerous court, he would be sure to find generous hearts responding to his appeal, and undertaking his defense. He therefore entreated the court to grant him this favor; but his enemies had equally reckoned on the issue of such a hearing. Had they not seen Luther appearing before the German diet and shaking the most determined hearts?

On the watch to remove every chance of safety, they exerted themselves to such effect that the parliament refused Briconnet this favor by a decree dated the 25th of October 1525, in confirmation of the one previously issued. Here then was the Bishop of Meaux referred like the humblest priest



to the jurisdiction of James Menager and Andrew Verjus. These two lawyers, docile instruments in the hands of the Sorbonne, would not be moved by those higher considerations to which the whole chamber might have been sensible; they were matter of fact men: had the bishop differed from that society, or had he not? This is all they desire to know. Briconnet's conviction was therefore secured.

While the parliament was thus holding the sword over the head of the bishop, the monks, priests, and doctors were not idle; they saw that Briconnet's retractation would be of more service to them than his punishment. His death would only inflame the zeal of all those who held the same faith with him; but his apostasy would plunge them into the deepest discouragement. They went to work accordingly. They visited and entreated him, Martial Mazurier in particular endeavoring to make him fall, as he had done himself. There was no lack of arguments which might appear specious to Briconnet. Would he like to be deprived of his functions? Could he not, by remaining in the

church, employ his influence with the king and the court to effect an incalculable amount of good? What would become of his old friends, when he was no longer in power? Might not his resistance compromise a reform, which, to be salutary and durable, should be carried out by the legitimate influence of the clergy? How many souls he would offend by resisting the Church; how many souls he would attract, on the contrary, by giving way!.....They, like himself, were anxious for a reform. All is advancing insensibly; at the court and in the city and provinces, everything is moving forward.....and would he in mere recklessness of heart destroy so fair a prospect!.....After all, they did not call upon him to sacrifice his opinions, but only to submit to the established order of the Church. Was it well in him, when France was laboring under so many reverses, to stir up new confusions? “In the name of religion, of your country, of your friends, and of the Reformation itself, be persuaded,” said they. By such sophisms are the noblest causes ruined.

Yet every one of these considerations had its

influence on the mind of the bishop. The tempter, who desired to make our Savior fall in the wilderness, thus presented himself to Briconnet in specious colors, but instead of saying with his Master: "Get thee behind me, Satan!" he listened, welcomed, and pondered on these suggestions. From that hour his fidelity was at an end.

Briconnet had never embarked with his whole heart, like Luther or Farel, in the movement that was then regenerating the Church; there was in him a certain mystical tendency which weakens men's minds, and deprives them of that firmness and courage which proceed from faith alone based on the Word of God. The cross that he was called to take up that he might follow Christ was too heavy. Shaken, alarmed, stupefied, and distracted, he stumbled against the stone which had been artfully placed in his path.....he fell, and instead of throwing himself into the arms of Jesus, he threw himself into those of Mazurier, and by a shameful recantation sullied the glory of a noble faithfulness. Thus fell Briconnet, the friend of Lefevre and of Margaret; thus the earliest supporter of the Gospel

in France denied the glad tidings of grace, in the guilty thought that if he remained faithful, he would lose his influence over the Church, the court, and France. But what was represented to him as the salvation of his country, perhaps became its ruin. What would have been the result if Briconnet had possessed the courage of Luther? If one of the first bishops of France, beloved by the king and by the people, had ascended the scaffold, and had, like the little ones of the world, sealed the truth of the Gospel by a bold confession and a christian death, would not France herself have been moved; and the blood of the bishop becoming, like that of Polycarp and Cyprian, the seed of the Church, might we not have seen that country, so illustrious in many respects, emerging in the sixteenth century from that spiritual darkness with which it is still clouded?

Briconnet underwent a mere formal examination before James Menager and Andrew Verjus, who declared that he had sufficiently vindicated himself of the crime imputed to him. He was then subjected to penance, and assembled a

synod in which he condemned Luther's books, retracted all that he had taught contrary to the doctrine of the Church, restored the invocation of saints, endeavored to bring back those who had forsaken the Romish worship, and wishing to leave no doubt of his reconciliation with the pope and the Sorbonne, kept a solemn fast on the eve of Corpus Christi, and gave orders for pompous processions, in which he appeared personally, still further testifying his faith by his magnificence and by every kind of devout observance. In his will he commended his soul to the Virgin Mary and to the heavenly choir of paradise, and desired that after his death (which happened in 1533) twelve hundred masses should be said for the repose of his soul.

The fall of Briconnet is perhaps the most memorable in the history of the Reformation. Nowhere else do we find a man so sincerely pious and so deeply engaged in the reform turning round so suddenly against it: yet we must clearly understand his character and his fall. Briconnet was, as regards Rome, what Lefevre was with

respect to the Reformation. They were both persons of half-measures, properly belonging to neither party.

The doctor of Etaples inclined towards the Word, while the Bishop of Meaux leaned to the hierarchy; and when these two men who touch each other were called upon to decide, the one ranged himself under the banner of Rome, and the other of Jesus Christ. We cannot, however, be sure that Briconnet was wholly untrue to the convictions of his faith; at no period after his recantation did the Romish doctors place entire confidence in him.

But he acted, perhaps, as the Archbishop of Cambray afterwards did, and whom he resembled in many points; he thought he might submit outwardly to the pope, while remaining inwardly subject to his old convictions. Such weakness is incompatible with the principles of the Reformation. Briconnet was one of the chiefs of the mystic or quietest school in France, and we know that one of its leading maxims has ever been to accommodate itself to the church in which it

exists, whatever that church may be.

Briconnet's guilty fall went to the hearts of his old friends, and was the sad forerunner of those lamentable apostasies which the spirit of the world so often obtained in France in another age. The man who seemed to hold the reins of the Reformation in his hand was suddenly thrown from his seat; and the Reformation was thenceforward destined to pursue its course in France, without a human leader, without a chief, in humility and in obscurity. But the disciples of the Gospel raised their heads, and from that time looked with a firmer faith towards that heavenly Guide, whose faithfulness they knew could not be shaken.

The Sorbonne triumphed; this was a great stride towards the destruction of the Reform in France; and it was important to achieve another victory without delay. Lefevre stood next after Briconnet. Accordingly Beda had immediately turned the attack against him, by publishing a book against this illustrious doctor, full of such gross calumnies, that Erasmus says, "even smiths and cobblers could

have pointed them out.” His fury was particularly excited by the doctrine of justification through faith, which Lefevre was the first to preach to Christendom in the sixteenth century.

To this point Beda continually recurred, as an article which, according to him, overturned the Church. “What!” said he, “Lefevre affirms that whoever places his salvation in himself will surely perish; while the man that lays aside all strength of his own, and throws himself entirely into the arms of Jesus Christ, will be saved!.....Oh, what heresy! to teach the inefficacy of meritorious works!.....What a hellish error! what a deceitful snare of the devil! Let us oppose it with all our might!” That engine of persecution which produces either retractation or death, was immediately turned against the doctor of Etaples; and hopes were already entertained of seeing Lefevre share the fate of the poor woolcomber or of the illustrious Briconnet. His accusation was soon drawn up; and a decree of the parliament (dated 28th of August 1525) condemned nine propositions extracted from his commentaries on the Gospels, and placed his



translation of the Scriptures in the list of prohibited books. This was only the prelude; and that the learned doctor knew. Upon the first symptoms of persecution, he had felt that, in the absence of France I, he must fall under the assault of his enemies, and that the moment was now come to obey the Lord's commandment: When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another. Lefevre quitted Meaux, where, after the bishop's apostasy, he had drunk nothing but the cup of bitterness, and saw all his activity paralyzed; and as he withdrew from his persecutors, he shook the dust from off his feet against them, "not to call down evil upon them, but as a sign of the evils that were in store for them; for (says he in one place) just as this dust is shaken from off our feet, are they cast off from the face of the Lord." The persecutors had missed their victim; but they consoled themselves with the thought that France was at least delivered from the father of the heretics.

