

THEODORE BEZA

# Life of John Calvin

CAREFULLY WRITTEN BY THEODORE BEZA MINISTER OF THE CHURCH OF GENEVA LIFE OF JOHN CALVIN, BY THEODORE BEZA SHOULD any one suppose that I have engaged in writing this Life of John Calvin from any other motive than zeal to maintain the truth, the present state of human affairs will, I hope, easily vindicate me from the calumny.

For there is scarcely any shorter road to all kinds of disaster than to praise virtue; and it were extreme folly voluntarily to bring down on one's self evils which mere silence may avert. But if the wicked allow no kind of virtue to be proclaimed with impunity, what must those expect, whose object it is to proclaim piety, which is of a higher order than virtue, and is not only opposed by the wicked, but is also very often assailed even by persons who are most desirous to appear, and sometimes also to be, honest? For piety has no enemies more inveterate than those who have sincerely embraced a false religion, thinking it true, but these things, however formidable in appearance, have not at all deterred me. For it were shameful if, from fear of the wicked, the good were not to be spoken of, and if the voice of religion were to be suppressed by the clamours of the superstitious.

But should any one object, that to write the Life of Calvin is a very different thing from defending the truth, I will at once admit that man and truth are very different things; this, however, I will not hesitate to say, that He who is truth itself did not speak rashly when he said, "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you," ( John 20:21,) and "who so heareth you heareth me," ( Luke 10:16.)

Let men, therefore, (both those who believe through ignorance, and those who so speak from malice,) cry out, that Luther, Zuinglius, and Calvin, are regarded by us as gods, though we are continually charging the worshippers of saints with idolatry; let them, I say, cry out as much and as long as they please, — we are prepared with our answer, viz., that to commemorate the labours which holy men have undertaken in behalf of religion, together with their words and actions, (through the knowledge of which the good become better, while the wicked are reprov'd, our only aim in this kind of composition,) is a very different thing from doing as they do, when they either bring disgrace on the lives of men who were truly pious, by narratives not less impious than childish, (as an obscure individual called Abdias did with the history of the Apostles,) or compose fabulous histories filled with the vilest falsehoods, (they, in their barbarous jargon, call them Golden Legends, I call them abominable trash,) and endeavour, moreover, to bring back the idols of the ancient Gods, the only difference being a change of name.

We are as far from these worshippers of the dead as light is from darkness.

Against conduct such as theirs, the Lord denounces the severest threatenings, ours, on the contrary, he commends, when he bids us keep both our bodily and mental eye intent upon his works. Nobody, I presume, will deny, that of all the works of God, men best deserve to be known and observed, and of men, those of them who have been distinguished at once for learning and piety. It is not without cause Daniel ( Daniel 12:3) compares holy men of God to stars, since they by their brightness show the way of happiness to others. Those who allow that brightness to be entirely extinguished by death, deserve to be themselves plunged in thicker darkness than before. I have no intention, however, to imitate those who, in their eagerness for

declamation and panegyric, have not so much adorned the truth as brought it into suspicion. Trying not how elegantly, but how truly I could write, I have preferred the style of simple narrative. JOHN CALVIN was born at Noyons, a celebrated town in Picardy, or at least on the confines of Picardy, on the 27th July, in the year of our Lord 1509. His father's name was Gerard Calvin, his mother's Joan France, both of them persons of good repute, and in easy circumstances. Gerard being a person of no small judgment and prudence, was highly esteemed by most of the nobility of the district, and this was the reason why young Calvin was from a boy very liberally educated, though at his father's expense, in the family of the Mommors, one of the most distinguished in that quarter. Having afterwards accompanied them to Paris in the prosecution of his studies, he had for his master in the College of La Marche, Maturinus Corderius, a man of great worth and erudition, and in the highest repute in almost all the schools of France as a teacher of youth.

He attained the age of 85, and died (the same year as Calvin) at Geneva, while a professor in the Academy of that city. Calvin afterwards removed to the College of Mont Aigu, and there had for his master a Spaniard, a man of considerable attainments. Under him Calvin, who was a most diligent student, made such progress, that he left his fellow-students behind in the Grammar course, and was promoted to the study of Dialectics, and what is termed Arts.

His father had at first intended him for the study of Theology, to which he inferred that he was naturally inclined; because, even at that youthful age, he was remarkably religious, and was also a strict censor of every thing vicious in his companions. This I remember to have heard from some Catholics, unexceptionable witnesses, many years after he had risen to celebrity.

Being thus, as it were, destined to the sacred office, his father procured a benefice for him from the Bishop of Noyons, in what is called the Cathedral church, and thereafter the cure of a parish connected with a suburban village called Pont — Eveque, the birth-place of his father, who continued to live in it till his removal to the town. It is certain that Calvin, though not in priest's orders, preached several sermons in this place before he quitted France. The design of making him a priest was interrupted by a change in the views both of father and son — in the former, because he saw that the Law was a surer road to wealth and honour and in the latter, because, having been made acquainted with the reformed faith, by a relation named Peter Robert Olivet (the person to whom the churches of France owe that translation of the Old Testament, from the Hebrew, which was printed at Neufchatel,) he had begun to devote himself to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and from an abhorrence at all kinds of superstition, to discontinue his attendance on the public services of the Church. \* Calvin went therefore to Orleans for the purpose of prosecuting his studies in civil law, which was taught by Peter de l'Etoile, the most distinguished of all the French civilians; and his progress in a short time was so surprising that, as he frequently supplied the chairs of the professors themselves, he was esteemed a teacher rather than a scholar.

The degree of Doctor, free of expense, was offered him when on the point of leaving, with the unanimous and most flattering testimony of all the professors to his merits, and his claims upon the University. In the midst of his other labours, he made so great a progress in the study of the Scriptures, which he at the same time diligently prosecuted, that all those who were zealous to be instructed in the reformed religion, frequently applied to him for information, and were struck with deep admiration of the extent of his erudition, and of the ardour of his pursuits. Some of his surviving associates and fellow-students assert, that he was accustomed at this period of his life,

after taking a very frugal supper, to pursue his lucubrations till midnight, and employ his morning hours in bed, reviewing, and as it were, digesting the studies of the preceding night; nor did he easily allow any interruption to this train of meditation. These longcontinued watchings assisted him indeed in attaining solid erudition, and improving an excellent memory, but there is every reason for thinking that in return he contracted a weakness of the digestive organs, productive of various diseases, and finally even of an untimely death.

Calvin determined to attend the lectures of Andrew Alciat, the first civilian without doubt of the age, who in consequence of accepting an invitation from Italy to the University of Bourges, settled there, and much increased its celebrity by his talents. During his residence at this city, Calvin formed an intimate friendship, on account of his religion and learning, with Melchior Wolmar, a native of Rothweil in Germany, and at that time public professor of Greek in Bourges. It affords me very great pleasure to speak of this distinguished scholar, because he was my sole preceptor from childhood to mature age; nor can I ever sufficiently praise his learning, piety, and other virtues, but especially his admirable skill in the instruction of youth. By his advice and assistance, Calvin attained an acquaintance with Greek literature, and was desirous to acknowledge the remembrance of his obligation to all future ages, by dedicating to Wolmar his Commentaries on the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians. While Calvin pursued his professional studies he never neglected the Holy Scriptures, and occasionally preached at Ligniers, a small town in the Province of Berri, in the presence, and with the approbation of the head of that department. (III.)

The intelligence of the sudden death of his father recalled Calvin from Bourges to his native country. Not long after he removed from Noyon to Paris, and in his twenty-fourth year published his excellent Commentary on Seneca's Epistle concerning Clemency. Calvin was certainly very much delighted with this very serious author, whose sentiments evidently harmonized with his own moral character. (IV.)

Calvin, during the few months he was at Paris, became acquainted with all the zealous supporters of the reformed religion; and we have frequently heard him afterwards praise, among the rest, Steven de la Forge, a distinguished merchant, subsequently burned for the name of Christ, on account of his remarkable piety. He has also eulogized this martyr in his treatise against the libertines. Calvin, from that time, abandoning all other studies, devoted himself to the service of God, to the very great satisfaction of all those pious characters, who then held their meetings privately in Paris.