The fugitive Lefevre arrived at Strasburg under a borrowed name; there he immediately united with

the friends of the Reformation; and what must have been his joy at hearing that Gospel publicly taught which he had been the first to bring forward in the Church! Lo, there was his faith! this was exactly what he had intended to teach! He seemed to have been born a second time to the christian life. Gerard Roussel, one of those evangelical men who, like the doctor of Etaples, did not attain complete emancipation, had also been compelled to quit France. Together they followed the teaching of Capito and Bucer; they had frequent private conversations with these faithful doctors, and a report was circulated that they had even been commissioned to do so by Margaret, the king's sister. But Lefevre was more occupied in contemplating the ways of God than with polemies. Casting his eyes over Christendom, filled with astonishment on beholding the great events that were taking place, moved with thankfulness, and his heart full of anticipation, he fell on his knees and prayed the Lord "to perfect that which he saw then beginning." One pleasure in particular awaited him in Strasburg; Farel his disciple, his son, from whom he had been separated by persecution for

nearly three years, had arrived there before him. The aged doctor of the Sorbonne found in his young pupil a man in the vigor of life, a Christian in all the energy of faith. Farel affectionately clasped that wrinkled hand which had guided his first steps, and he experienced an indescribable joy at again meeting with his father in an evangelical city, and on seeing him surrounded with faithful men. Together they listened to the pure instructions of illustrious teachers; together they partook of the Lord's Supper in conformity with Christ's institution; together they received touching proofs of the love of their brethren. "Do you remember," said Farel, "what you once observed to me when we were both sunk in darkness: William, God will renew the world, and you will see it!.....Here is the beginning of what you then told me." — "Yes:" answered the pious old man, "God is renewing the world..... My dear son, continue to preach boldly the holy Gospel of Jesus Christ." Lefevre, from excess of caution doubtless, wished to live unknown at Strasburg, and had taken the name of Anthony Pilgrim, while Roussel assumed that of Solnin. But the illustrious doctor could not remain

hidden; in a short time the whole city and the very children saluted the aged Frenchman with respect. He did not dwell alone; but resided in Capito's house with Farel, Roussel, Vedastus, who was eulogized for his diffidence, and a certain Simon, a converted Jew. The houses of Capito, Oecolampadius, Zwingle, and Luther, were then like inns. Such was at that time the strength of brotherly love. Many other Frenchmen were living in this city on the banks of the Rhine, and they founded a church in which Farel often preached the doctrine of salvation. This christian society soothed the pain of exile.

While these brethren were thus enjoying the asylum offered them by fraternal affection, those in Paris and in other parts of France were exposed to great dangers. Briconnet had retracted; Lefevre had quitted France; this was no doubt something for the Sorbonne; but it had still to wait for the punishments that it had advised. Beda and his party had found no victims.....one man exasperated them still more than Briconnet and Lefevre; this was Louis Berquin. The gentleman of Artois, of a more

decided character than his two masters, omitted no opportunity of tormenting the monks and theologians, and of unmasking their fanaticism.

Living by turns at Paris and in the provinces, he collected and translated the writings of Luther and Erasmus: he himself would compose controversial works, and defend and propagate the new doctrine with all the zeal of a new convert. The Bishop of Amiens denounced him; Beda seconded the charge; and the parliament had him thrown into prison. "This one," said they, "shall not escape us like Briconnet or Lefevre." In effect, they kept him in close confinement. In vain did the superior of the Carthusians and others entreat him to apologize; he boldly declared that he would not give way on a single point. "There seemed no way left," says a chronicler, "but to lead him to the stake." Margaret, in consternation at what had happened to Briconnet, dreaded to see Berquin dragged to that scaffold which the bishop had so shamefully escaped. Not daring to visit him in prison, she endeavored to convey a few words of consolation to him; and it was perhaps for him that

the princess composed this touching complaint of the prisoner, in which the latter, addressing the Lord, exclaims: — But yet, where'er my prison be, Its gates can never keep out Thee For instant where I am, Thou art with me.

But Margaret did not stop here; she instantly wrote to her brother, soliciting this gentleman's pardon. Happy would she be if she could deliver him in time from the hatred of his enemies.

While waiting for this victim, Beda resolved to intimidate the enemies of the Sorbonne and of the monks by crushing the most celebrated of them.

Erasmus had taken up the pen against Luther; but that was of little consequence. If they can succeed in destroying Erasmus, with much the stronger reason would the ruin of Farel, of Luther, and of their associates be inevitable. The surest way to reach the mark is to aim beyond it. When once Rome has placed her foot upon the neck of the philosopher of Rotterdam, where is the heretical doctor that can escape its vengeance?

Lecouturier, commonly known by his Latin name Sutor (cobbler), had already begun the attack, by launching from his solitary Carthusian cell a treatise overflowing with violence, in which he called his opponents theologasters and jackasses, charging them with scandalous crimes, heresy, and blasphemy. Treating of subjects which he did not understand, he reminded his readers of the old proverb: *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, Let the cobbler stick to his last.

Beda hastened to the assistance of his brother. He ordered Erasmus to write no more; and taking up that pen which he had commanded the greatest writer of the age to lay down, he made a collection of all the calumnies that the monks had invented against the illustrious philosopher, translated them into French, and composed a book that he circulated in the city and at court, striving to raise all France against him. This work was the signal of attack; Erasmus was assailed from every quarter. An old Carmelite of Louvain, Nicholas Ecmont, exclaimed every time he went into the pulpit,

“There is no difference between Luther and Erasmus, except that Erasmus is the greater heretic;” and wherever the Carmelite might be, at table, in coach, or in boat, he called Erasmus a heresiarch and forger.

The faculty of Paris, excited by these clamors, prepared a censure against the illustrious writer.

Erasmus was astounded. This, then, is the end of all his forbearance, and of even his hostility against Luther. He had mounted to the breach with greater courage than any man; and now they want to make him a stepping stone, and trample him under foot, that they may the more securely attack the common enemy. This idea disgusted him: he turned round immediately, and almost before he had ceased his attack upon Luther, fell upon these fanatical doctors, who had assailed him from behind. Never was his correspondence more active than now. He glances all around him, and his piercing eye soon discovers in whose hands depends his fate. He does not hesitate: he will lay his complaints and remonstrances at the feet of the



Sorbonne, of the parliament, of the king, and of the emperor himself.

“What is it that has kindled this immense Lutheran conflagration?” wrote he to those theologians of the Sorbonne, from whom he still expected some little impartiality; “what has fanned it, if not the virulence of Beda and his fellows? In war, a soldier who has done his duty receives a reward from his general; and all the recompense I shall receive from you, the leaders of this war, is to be delivered up to the calumnies of such as Beda and Lecouturier.” “What!” wrote he to the parliament, “when I was contending with these Lutherans, and while I was maintaining a severe struggle by order of the emperor, the pope, and other princes, even at the peril of my life, Beda and Lecouturier attacked me from behind with their foul libels! Ah, if fortune had not deprived us of King Francis, I should have invoked this avenger of the muses against this new invasion of the barbarians. But now it is your duty to put an end to such injustice!” As soon as he found the possibility of conveying a letter to the king, he wrote to him

immediately. His penetrating eye detected in these fanatical doctors of the Sorbonne the germs of the league, the predecessors of those three priests who were one day to set up the Sixteen against the last of the Valois; his genius forewarned the king of the crimes and misfortunes which his descendants were destined to know but too well. "Religion is their pretext," said he, "but they aspire to tyranny even over princes. They move with a sure step, though their path is underground. Should the prince be disinclined to submit to them in every thing, they will declare that he may be deposed by the Church; that is to say, by a few false monks and theologians who conspire against the public peace." Erasmus in writing to Francis I could not have touched a tenderer point.