Not long after this an opportunity presented itself for the display of his strenuous efforts in the cause of the reformed religion. Nicholas Cop, son of William Cop, physician to the king, and a citizen of Basle, was at that time appointed in the usual manner, rector of the University of Paris.

Calvin prepared for him an oration to be delivered according to custom, on the 1st of November, when the Roman Catholics celebrated the feast of All Saints; and in this he discussed the subject of religion with greater purity and more boldness, than the hierarchy had before experienced. This excited the displeasure, of the Sorbonne, and the parliament was so much offended as to cite the rector to appear. At first the rector prepared, with his officers, to attend the summons, but being admonished by friends, as he was on his way, to avoid his adversaries, he returned home, left the kingdom, and retired to Basle. A party proceeded to Calvin's lodgings in the College de Forfret, but happily not finding him at home, they seized among his papers a considerable number of letters from his friends, and the lives of several of them were thus exposed to very imminent danger. Such was the severity of the judges against the church of

Christ at that period, and the violence of John Morin was peculiarly striking, whose name is yet distinguished for uncommon cruelty. The queen of Navarre, only sister of Francis 1st, a princess of extraordinary talents, afforded the reformer, on this occasion, marked protection, and the Lord dispelled the storm by her intercession. She invited Calvin to her court, received him with great honour, and gave him an audience. (V.)

Calvin left Paris, went to Saintonge, and assisted one of his friends, at whose request he composed some short Christian exhortations, which were presented to certain parishes to be read as homilies, that the people might gradually be enticed to a zeal in the investigation of the truth. f5 About this time he came to Nerac in Gascony, on a visit to James le Fevre, of Estaples, now far advanced in years, who had been defended by the same queen of Navarre, when in danger of his life from the vain and foolish doctors of the Sorbonne, for his having introduced great improvements in mathematics and other branches of philosophy in the University of Paris, after a long and very violent opposition, and for his assisting to rout out the scholastic theology. She had also provided for him in Nerac a town within her jurisdiction. The good old man received and saw young Calvin with great kindness, and predicted that he would become a distinguished instrument in restoring the kingdom of heaven in France.

(VI.) Not long after Calvin returned to Paris, as if called there by the hand of God himself; for the impious Servetus was even then disseminating his heretical poison against the sacred Trinity in that city. He professed to desire nothing more earnestly than to have an opportunity for entering into discussion with Calvin, who waited long for Servetus, the place and time for an interview having been appointed, with great danger to his own life, since he was at that time under the necessity of being concealed on account of the incensed rage of his adversaries. Calvin was disappointed in his expectations of meeting Servetus, who wanted courage to endure even the sight of his opponent.

The year 1534 was distinguished by many horrid cruelties inflicted upon the reformers. Gerard de Rousel, Doctor of the Sorbonne, affording at that time great assistance to the study of religion, and Couraut, of the order of St. Augustin, who, having been for two years under the patronage of the queen of Navarre, promoted very much the cause of the gospel in Paris, were not only dragged out of their pulpits, but thrown into prison. The indignation of the infatuated Francis 1st, was so much enraged on account of certain papers against the mass dispersed through the city, and affixed to his chamber door, that having appointed a public procession, he walked uncovered before it, bearing a lighted torch, as if in expiation of the crime, accompanied by his three sons. He ordered eight martyrs to be burned alive in four principal quarters of the city, and declared with a solemn oath that he would not spare his own children, if by any chance infected with these, as he called them, most execrable heresies. (VII.)

Calvin, beholding with grief such a spectacle of woe, determined to leave France, after he had first published at Orleans an excellent little work, entitled “Psychopannychia,” against an error which commenced in the earliest ages of the church, and was again revived by those who taught that the soul sleeps when in a state of separation from the body.

With an intention of leaving France, he went by way of Lorraine towards Basle, with the young gentleman at whose house, as already stated, he resided at Saintonge. Near Metz he was plundered by a servant, who saddled one of the strongest horses, and fled with so much speed that he could not be apprehended, after he had perfidiously robbed his masters of all things necessary for their journey, and reduced them to great

difficulties. The other servant, however, lent them ten crowns, which enabled them to proceed with considerable inconvenience to Strasbourg, and thence to Basle. He formed an intimate friendship in this city with Simon Grinee, and Wolfgang Capito, men of the greatest celebrity, and devoted himself to the study of the Hebrew language. Though very desirous to do his utmost that he might remain in obscurity, as appears from one of Bucer's letters to Calvin the following year, he was under the necessity of publishing what he called the Institutes of the Christian Religion, and the rudiment of much the largest of his works. For when the German princes, who had supported the gospel, and whose friendship he then courted, were indignant at Francis 1st, for the murder of his Protestant subjects, the only wise remedy proposed by Bellay-Lange, which he resolved to adopt, was his declaration that he had merely punished the Anabaptists, who boast only in their own spirit as the divine word, and despise all magistrates. Calvin, feeling indignant at the calumny with which the new religion was branded, seized this opportunity for publishing what I consider an incomparable work. He prefixed also an admirable preface to the king himself, and if he could from any circumstance have been induced to read it, I am either very much mistaken or a great wound would, even at that period, have been inflicted on the whore of Babylon. For the king differed in many respects from his successors; he was a very acute judge of the situation of affairs, possessed an excellent talent in detecting the truth, was a patron of learned men, and his inclination did not lead him to hate persons of the reformed religion.

But neither his own sins, nor the sins of his people, which were even then menaced with the speedy arrival of God's indignation, allowed him to hear, much less to read, this work.

After completing his Institutes, and faithfully performing the duties he owed his native country, he felt a desire to pay, as if at a distance, his respects to Italy, and to visit Renee, the Duchess of Ferrara, and daughter of Louis 12th king of France, whose piety was at that time very much praised. He therefore, waited upon her, and at the same time so confirmed her in a sincere zeal for religion, to the utmost of his abilities according to the existing state of affairs, that she continued ever after to entertain a sincere affection for him during his life; and now also, as his survivor, exhibits striking marks of her gratitude after his death. (VIII.)

From Italy, whose territories he entered, to use his own language, only that he might leave them, Calvin returned to France, where he settled all his affairs, and brought along with him Anthony Calvin, his only surviving brother. His intention was to return to Basle or Strasbourg, but the wars compelled him to make his route through Dauphiny and Savoy, all other countries having been completely closed against his passage. This was the cause of his coming without his own intention to Geneva, where, as future events proved, he was conducted by a divine hand. For the gospel had a short time before been wonderfully introduced into that city by the joint exertions of two very distinguished characters, William Farel, a gentleman of Dauphiny, educated, not in a monastery, as was reported by some, but in the academy of James Fabre, of Estaples, and Peter Viret, of Orb, in the Territory of Berne, and Freiburg, whose labours were afterwards most abundantly blessed of the Lord. Calvin, passing through Geneva, visited these good men as a matter of course, on which occasion Farel, with his usual heroic spirit, after urging him at some length to continue, and share their labours at Geneva without going farther, thus addressed Calvin, when he manifested no disposition to comply with the proposal: "I denounce unto you, in the name of Almighty God, that if, under the pretext of prosecuting your

studies, you refuse to labour with us in this work of the Lord, the Lord will curse you, as seeking yourself rather than Christ.”

Calvin, terrified by this dreadful denunciation, surrendered himself to the disposal of the Presbytery and magistrates, by whose votes, and the consent of the people, he was chosen not only preacher, which at first he had refused, but also appointed professor of divinity, which office he accepted in the month of August, 1536. This year is also distinguished by a closer alliance between Geneva and Berne, and by the accession of Lausanne to Christ, where a free disputation was held against the Catholics, which Calvin also attended.