Finally, to be more certain of escape from his enemies, Erasmus invoked the protection of Charles V. "Invincible emperor," said he, "certain individuals who, under the pretense of religion, wish to establish their own gluttony and despotism, are raising a horrible outcry against me. I am fighting under your banners and those of Jesus

Christ. May your wisdom and power restore peace to the christian world.” Thus did the prince of letters address the great ones of the age. The danger was averted; the powers of the world interposed; the vultures were compelled to abandon a prey which they fancied already in their talons.

Upon this they turned their eyes to another quarter, seeking fresh victims, which were soon found.

Lorraine was the first place in which blood was again to flow. From the earliest days of the Reform there had been a fanatical alliance between Paris and the country of the Guises. When Paris was quiet, Lorraine applied to the task; and then Paris resumed her labor, while Metz and Nancy were recovering their strength. In June 1525, Peter Toussaint returned to Metz, in company with Farel. They desired a hearing before their lordships the Thirteen; and this being refused, they appealed to the eschevin. Plans were already laid for throwing them into prison, when, fearful of danger, they quickly left the city, travelling all night lest they

should be overtaken. The first blows were destined apparently to fall on an excellent man, one of the Basle refugees, a friend of Farel and Toussaint. The Chevalier d'Esch had not been able to escape the suspicions of the priests in Metz.

They discovered that he kept up a communication with the evangelical Christians, and he was imprisoned at Pont-a-Mousson, about five miles from Metz on the banks of the Moselle. These tidings overwhelmed the French refugees and the Swiss themselves with sorrow. "O heart full of innocence!" exclaimed Oecolampadius. "I have confidence in the Lord," added he, "that he will preserve this man to us, either in life as a preacher of righteousness, to announce His name, or as a martyr to confess him in death." But at the same time Oecolampadius disapproved of the impetuosity, enthusiasm, and imprudent zeal which distinguished the French refugees. "I wish," said he, "that my very dear lords of France would not be so hasty in returning into their own country, before they had duly examined all things; for the devil is spreading his snares on every side. Nevertheless let

them obey the Spirit of Christ, and may this Spirit never abandon them.” There was, in truth, reason to fear for the chevalier. The fury of the enemy had broken out in Lorraine with redoubled violence. The provincial of the Cordeliers, Bonaventure Renel, confessor to Duke Anthony the Good, a man devoid of shame, and not very commendable on the score of morals, gave this weak prince, who reigned from 1508 to 1544, great licence in his pleasures, and persuaded him, almost by way of penance, to destroy the innovators without mercy. “It is enough for every one to know his Pater and his Ave,” this prince, so well tutored by Renel, would say; “the greater the doctor, the greater the disturbance.” Towards the end of 1524 the duke’s court was informed that a pastor named Schuch was preaching some new doctrine in the town of St.

Hippolyte, at the foot of the Vosges. “Let them return to their duty,” said Anthony the Good, “or else I will march against the city, and destroy it by fire and sword.” Upon this the faithful pastor resolved to give himself up for his flock, and

repaired to Nancy, where the prince was residing. As soon as he arrived he was thrown into a filthy prison, under the guard of brutal and cruel men; and Friar Bonaventure at last saw the heretic in his power. It was he who presided at the trial. “Heretic! Judas! devil!” exclaimed he. Schuch, calm and collected, made no reply to this abuse; but holding in his hands a Bible, all covered with notes, he meekly yet forcibly confessed Christ crucified.

On a sudden he became animated; he stood up boldly, and raising his voice, as if filled by the Spirit from on high, looked his judges in the face, and threatened them with the terrible judgments of God.

Brother Bonaventure and his companions, amazed and transported with rage, rushed upon him with violent cries, tore away the Bible from which he was reading this menacing language, “and like mad dogs,” says the chronicler, “unable to bite his doctrine, they burnt it in their convent.” All the court of Lorraine resounded with the obstinacy and

impudence of the minister of St. Hippolyte, and the prince, curious to hear the heretic, desired to be present at his last interrogatory, but in secret however, and concealed from every eye. As the examination took place in Latin, he could not understand a word; but he was struck with the firm countenance of the minister, who seemed neither vanquished nor confounded. Exasperated at such obstinacy, Anthony the Good rose up, and said as he withdrew: “Why do you still dispute? He denies the sacrament of the mass; let them proceed to execution against him.” Schuch was instantly condemned to be burnt alive. When the sentence was made known to him, he raised his eyes to heaven, saying mildly: “I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord.” On the 19th August 1525 the whole city of Nancy was in motion. The bells were tolling for the death of a heretic. The mournful procession set out. It was necessary to pass before the convent of the Cordeliers, who, rejoicing and expectant, had assembled before the gate. At the moment that Schuch appeared, Father Bonaventure, pointing to the carved images over the portals of the convent,

exclaimed: “Heretic! pay honor to God, to his mother, and to the saints.” — “Ye hypocrites!” replied Schuch, standing erect before these blocks of wood and stone, “God will destroy you, and bring your deceits to light!” When the martyr reached the place of execution, his books were burnt before his face; he was then called upon to retract; but he refused, saying: “It is thou, O God, who hast called me, and thou wilt give me strength unto the end.” After this he began to repeat aloud the fifty-first psalm: “Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving kindness.” Having mounted the pile, he continued to recite the psalm until the smoke and the flames stifled his voice.

Thus the persecutors of France and Lorraine beheld a renewal of their victories; at length men paid attention to their advice. The ashes of a heretic had been scattered to the winds at Nancy; it was a challenge to the capital of France. What! shall Beda and Lecouturier be the last to show their zeal for the pope! Let flames reply to flames, and heresy, swept from the soil of the kingdom, would soon be entirely driven back beyond the Rhine.



But before he could succeed, Beda had to sustain a combat, half serious, half ludicrous, against one of those men with whom the struggle against the Papacy is merely an intellectual pastime and not an earnest purpose of the heart.

Among the scholars whom Briconnet had attracted to his diocese, was a doctor of the Sorbonne, named Peter Caroli, a vain and frivolous man, not less quarrelsome and litigious than Beda himself. In the new doctrine Caroli saw the means of vexing Beda, whose ascendancy he could not endure.

Accordingly, on his return from Meaux to Paris, he made a great sensation by carrying into the pulpit what was called, “the new way of preaching.” Then began an indefatigable struggle between the two doctors; it was blow for blow, and trick for trick. Beda summoned Caroli before the Sorbonne, and Caroli summoned him before the bishop’s court by way of reparation.

The faculty continued the examination, and Caroli gave notice of an appeal to the parliament. He was provisionally forbidden to enter the pulpit, and he preached in all the churches of Paris. Being positively forbidden to preach at all, he publicly lectured on the Psalms in the College of Cambray.

The faculty forbade him to continue his course, and he begged permission to finish the explanation of the 22nd Psalm, which he had just begun.

Finally, on the refusal of his request, he posted the following placard on the college gates: “Peter Caroli, desirous of obeying the orders of the sacred faculty, has ceased to lecture; he will resume his lectures (whenever it shall please God) at the verse where he left off: **THEY HAVE PIERCED MY HANDS AND MY FEET.**” Thus Beda at last found his match. If Caroli had seriously defended the truth, the burning pile would soon have been his reward; but he was of too profane a spirit to be put to death. How could the judges capitally punish a man who made them lose their gravity.