Calvin then published a certain formulary of doctrine suited to the state of the church of Geneva, which was only just emerging from the corruptions of popery. He added also a catechism, not, as it is now, distinguished into questions and answers, but much shorter, comprising the chief articles of religion. Afterwards he endeavoured in conjunction with Farel and Couraut, to settle the state of the church in Geneva, the greater part of his colleagues, from timidity, avoiding all disturbance, while some even secretly opposed the work of the Lord, which Calvin beheld with deep concern. He induced the citizens to convene an assembly of the whole people, for the purpose of openly abjuring popery, and of swearing to the Christian doctrine and discipline included in a few articles.

Many refused to do this in a city not yet completely liberated from the artifices of the Duke of Savoy, and from the yoke of Antichrist, and where various factions still continued to rage. On the 20th July, however, in the year 1537, the Lord granted that the senate and people of Geneva, openly preceded by a public scribe, should swear to the articles reign among various persons in a city, which had been for so many years under the power of monks, and of a profligate clergy; and ancient quarrels, which commenced during the wars with the Duke of Savoy, were still fostered among some of the principal families. He first endeavoured, without affecting any thing, to remove these disorders by gentle admonition, afterwards by severely reproofing the stubborn and refractory. The evil increased so much that the city was divided by the seditious conduct of private individuals into various factions, and a considerable number altogether refused to join that body of the people who had abjured popery. At last affairs came to such a height, that Farel, Calvin, and Couraut, (who, as we have already stated, after boldly defending the truth at Paris, was brought by Calvin first to Basle, and afterwards to Geneva, when he himself was settled there,) openly testified that they could not properly administer the Lord's Supper to citizens who lived in such a state of discord, and were so utterly averse to all church discipline. To this also was added another evil, the disagreement of the church of Geneva with that of Berne in certain rites. The churches of Geneva not only used common bread, but had removed all baptismal fonts, as they are called, considering them unnecessary for performing the office of baptism, and had abolished all festivals except Sunday. The synod of Lausanne, compelled by the people of Berne, had decided that Geneva should be requested to restore the use of unleavened bread, the baptismal fonts, and the festivals. The college of the ministers of Geneva considered it right that an audience should be afforded, and on this account another synod was convened at Zurich. Those who had been elected syndics at that time, for this highest office in Geneva is appointed annually, embracing this as a favourable opportunity, became the leaders of the seditious and factious part of the city, and assembled the people. They brought affairs to such a state, that while Calvin and the rest of his colleagues, who held the same views, offered in vain to assign a reason for their conduct, these three faithful servants of God, in consequence of the more virtuous party being outvoted,

were ordered to leave the city within two days for refusing to administer the Lord's Supper. When Calvin was informed of the decree of banishment, he said, "Certainly, had I been in the service of men, this would have been a bad reward; but it is well that I have served Him, who never fails to repay his servants whatever he has once promised." f9 Who would not have thought that such measures were calculated to bring certain destruction to the church at Geneva? The event, however, on the other hand, showed that it was done by Divine Providence, partly with a view to qualify Calvin, by the various experience he acquired as a faithful servant in other scenes of usefulness, for engaging in still nobler labours, and partly to purge the church of Geneva from much of its corruption, while the leaders in the sedition were overthrown by their own violence. So wonderful does the Lord manifest himself in all his works, but especially in the government of his Church. The truth of these remarks was proved by the final result of this transaction. But these three servants of Christ, obeying at that time the edict, while all good men mourned on account of their banishment, proceeded first to Zurich, where a synod being convened of some of the Swiss churches, means were used according to its decree, by the intercession of the government of Berne, to try to influence the minds of the governors and people of Geneva. This attempt was of no avail, and Calvin went first to Basle, and next to Strasburg, where with the sanction of the senate of that city he was appointed professor of divinity, with a liberal stipend, by Bucer, Capito, Hedio, Niger, and the rest of their colleagues, men of the highest eminence, who then illuminated, as so many shining gems, the established church of that place. He not only taught divinity there with the greatest applause of all good men, but with the consent of the senate planted also a French church, and introduced such discipline as he approved. Satan, thus disappointed in his expectation, beheld Calvin welcomed by another city, on his expulsion from the church of Geneva, where in a short time a new church was formed. In the mean while Satan, using every exertion to subvert entirely the church erected at Geneva, which had been shaken to its very foundation, found in a short time some idle characters, who, for the purpose of concealing the great iniquity of the decree under the pretext of religion, determined that unleavened bread should be substituted for common, formerly used at the Lord's table, with a view to afford an opportunity for fomenting new dissensions. And the great enemy of the Church would have succeeded in this plan, had not Calvin seriously admonished some good men, so displeased with the change as to consider it their duty to refrain from taking the Lord's Supper, not to contend about a subject in itself indifferent. The use of unleavened bread commenced in the manner now stated, nor did Calvin on his future restoration think it worth while to make any opposition to the practice, though he did not attempt to conceal his approval of the use of common bread.

Another still more dangerous evil commenced in the year 1539, and was at the same time extinguished by Calvin's diligence. James Sadolet, Bishop of Carpentras, a man of great eloquence, which he chiefly abused to suppress the light of the truth, and who had been presented with a cardinal's hat, with a view to enable a character, whose moral conduct was in other respects regular, to decorate a false religion in the best possible colours. He, observing the opportunity then offered, and thinking he would easily lead away a flock deprived of such distinguished pastors, adducing also as an excuse his vicinity to Geneva, for Carpentras is a city in Dauphiny, which joins on Savoy, sent letters addressed to his dearly beloved brethren, as he termed them, the magistracy, council, and people of Geneva, in which he omitted nothing that might be useful in recalling them to the bosom of Rome, that great harlot. There was no person at Geneva able to answer this work, and it would in all probability, if not written in a

foreign language, have been productive of great mischief to that city in its present circumstances. But when Calvin read this letter at Strasburg, he forgot all the injuries he had received, and immediately answered it with so much truth and eloquence, that Sadolet forthwith gave up the whole business as desperate. But Calvin did not permit so long a period to elapse before he manifested the due affection which he felt as a pastor for his flock at Geneva, who were at that time suffering among their fellow citizens in a very severe manner for the common cause of religion. The excellent letters which he wrote at Strasburg, both in the year of his expulsion and the following, exhibit striking marks of his affection, in which his whole object is, in an especial manner, to exhort them to repentance before God, to forbearance towards the wicked, to concord and peace with their pastors, and prayer and supplication to the Head of the Church. He thus prepares them for the renewed expectation of the splendid shining forth of that much desired pleasant light from the midst of the most horrible darkness, and the event wonderfully proved the truth of his prediction. He then published, in a much more enlarged form, his “Christian Institutions,” his “Commentaries upon the Epistle to the Romans,” dedicated to his most affectionate friend Simon Grinee, as also a golden Treatise “on the Lord’s Supper,” for the use of his French congregation at Strasburg, translated afterwards into Latin by Galar. He handled the subject of the Lord’s Supper with so much skill and erudition, that it may in a very great measure be considered the means of affording, by the divine blessing, decisive answers to a great variety of most unhappy controversies, in which men of the highest attainments in learning and virtue justly acquiesced.

He had great success in reclaiming many Anabaptists; their principal leaders were Paul Volve, to whom Erasmus had dedicated his “Manual of the Christian Soldier,” afterwards a pastor in the church of Strasburg, and John Storder, of Liege, who subsequently fell a victim to the plague; and Calvin married, by the advice of Bucer, his widow, Idolette de Bure, distinguished for virtue and gravity. f10 Such were the studies and employments of Calvin at Strasburg till the year 1541, when conferences, appointed by Charles the 5th, were held first at Worms, and afterwards at Ratisbon, for effecting a pacification between the Catholics and Protestants. (See note A.) Calvin was present, by the appointment of the ministers of Strasburg, and was of no small use to the churches in general, particularly to those in his own country. Philip Melancthon and Gaspar Cruciger, of happy memory, were in a peculiar manner delighted with him; the former often honoured Calvin with the distinctive appellation of “the divine,” and the latter, after holding a private conference with him on the subject of the Lord’s Supper, expressly approved of his views.

The time had now arrived when the Lord determined to have pity on his church at Geneva. One of the four syndics, by whose means the decree for banishing the faithful ministers had been passed, being accused of sedition in conducting the affairs of the state, was precipitated, in consequence of his corpulence, when he was endeavouring to escape through a window, and his body was so bruised that he died of his wounds a few days after the accident. Another was beheaded for murder. The other two, accused of having betrayed the interests of the city in an embassy, fled from their country, and were condemned to perpetual exile.