Neither the bishop's court, nor the parliament, nor the council, could ever come to a definite decision in his cause. Two men such as Caroli would have wearied out the activity of Beda himself; but the Reformation did not produce his parallel. As soon as this unseasonable contest was ended, Beda applied to more serious matters. Happily for the syndic of the Sorbonne, there were men who gave persecution a better hold of them than Caroli. Briconnet, Erasmus, Lefevre, and Farel had escaped him; but since he cannot reach these distinguished individuals, he will content himself with meaner persons. The poor youth, James Pavanne, after his abjuration at Christmas 1524, had done nothing but weep and sigh. He might be seen with a melancholy air, his eyes fixed on the earth, groaning inwardly, and severely reproaching himself for having denied his Savior and his God. Pavanne was undoubtedly the most diffident and inoffensive of men: but what mattered that! he had been at Meaux, and in those days that was sufficient. "Pavanne has relapsed," was the cry; "the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the

mire.” He was immediately arrested, thrown into prison, and taken before his judges. This was all that the youthful James required. He felt comforted as soon as he was in chains, and found strength sufficient to confess Jesus Christ with boldness. The cruel persecutors smiled as they saw that, this time at least, nothing could save their victim; there was no recantation, no flight, no powerful patronage. The young man’s mildness, his candor and courage, failed to soften his adversaries. He regarded them with love; for by casting him into prison, they had restored him to tranquillity and joy; but his tender looks only served to harden their hearts. His trial was soon concluded: a pile was erected on the Greve, where Pavanne died rejoicing, strengthening by his example all those who in that large city believed openly or secretly in the Gospel of Christ.

This was not enough for the Sorbonne. If they are compelled to sacrifice the little ones of the world, their number must at least make amends for their quality. The flames of the Greve struck terror into Paris and the whole of France; but a new pile,

kindled on another spot, will redouble that terror. It will be talked of at court, in the colleges, and in the workshops of the people; and such proofs will show more clearly than any edicts, that Louisa of Savoy, the Sorbonne, and the parliament, are resolved to sacrifice the very last heretic to the anathemas of Rome.

In the forest of Livry, three leagues from Paris, and not far from the spot where once stood the ancient abbey of the Augustines, dwelt a hermit, who in his excursions having met with some men of Meaux, had received the evangelical doctrine in his heart. The poor hermit had felt himself rich in his retreat, when one day, returning with the scanty food that public charity bestowed on him, he carried back Jesus Christ and his grace.

From that time he found that it was better to give than to receive. He went from house to house in the surrounding villages, and as soon as he had opened the doors of the poor peasants whom he visited in their humble huts, he spoke to them of the Gospel, of the perfect pardon that it offers to

the burdened soul, and which is far better than absolutions. Erelong the good hermit of Livry was known in the environs of Paris; people went to visit him in his lowly cell, and he became a mild and fervent missionary for the simple souls of that district.

The rumor of the doings of this new evangelist did not fail to reach the ears of the Sorbonne and of the magistrates of Paris. The hermit was seized, dragged from his hermitage, from his forest, from those fields through which he used to wander daily, thrown into a prison in that great city which he had ever shunned, and condemned “to suffer the exemplary punishment of the slow fire.” In order to render the example more striking, it was determined that he should be burnt alive in the front of Notre- Dame, before that splendid cathedral, that majestic symbol of Roman-catholicism. All the clergy were convoked, and as much pomp was displayed as on the most solemn festivals. They would, if possible, have attracted all Paris round the stake, “the great bell of the church of Notre-Dame (says an historian) tolling solemnly

to arouse the citizens.” The people flocked in crowds through all the streets that led into the square. The deep tones of the bell drew the workman from his toil, the scholar from his books, the merchant from his traffic, the soldier from his idleness, and already the wide space was covered by an immense crowd which still kept increasing. The hermit, clad in the garments assigned to obstinate heretics, with head and feet bare, had been led before the gates of the cathedral. Calm, firm, and collected, he made no reply to the exhortations of the confessors who presented him a crucifix, save by declaring that his sole hope was in the pardon of God.

The doctors of the Sorbonne, in the front ranks of the spectators, seeing his constancy, and the effect it was producing on the people, cried aloud: “He is damned: they are leading him to hell-fire!” The great bell still continued tolling, and its loud notes, by stunning the ears of the crowd, increased the solemnity of this mournful spectacle. At length the bell was silent, and the martyr having replied to the last questions of his enemies, that he was

resolved to die in the faith of his Lord Jesus Christ, was burnt by a slow fire, according to the tenor of his sentence. And thus, in front of Notre- Dame, amid the shouts and emotion of a whole people, under the shadow of the towers raised by the piety of Louis the younger, peacefully died a man, whose name history has not transmitted to us, except as the “Hermit of Livry.”



## Chapter 15

# A Student of Noyon

While men were thus putting to death the first confessors of Jesus Christ in France, God was preparing mightier ones to fill their places. Beda hurried to the stake an unassuming scholar, an humble hermit, and thought he was dragging almost the whole of the Reform along with them. But Providence has resources that are unknown to the world. The Gospel, like the fabulous phoenix, contains a principle of life within itself, which the flames cannot consume, and it springs up again from its own ashes. It is often at the moment when the storm is at its height, when the thunderbolt seems to have struck down the truth, and when thick darkness hides it from our view, that a sudden glimmering appears, the forerunner of a great deliverance. At this time, when all human powers in France were arming against the Gospel for the complete destruction of the Reformation, God was preparing an instrument, weak to all appearance, one day to support His rights and to defend His

cause with more than mortal intrepidity. In the midst of the persecutions and blazing piles that followed each other in close succession after Francis became Charles's prisoner, let us fix our eyes on a youth, one day to be called to the head of a great army in the holy warfare of Israel.

Among the inhabitants of the city and colleges of Paris who heard the sound of the great bell was a young scholar of sixteen, a native of Noyon in Picardy, of middle stature, sallow features, and whose piercing eye and animated looks announced a mind of no common sagacity. His dress, extremely neat but of perfect simplicity, betokened order and moderation.

This young man, by name John Cauvin or Calvin, was then studying at the college of La Marche, under Mathurin Cordier, a rector celebrated for his probity, erudition, and peculiar fitness for the instruction of youth.

Brought up in all the superstitions of popery, the scholar of Noyon was blindly submissive to the

Church, cheerfully complying with all her observances, and persuaded that the heretics had richly deserved their fate. The blood which was then flowing in Paris aggravated the crime of heresy in his eyes. But although naturally of a timid and fearful disposition, and which he himself has styled soft and pusillanimous, he possessed that uprightness and generosity of heart which lead a man to sacrifice everything to his convictions. Accordingly, in vain had his youth been appalled by those frightful spectacles, in vain had murderous flames consumed the faithful disciples of the Gospel on the Greve and in front of Notre-Dame; the recollection of these horrors could not prevent him from one day entering on the new path, which seemed to lead only to the prison or the stake. Moreover, there were already perceptible in the character of young Calvin certain traits that announced what he would become.

Strictness of morals in him led the way to strictness of doctrine, and the scholar of sixteen already gave promise of a man who would deal seriously with every principle he embraced, and

who would firmly require in others what he himself found it so easy to perform. Quite and serious during his lessons, never sharing in the amusements or follies of his schoolfellows during the hours of recreation, holding himself aloof, and filled with horror at sin, he would often reprimand their disorders with severity and even bitterness. And hence, as a canon of Noyon informs us, his fellow-students nicknamed him the accusative case. Among them he was the representative of conscience and of duty, so far was he from being as some of his calumniators have depicted him. The pale features and the piercing eyes of the scholar of sixteen had already inspired his comrades with more respect than the black gowns of their masters; and this Picard youth, of a timid air, who daily took his seat on the benches in the college of La Marche, was even then, by the seriousness of his conversation and life, an unconscious minister and reformer.

It was not in these particulars alone that the youth of Noyon was already far above his schoolfellows. His great timidity sometimes

prevented him from manifesting all the horror he felt at vanity and vice; but he already consecrated to study the whole force of his genius and of his will, and to look at him one might see he was a man who would spend his life in toil.