On the expulsion of such off scum from the city, Geneva began to demand its own Farel and Calvin. And when no hopes of recovering Farel from Neuchatel remained, the citizens directed their attention in the most earnest manner to Calvin, and sent a deputation, uniting also the intercession of Zurich, to Strasburg, that they might obtain the consent of its citizens for his removal. The people of Strasburg were very reluctant to part with Calvin, and though his own attachment to the people of Geneva had not

been changed, in consequence of the insults offered him by men of the basest characters, yet he disliked all disturbance, and plainly refused to return, because he saw the Lord had blessed his ministry in the church at Strasburg. Bucer and his colleagues testified their very great unwillingness to part with him. The people of Geneva persisting to demand Calvin, f11 Bucer at last thought it right to grant their requests for a limited time; he could not, however, persuade Calvin to yield, until he denounced the severe judgment of Heaven against him, and pressed upon him the consideration of the example of Jonah. But since these things occurred at the time when Calvin and Bucer were engaged by a decree to go to the conferences at Ratisbon, his departure was deferred, and the Genevese only obtained leave from the inhabitants of Berne to allow Peter Viret to go from Lausanne to Geneva. Calvin returned to the city with more readiness when he found Viret appointed his colleague, whose assistance and counsel would be of great use to him in restoring the church. Thus, after the lapse of a few months, Calvin returned to Geneva on the 13th of September, 1541; all the people, and particularly the senate highly congratulating themselves on the occasion, and acknowledging, in an impressive manner, the signal kindness and favour of God to their city. Nor did Geneva rest until the temporary grant of his services, made by Strasburg, was changed into a permanent surrender. Strasburg conceded their request, but insisted on his retaining the privileges of a citizen, and the annual stipend of what they denominate the pretend. Calvin gladly accepted the former mark of respect, but could never be induced to receive the latter, since the care of riches occupied his mind the least of any thing. Calvin on being restored to the church at their earnest request, failed not, on his instauration, in consequence of observing the city to require such restraints, to testify how impossible it was for him duly to discharge his ministerial functions, unless together with Christian doctrine, the Presbyterian plan of church government was established by the state, as well as a regular ecclesiastical discipline. f13 On this occasion, therefore, as we shall detail more at length in another part of our narrative, laws were passed consistent with the word of God, and acceptable to the citizens, for the choice of elders, and for establishing the whole plan of Presbyterian discipline which Satan afterwards endeavoured without effect, by wonderful contrivances, to disannul. Calvin also wrote a catechism in French and Latin, differing very little from his first, but much more copious, and divided into questions and answers. We may justly term this all admirable work which has received the approbation of very many foreign nations, and been translated in a very elegant style into the modern languages of Germany, England, Scotland, Holland, and Spain, into Hebrew by Immanuel Tremellius, a converted Jew, and into Greek by Henry Stephens.

The following statement of facts will enable us to form a judgment of his ordinary labours. In every fortnight he preached one whole week; thrice every week he delivered lectures; on the Thursdays he presided in the meetings of the Presbytery; on the Fridays he collated and expounded the Holy Scriptures to what we term the congregation. He was engaged in illustrating many of the sacred books by commentaries of very uncommon learning; on some occasions he was employed in answering the adversaries of religion, and at other times wrote to correspondents from every part of Europe concerning subjects of great importance. Every attentive reader of his numerous productions will be astonished to find one weak little man able to accomplish so many and such great labours. He experienced much advantage from the assistance of Farel and Viret, who in return received greater from him. And the close intercourse and friendship of these two men, which excited as much envy in the wicked as it gave pleasure to all pious minds, afforded him wonderful delight. It was a

most pleasant sight to behold and hear these three distinguished persons in the church cooperating with so much zeal in the work of the Lord, and flourishing in such a variety of gifts. Farel excelled in boldness and grandeur of mind. The thunders of his preaching none could hear without trembling, nor feel his most ardent prayers without the soul being elevated almost to heaven itself. Viret so excelled in a sweet persuasive eloquence, that his hearers were compelled to hang upon his lips. Calvin filled the minds of his hearers with as many most weighty sentiments as he uttered words. Hence I have often thought that a preacher would in some measure appear perfect, who was formed by the united excellencies of all three.