He comprehended everything with inconceivable facility; he ran in his studies while his companions were lazily creeping along, and he impressed deeply on his profound genius what others spend much time in learning superficially. Accordingly, his master was compelled to take him out of the classes, and introduce him singly to fresh studies. Among his fellow-students were the young De Mommors, belonging to the first nobility of Picardy. John Calvin was very intimate with them, especially with Claude, who afterwards became abbot of Saint Eloi, and to whom he dedicated his commentary on Seneca. It was in the company of these young nobles that Calvin had come to Paris. His father, Gerard Calvin, apostolic notary, procurator-fiscal of the county of Noyon, secretary of the diocese, and proctor of the chapter, was a man of judgment and ability, whose talents had

raised him to offices sought after by the best families, and who had gained the esteem of all the gentry in the province, and in particular of the noble family of Mommor. Gerard resided at Noyon; he had married a young woman of Cambray, of remarkable beauty and unassuming piety, by name Jane Lefranq, who had already borne him a son named Charles, when on the 10th of July 1509 she gave birth to a second son, who received the name of John, and who was christened in the church of St. Godeberte. A third son, Anthony, who died young, and two daughters, made up the family of the procurator-fiscal of Noyon.

Gerard Calvin, living in familiar intercourse with the heads of the clergy and the chief persons in the province, desired that his children should receive the same education as those of the best families. John, whose precocious habits he had observed, was brought up with the sons of the Mommor family; he lived in their house as one of themselves, and studied the same lessons as Claude. In this family he learnt the first elements of

literature and of life; he thus received a higher polish than he appeared destined to acquire. He was afterwards sent to the college of the Capettes, founded in the city of Noyon. The child enjoyed but little recreation. The austerity, that was one of the characteristic features of the son, was found also in the father. Gerard brought him up strictly; from his earliest years, John was compelled to bend to the inflexible rule of duty, which soon became habitual to him, and the influence of the father counteracted that of the Mommer family. Calvin, who was of a timid and somewhat rustic character (as he says himself), and rendered still more timid by his father's severity, shrunk from the splendid apartments of his protectors, and loved to remain alone and in obscurity. Thus in retirement his young mind formed itself to great thoughts. It would appear that he sometimes went to the village of Pont l'Eveque, near Noyon, where his grandfather resided in a small cottage, and where other relatives also, who at a later period changed their name from detestation of the heresiarch, kindly received the son of the procurator-fiscal.

But it was to study chiefly that young Calvin devoted his time. While Luther, who was to act upon the people, was brought up like a child of the people, Calvin, who was to act especially as a theologian and profound reasoner, and become the legislator of the renovated Church, received even in childhood a more liberal education. A spirit of piety early showed itself in the child's heart. One author relates that he was accustomed, when very young, to pray in the open air, under the vault of heaven; a habit which contributed to awaken in his heart the sentiment of God's omnipresence. But although Calvin might, even in infancy, have heard the voice of God in his heart, no one at Noyon was so rigid as he in the observance of ecclesiastical regulations. And hence Gerard, remarking this disposition, conceived the design of devoting his son to theology. This prospect no doubt contributed to impress on his soul that serious form, that theological stamp, by which it was subsequently distinguished. His spirit was of a nature to receive a strong impression in early years, and to familiarize itself from childhood with the most elevated thoughts. The report that he was at this



time a chorister has no foundation, as even his adversaries admit. But they assure us that, when a child, he was seen joining the religious processions, and carrying a sword with a cross-shaped hilt by way of a crucifix. "A presage," add they, "of what he was one day to become!" "The Lord hath made my mouth like a sharp sword," says the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah. The same may be said of Calvin.

Gerard was poor; his son's education had cost him much, and he wished to attach him irrevocably to the Church. The Cardinal of Lorraine had been coadjutor of the Bishop of Metz at the age of four years. It was then a common practice to confer ecclesiastical titles and revenues on children.

Alphonso of Portugal was made cardinal by Leo X at the age of eight, and Odet of Chatillon by Clement VII at eleven; and subsequent to Calvin's day, the celebrated Mere Angelique of Port Royal was appointed coadjutrix of that nunnery at the age of seven years. Gerard, who died a good catholic, was regarded with favor by Messire Charles de

Hangest, bishop of Noyon, and by his vicars-general. Accordingly, when the chaplain of La Gesine resigned, the bishop, on the 21st May 1521, conferred this benefice on John Calvin, who was then nearly twelve years old. The appointment was communicated to the chapter twelve days after.

On the eve of Corpus Christi, the bishop solemnly cut off the child's hair, and by this ceremony of the tonsure, John became a member of the clergy, and capable of entering into holy orders, and of holding a benefice without residing on the spot.

Thus was Calvin called to make trial in his own person of the abuses of the Romish Church. Of all who wore the tonsure in France, there was none more serious in his piety than the chaplain of La Gesine, and the serious child was probably astonished himself at the work of the bishop and his vicars-general. But in his simplicity he felt too much veneration towards these exalted personages to indulge in the least suspicion on the lawfulness of his tonsure. He had held the title about two years

when Noyon was visited by a dreadful pestilence. Several of the canons petitioned the chapter that they might be allowed to quit the city. Already many of the inhabitants had been carried off by the great death, and Gerard was beginning to fear that his son John, the hope of his life, might in a moment be snatched from his tenderness by the scourge of God. The young de Mommors were going to Paris to continue their studies; this was what the procurator-fiscal had always desired for his son. Why should he separate John from his fellow-students? On the 5th of August 1523, he petitioned the chapter to procure the young chaplain "liberty to go wherever he pleased during the plague, without loss of his allowance; which was granted him until the feast of Saint Remy." John Calvin quitted his father's house at the age of fourteen. It requires great audacity in calumny to ascribe his departure to other causes, and in mere wantonness challenge that disgrace which justly recoils on those who circulate charges the falsehood of which has been so authentically demonstrated. It appears that in Paris, Calvin lodged at the house of one of his uncles, Richard

Cauvin, who resided near the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. "Thus flying from the pestilence," says the canon of Noyon, "he went to catch it elsewhere." Some years after Calvin had quitted Noyon, another individual of the same name arrived in that city. John Cauvin was a young man of corrupt principles, but as he came from another part of France, and was a stranger (or unknown) in Noyon, he was received among the priests who chanted in the choir, and in a short time a chapel was given him, as in the case of the first Calvin. As this took place at a time when the latter had already "turned to heresy," the good canons looked upon Cauvin's arrival as a sort of recompense and consolation; but it was not long before the disorderly life of this wretched man excited alarm among his protectors. He was reprimanded, punished, and even deprived of his stipend: but to this he paid no attention, continually lapsing again into incontinence. "Seeing then," says the canon, "his hardness of heart, which made him neglect every kind of remonstrance," the canons deprived John Cauvin of his chapel and expelled him from the choir. James Desmay, a

priest and doctor of divinity, who had studied at Noyon everything that concerned this church, adds, that he was privately scourged in 1552, and then driven from the town. This is indeed a disgraceful end for a priest! The canon Levasseur disputes the scourging, but admits all the rest.

In the following year the same circumstances happened again, for the history of popery abounds in such adventures. A certain Baldwin the younger, also chaplain at Noyon, having taken to live scandalously with him certain women of suspicious character, was condemned to attend every service in the church during a month, and to be scourged. While these two Romanist authors agree in relating the disorders and punishments inflicted on these young ecclesiastics, they likewise agree in declaring that they had found nothing at Noyon or in its registers against the morals of the great French reformer, and are content to execrate his error; “for to call a man a heretic, is to call him by the most opprobrious of names.” The Dean of Noyon goes even farther in his zeal for the papacy, and relates that John Cauvin, who had been

expelled in 1552 for incontinence, died a good catholic. “Thanks be to God,” adds he, “that he never turned his coat, nor changed his religion, to which his libertine life and the example of his namesake Calvin seemed to incline him.” The dean concludes his strange narrative, the discovery of which is highly valuable to the history of the Reformation, in these words: “I thought it my duty to add this chapter to the history of the first Calvin the reformer, *ad diluendam homonymiam* (to guard against the similarity of names), for fear one should be taken for the other, the catholic for the heretic.” Never was fear better founded. We know what the popish writers are accustomed to do. They take advantage of the misdeeds of John Cauvin at Noyon, and ascribe them to the reformer. They tell their readers gravely that he was driven from his native town for misconduct, after having been condemned to be scourged and even branded. In spite of all the pains taken by the Dean of Noyon to add a chapter for fear one should be taken for the other, the catholic for the heretic, the apologists of Rome fail not to ascribe to the reformer the debaucheries of his namesake. What engrossed the

thoughts of the canon of Noyon was the glory of John Cauvin who died a good catholic, and he feared lest Calvin's heresy should be laid to him.

And, accordingly, he clearly assigns incontinence to the one, and heresy to the other. There have indeed been equivocations, as he says, but in a contrary direction. Let us now return to Calvin at Paris.

A new world opened before the young man in the metropolis of letters. He profited by it, applied to his studies, and made great progress in Latin literature. He became familiar with Cicero, and learned from this great master to employ the language of the Romans with a facility, purity, and ease that excite the admiration even of his enemies. But at the same time, he found riches in this language which he afterwards transferred to his own.

Up to this time Latin had been the only language of the learned; and to our own days it has remained the language of the Roman Church. The

Reformation created or at least emancipated the vulgar tongue.

The exclusive office of the priest had ceased; the people were called to learn and know for themselves. In this one fact was involved the ruin of the language of the priest, and the inauguration of the language of the people. It is no longer to the Sorbonne alone, to a few monks, or ecclesiastics, or literary men, that the new ideas are to be addressed; but to the noble, the citizen, and the laborer. All men are now to be preached to; nay more, all are to become preachers — wool-combers and knights, as well as doctors and parish-priests. A new language is wanted, or at the least the language of the people must undergo an immense transformation, a great enfranchisement, and, drawn from the common uses of life, must receive its patent of nobility from renovated Christianity. The Gospel, so long slumbering, has awoken; it speaks and addresses whole nations, everywhere kindling generous affections; it opens the treasures of heaven to a generation that was thinking only of the mean things on earth; it shakes



the masses; it talks to them of God, of man, of good and evil, of the pope and the Bible, of a crown in heaven, and perhaps a scaffold upon earth. The popular tongue, which hitherto had been the language of chroniclers and troubadours only, was called by the Reformation to act a new part, and consequently to new developments. A new world is opening upon society, and for a new world there must be new languages. The Reformation removed the French from the swaddling bands in which it had hitherto been bound, and reared it to its majority. From that time the language has had full possession of those exalted privileges that belong to the operations of the mind and the treasures of heaven, of which it had been deprived under the guardianship of Rome. No doubt the language is formed by the people themselves: they invent those happy words, those energetic and figurative expressions, that impart to language such coloring and life. But there are resources beyond their reach, and which can only proceed from men of intellect. Calvin, when called upon to discuss and to prove, enriched his mothertongue with modes of connection and dependence, with

shadows, transitions, and dialectic forms, that it did not as yet possess.

These elements were already beginning to ferment in the head of the young student at the college of La Marche. This lad, who was destined to exercise so powerful a mastery over the human heart, was also to subjugate the language he would have to use as his weapon. Protestant France subsequently habituated itself to the French of Calvin, and Protestant France comprehends the most cultivated portion of the nation; from it issued those families of scholars and dignified magistrates who exerted so powerful an influence over the refinement of the people; out of it sprung the Port Royal, one of the greatest instruments that have ever contributed to form the prose and even the poetry of France, and who, after endeavoring to transfer to the Gallican catholicism the doctrine and language of the Reformation, failed in one of his projects, but succeeded in the other; for Roman-catholic France was forced to go and learn of her Jansenist and reformed adversaries how to wield those weapons of language without which it cannot

contend against them. While the future reformer of religion and language was thus growing to maturity in the college of La Marche, everything was in commotion around the young and serious scholar, who took no part as yet in the great movements that were agitating society. The flames that consumed the hermit and Pavanne had spread terror through Paris. But the persecutors were not satisfied; a system of terror was set on foot throughout France.

The friends of the Reformation no longer dared correspond with one another, for fear their intercepted letters should betray to the vengeance of the tribunals both those who wrote them and those to whom they were addressed. One man, however, ventured to carry intelligence from Paris to France to the refugees at Basle, by sewing a letter that bore no signature under his doublet. He escaped the squadrons of arquebusiers, the marechaussee of the several districts, the examinations of the provosts and lieutenants, and reached Basle without the mysterious doublet being searched. His tidings filled Toussaint and his

friends with alarm. “It is frightful,” said Toussaint, “to hear of the great cruelties there inflicted!” Shortly before this, two Franciscan monks had arrived at Basle, closely pursued by the officers of justice. One of them named John Prevost had preached at Meaux, and had afterwards been thrown into prison at Paris. All that they told of Paris and Lyons, through which they had passed, excited the compassion of these refugees. “May our Lord send his grace thither,” wrote Toussaint to Farel; “I assure you that I am sometimes in great anxiety and tribulation.” These excellent men still kept up their courage; in vain were all the parliaments on the watch; in vain did the spies of the Sorbonne and of the monks creep into churches, colleges, and even private families, to catch up any word of evangelical doctrine that might there be uttered; in vain did the king’s soldiers arrest on the highways everything that seemed to bear the stamp of the Reformation: those Frenchmen whom Rome and her satellites were hunting down and treading under foot, had faith in better days to come, and already perceived afar off the end of this Babylonish captivity, as they called

it. “The seventieth year, the year of deliverance, will come at last,” said they, “and liberty of spirit and of conscience will be given to us.” But the seventy years were destined to last nearly three centuries, and it was only after calamities without a parallel that these hopes were to be realized. It was not in man, however, that the refugees placed any hope.

“Those who have begun the dance,” said Toussaint, “will not stop on the road.” But they believed that the Lord “knew those whom he had chosen, and would deliver his people with a mighty hand.” The Chevalier d’Esch had in effect been delivered. Escaping from the prison at Pont a Mousson, he had hastened to Strasburg; but he did not remain there long. “For the honor of God,” immediately wrote Toussaint to Farel, “endeavor to prevail on the knight, our worthy master, to return as speedily as possible; for our brethren have great need of such a leader?” In truth, the French refugees had new cause of alarm. They trembled lest that dispute about the Lord’s Supper, which had so much distressed them in Germany, should

pass the Rhine, and cause fresh troubles in France. Francis Lambert, the monk of Avignon, after visiting Zurich and Wittenberg, had been in Metz; but they did not place entire confidence in him; they feared lest he should have imbibed Luther's sentiments, and that by controversies, both useless and "monstrous" (as Toussaint calls them), he might check the progress of the Reformation. Esch therefore returned to Lorraine; but it was to be again exposed to great dangers, "along with all those who were seeking the glory of Jesus Christ." Yet Toussaint was not of a disposition to send others to the battle without joining in it himself. Deprived of his daily intercourse with Oecolampadius, reduced to associate with an ignorant priest, he had sought communion with Christ, and felt his courage augmented. If he could not return to Metz, might he not at least go to Paris? True, the piles of Pavanne and the hermit of Livry were smoking still, and seemed to repel from the capital all those who held the same faith as they did. But if the colleges and the streets of Paris were struck with terror, so that no one dared even name the Gospel and the Reformation, was not that a

reason why he should go thither? Toussaint quitted Basle, and entered those walls where fanaticism had taken the place of riot and debauchery. While advancing in christian studies, he endeavored to form a connection with those brethren who were in the colleges, and especially in that of the Cardinal Lemoine, where Lefevre and Farel had taught. But he could not long do so freely. The tyranny of the parliamentary commissioners and of the theologians reigned supreme in the capital, and whoever displeased them was accused of heresy. A duke and an abbot, whose names are unknown to us, denounced Toussaint as a heretic; and one day the king's sergeants arrested the youth from Lorraine and put him in prison. Separated from all his friends, and treated like a criminal, Toussaint felt his wretchedness the more keenly. "O Lord," exclaimed he, "withdraw not thou thy Spirit from me! for without it I am but flesh and a sink of iniquity." While his body was in chains, he turned in heart to those who were still combating freely for the Gospel. There was Oecolampadius, his father, and "whose work I am in the Lord," said he. There was Leclerc, whom he no doubt believed, on

account of his age, “unable to bear the weight of the Gospel;” Vaugris, who had displayed all the zeal “of the most affectionate brother” to rescue him from the hands of his enemies; Roussel, “by whom he hoped the Lord would bring great things to pass; and lastly, Farel, to whom he wrote, “I commend myself to your prayers, for fear that I should fall in this warfare.”

How must the names of all these men have softened the bitterness of his imprisonment, for he showed no signs of falling. Death, it is true, seemed hanging over him in this city where the blood of a number of his brethren was to be poured out like water; the friends of his mother, of his uncle the Dean of Metz, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, made him the most lavish offers .....“I despise them,” answered he; “I know that they are a temptation of the devil. I would rather suffer hunger, I would rather be a slave in the house of the Lord, than dwell with riches in the palaces of the wicked.” At the same time he made a bold confession of his faith. “It is my glory,” exclaimed he, “to be called a heretic by those whose lives and



doctrines are opposed to Jesus Christ.” And this interesting and bold young man subscribed his letters, “Peter Toussaint, unworthy to be called a Christian.” Thus, in the absence of the king, new blows were continually aimed against the Reformation. Berquin, Toussaint, and many others, were in prison; Schuch, Pavanne, and the hermit of Livry, had been put to death; Farel, Lefevre, Roussel, and many other defenders of the holy doctrine, were in exile, the mouths of the mighty ones were dumb. The light of the Gospel day was growing dim; the storm was roaring incessantly, bending and shaking as if it would uproot the young tree that the hand of God had so recently planted in France.

Nor was this all. The humble victims who had already fallen were to be succeeded by more illustrious martyrs. The enemies of the Reform in France, having failed when they began with persons of rank, had submitted to begin at the bottom, but with the hope of rising gradually until they procured the condemnation and death of the most exalted personages. The inverse progress

succeeded with them. Scarcely had the ashes with which the persecution had covered the Greve and the avenues of Notre- Dame been dispersed by the wind, before fresh attacks were commenced.

Messire Anthony Du Blet, that excellent man, the Lyons merchant, sunk under the persecutions of these enemies of the truth, in company with another disciple, Francis Moulin, of whose fate no details have been handed down. They went further still; they now took a higher aim; there was an illustrious person whom they could not reach, but whom they could strike in those who were dear to her. This was the Duchess of Alencon. Michael d'Arande, chaplain to the king's sister, for whose sake Margaret had dismissed her other preachers, and who proclaimed the pure doctrine of the Gospel in her presence, became the object of attack, and was threatened with imprisonment and death. About the same time Anthony Papillon, for whom the princess had obtained the office of chief master of requests to the Dauphin, died suddenly, and the general report, even among the enemies, was that he had been poisoned. Thus the

persecution spread over the kingdom, and daily drew nearer to the person of Margaret. After the forces of the Reform, concentrated at Meaux, at Lyons, and at Basle, had been dispersed, they brought down one after another those isolated combatants who here and there stood up for it. Yet a few more efforts, and the soil of France will be free from heresy. Underhanded contrivances and secret practices took the place of clamor and the stake. They will make war in open day, but they will also carry in on in darkness. If fanaticism employs the tribunal and the scaffold for the meaner sort, poison and the dagger are in reserve for the great. The doctors of a celebrated society have made too good a use of these means, and even kings have fallen under the dagger of the assassins. But justice demands that we should remember it. Rome has had in every age its fanatical assassins, it has also had men like Vincent de Paul and Fenelon.

These blows struck in darkness and silence were well adapted to spread terror on every side.

To this perfidious policy and fanatical

persecution from within, were added the fatal reverses from without. A veil of mourning hung over the whole nation. There was not a family, particularly among the nobles, whose tears did not flow for the loss of a father, a husband, of a son left on the fields of Italy, or whose hearts did not tremble for the liberty and even the life of one of its members. The great reverses that had fallen upon the nation diffused a leaven of hatred against the heretics. People and parliament, church and throne, joined hand in hand.

Was it not enough for the Duchess of Alencon that the defeat of Pavia should have deprived her of a husband, and made her brother a prisoner?

Must the torch of the Gospel, in whose mild light she so rejoiced, be extinguished perhaps for ever? In May 1525, she had felt increase of sorrow. Charles of Lannoy had received orders to take his prisoner into Spain. Margaret had recourse to the consolations of faith, and having found them, immediately communicated them to her brother. "My lord," she wrote, "the farther you are removed

from us, the stronger is my hope of your deliverance: for when the reason of man is troubled and fails, then the Lord performs his mighty works. — And now, if he makes you partaker of the pains he has borne for you, I beseech you, my lord, to believe that it is only to try how much you love him, and to afford you space to learn how he loves you; for he will have your whole heart, as he through love hath given his own. After having united you to himself by tribulation, he will deliver you to his glory and your consolation, by the merits of his victorious resurrection, in order that by you his name may be known and sanctified, not only in your kingdom, but in all Christendom, until the conversion of the unbelievers. Oh! how blessed will be your brief captivity, by which God will deliver so many souls from unbelief and eternal condemnation!” Francis I deceived the hopes of his pious sister.

The news from Spain soon increased the general sorrow. Mortification and illness endangered the life of the haughty Francis. If the king remains a prisoner, if he dies, if his mother’s

regency is prolonged for many years, will not the Reformation be crushed for ever? “But when all seems lost,” said the young scholar of Noyon at a later period, “God saves his Church in a marvelous way.” The Church of France, which was as if in the travail of birth, was to have an interval of ease before her pains returned; and to this end God made use of a weak woman, who never openly declared in favor of the Reformation. At that time she thought more of saving the king and the kingdom, than of delivering obscure Christians, who nevertheless rested great hopes in her. But under the splendor of worldly affairs God often conceals the mysterious ways by which he governs his people. A noble project arose in the mind of the Duchess of Alencon. To cross the sea or the Pyrenees, and rescue Francis from the power of Charles V, was now the object of her life.

Margaret of Valois announced her intention, which was suggested by her mother, and all France hailed it with shouts of gratitude. Her great genius, the reputation she had acquired, the love she felt for her brother, and that of Francis towards her,

were a great counterpoise in the eyes of Louisa and Duprat to her attachment to the new doctrine. All eyes were turned upon her, as the only person capable of extricating the kingdom from its perilous position. Let Margaret visit Spain, let her speak to the powerful emperor and to his ministers, and let her employ that admirable genius which Providence has bestowed on her, for the deliverance of her brother and her king!

Yet very different sentiments filled the hearts of the nobles and of the people, as they saw the Duchess of Alencon going into the midst of the enemy's councils, and among the fierce soldiery of the catholic king.

All admired the courage and devotion of this young woman, but did not share it. The friends of the princess had fears on her behalf, which were but too near being realized. The evangelical Christians were full of hope.

The captivity of Francis I had brought unheard-of severities on the friends of the Reform; his

liberation, they thought, might bring them to an end. To open the gates of Spain to the king, would be to close those of the prisons into which the servants of the Word of God had been thrown. Margaret encouraged herself in a project towards which all her soul felt attracted by so many different motives.

Heaven's height cannot my passage stay, Nor powers of hell can bar my way, My Savior holds the keys of both.

Her woman's heart was strengthened by that faith which overcomes the world, and her resolution was irrevocable. Every preparation was made for this important and dangerous journey.

The Archbishop of Embrun, afterwards Cardinal of Tournon, and the president Selves, were already at Madrid, treating for the king's deliverance. They were placed under Margaret's orders, as was also the Bishop of Tarbes, afterwards Cardinal of Grammont; full powers being given to the princess alone. At the same time



Montmorency, afterwards so hostile to the Reform, was sent in all haste to Spain to procure a safeconduct for the king's sister. The emperor objected at first, and said that it was the duty of his ministers alone to arrange this affair. "One hour's conference," exclaimed Selves, "between your majesty, the king my master, and the Duchess of Alencon, would forward the treaty more than a month's discussion between diplomatists." Margaret, impatient to arrive in consequence of the king's illness, set off without a safe-conduct, accompanied by a splendid train. She quitted the court, moving towards the Mediterranean; but while she was on the road, Montmorency returned with letters from Charles guaranteeing her liberty for three months only. That matters not; she will not be stopped.

The eagerness for this journey was such that the Duchess had been compelled to ask the king whom she should select to accompany her.

"Your good servants have so great a desire to see you, that each one prays to be allowed to go

with me,” she wrote to her brother.

Margaret had scarcely reached the shores of the Mediterranean when the fears of those about her on the insufficiency of the safe-conduct, but especially the bad weather and the tempest, made her halt. “The seamen themselves (wrote she to Montmorency) are alarmed.” On the 27th August she made up her mind. “The bearer,” she wrote to the king on the very day, “the bearer will tell you how the heavens, the sea, and the opinions of men have retarded my departure. But He alone to whom all things pay obedience, hath given such favorable weather that every difficulty is solved.....I will not delay either on account of my own security or of the sea, which is unsettled at this season, to hasten towards the place where I may see you; for fear of death, imprisonment, and every sort of evil are now so habitual to me, that I hold lightly my life, health, glory, and honor, thinking by this means to share your fortune, which I would desire to bear alone.” Nothing therefore could detain this princess at Aigues-Mortes, and in this port Margaret embarked on board the ship prepared for her. Led by

Providence into Spain, rather for the deliverance of humble and oppressed Christians, than to free the mighty King of France from his captivity, she confided herself to the waves of that sea which had borne her brother a captive after the disastrous battle of Pavia.

## PREFACE TO VOLUME FOUR.

When a foreigner visits certain countries, as England, Scotland, or America, he is sometimes presented with the rights of citizenship. Such has been the privilege of the “History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.” From 150,000 to 200,000 copies are in circulation, in the English language, in the countries I have just mentioned; while in France the number hardly exceeds 4,000. This is a real adoption, — naturalizing my Work in the countries that have received it with so much favor.

I accept this honor. Accordingly, while the former Volumes of my History were originally published in France; now that, after a lapse of five

years, I think of issuing a continuation of it, I do so in Great Britain.

This is not the only change in the mode of publication. I did not think it right to leave to translators, as in the case of the former Volumes, the task of expressing my ideas in English. The best translations are always faulty; and the Author alone can have the certainty of conveying his idea, his whole idea, and nothing but his idea. It became necessary for me to publish, myself, in English; and this I accordingly do. But although that language is familiar to me, I was desirous of securing, to a certain extent, the cooperation of an English literary gentleman. Dr. HENRY WHITE, of Croydon, has had the great kindness to visit Switzerland for this purpose, although such a step exposed him to much inconvenience, and to pass with me at Geneva the time necessary for this labor. I could not have had a more enlightened coadjutor; and I here express my obligations to him for his very able assistance.

I therefore publish in English this Continuation

of the History of the Reformation. I do not think that, as I publish, myself, in this language, any one will have the power, or will entertain the idea, of attempting another publication. It would be a very bad speculation on the part of any bookseller; for where is the reader that would not prefer the original text, as published by the Author himself, to a translation made by a stranger?

But there is a higher question — a question of morality. Of all property that a man can possess, there is none so essentially his own as the labors of his mind. He acquires the fruits of his fields by the sweat of his servants and of his beasts of burden; and the produce of his manufactures by the labor of his workmen and the movement of his machines; but it is by his own toils, by the exercise of his most exalted faculties, that he creates the productions of his mind. Accordingly, in putting this History under the protection of the laws, I place it at the same time under a no less secure safeguard, — that of justice. I know that it is written in the consciences on the other side of the Channel and of the Atlantic: Ye shall have one

manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of your country: for I am the Lord your God. To English honor I confide this work.

The first two Books of this Volume contain the most important epochs of the Reformation — the Protest of Spires, and the Confession of Augsburg.

The last two describe the establishment of the Reform in most of the Swiss cantons, and the instructive and deplorable events that are connected with the catastrophe of Cappel.

It was my desire to narrate also the beginnings of the English Reformation; but my Volume is filled, and I am compelled to defer this subject to the next. It is true I might have omitted some matters here treated of, but I had strong reasons for doing the contrary. The Reformation in Great Britain is not very important before the period described in this volume; the order of time compelled me, therefore, to remain on the Continent; for whatever may be the historian's desire, he cannot change dates and the sequence

that God has assigned to the events of the world. Besides, before turning more especially towards England, Scotland, France, and other countries, I determined on bringing the Reformation of Germany and German Switzerland to the decisive epochs of 1530 and 1531. The History of the Reformation, properly so called, is then, in my opinion, almost complete in those countries. The work of Faith has there attained its apogee: that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy begins. I do not, however, entirely abandon Germany and German Switzerland, but henceforward they will occupy me less: the movement of the sixteenth century has there made its effort. I said from the very first: It is the History of the Reformation and not of Protestantism that I am relating.

I cannot, however, approach the History of the Reformation in England without some portion of fear; it is perhaps more difficult there than elsewhere. I have received communications from some of the most respectable men of the different ecclesiastical parties, who, each feeling convinced that their own point of view is the true

one, desire me to present the history in this light. I hope to execute my task with impartiality and truth; and thought it would be advantageous to study for some time longer the principles and the facts. In this task I am at present occupied, and shall consecrate to it, with God's assistance, the first part of my next volume. Should it be thought that I might have described the Reformation in Switzerland with greater brevity, I beg my readers will call to mind that, independently of the intrinsic importance of this history, Switzerland is the Author's birthplace.

I had at first thought of making arrangements for the present publication with the English and Scotch booksellers who had translated the former portions. Relations that I had maintained with some of these publishers, and which had gained my esteem for them, induced me to adopt this course. They were consequently informed by letter of my purpose, and several months later I had an interview with some of them at Glasgow.

From circumstances which it is unnecessary to



explain, no arrangement was entered into with these gentlemen. But at the same time, one of the first houses in Great Britain, Messrs OLIVER & BOYD of Edinburgh, who were introduced to me by my highly respected friend Dr. CHALMERS, made me a suitable and precise offer. I could wait no longer; and on the very eve of my departure from London for the Continent, after a sojourn of three months in Scotland and in England, I made arrangements with them, which have since been definitively settled, and the work is now their property.

The French laws are positive to protect literary property in France, even if it belongs to a foreigner. I am less familiar with the English laws; but I will not do England the injustice of believing that its legislation is surpassed by that of France in justice and in morality.

Eaux-Vives, Geneva, January 1846.