To return to Calvin, he was exercised not only with these public, but with domestic and many other foreign cares. For the Lord so blessed his ministry that he had visitors from every quarter to solicit his counsel in matters of religion, as all oracle of the Christian world; and so numerous were his hearers, that we have seen an Italian, English, and even Spanish church at Geneva, which seemed not sufficiently large to contain so many strangers.

Although his friendship was much cultivated in Geneva by the good, while he was regarded with terror by the wicked, and affairs were in the best state of arrangement, yet many opponents were still raised up to keep him actively employed. We will unfold his contests separately, that posterity may be presented with a singular example of fortitude, which is calculated to excite their most strenuous imitation. To resume his history, — on his return to the city, keeping in mind that sentence of our Saviour, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things will be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33,) he considered nothing so important as to prescribe laws of ecclesiastical polity consistent with the word of God, and sanctioned by the consent of the senate, from which neither citizens nor ministers would be allowed afterwards to depart. And this, which had been so much approved before, gradually excited the dislike of some of the common people, and of the chief citizens, who had indeed put off the pope, and put on Christ, but only in name. Some also of those ministers, who had remained on the expulsion of their pious brethren, (the most influential however, after being accused of profligate conduct, deserted their station in disgrace,) although convicted by the testimony of their conscience, they wanted courage to make an open resistance, still continued to pursue a system of secret opposition, and did not easily permit them, as to be forced to adopt the established discipline. Nor did they want a pretext for this their wicked conduct, namely, the example of other churches, which had not adopted excommunication. Some also cried out, that the tyranny of popery was thus recalled. But these difficulties were overcome by the constancy and remarkable moderation of Calvin, who proved that we ought to seek for the reason of ecclesiastical discipline, as well as of doctrine, from the Scriptures, and adduced in his support the opinions of the most learned men of that age, Aecolampadius, Zwinglius, Zuichius, Melancthon, Bucer, Capito, and Myconius, to whose writings he appealed. Nor did he assert that those churches ought to be therefore condemned as unchristian, which had not proceeded to the same extent, nor those shepherds to be opposed to their Lord, who considered the same curb and restraint not to be wanted by their own flocks.

Finally, he proved the difference between popish tyranny and the yoke of the Saviour, and thus easily succeeded in inducing the people to receive, with unanimous consent, the same laws of ecclesiastical polity yet used by the church of Geneva, and which were written, read, and approved by the suffrages of the people on the 20th of November.

Although Calvin had thus made a successful commencement, yet he knew that such plans could not in reality be carried into effect without difficulty; and, on this account, was very desirous to have Viret, whom the people of Berne had allowed only for a certain period, and Farel, who had been received on his expulsion from Geneva at Neuchatel, to be appointed his perpetual colleagues. In this attempt he was unsuccessful, for Viret returned soon after to Lausanne, and Farel remained at Neuchatel, so that he enjoyed almost the whole praise of restoring the church by his own unassisted efforts.

Many things occupied Calvin the ensuing year; for to omit various domestic affairs which pressed upon his attention, the inflamed fury of the foreign enemies of the gospel banished numbers from France and Italy to Geneva, a neighbouring and now distinguished city. Calvin's zeal in comforting and refreshing those refugees by every kind of dutiful solicitude is very surprising. I omit mentioning the consolation, which he afforded to those who were indeed in the yawning jaws of the lion, by the various letters which he wrote them under their trials.

Another very great and two-fold evil occurred this year; namely, dearth of provision, and famine, its general attendant. It was even then a custom at Geneva to have a separate hospital out of the city for such as suffered from the plague. Since the attendance of a constant and active pastor was required, most of them dreaded the danger of contagion, and three only offered themselves — Calvin, Sebastian Castellio, (of whom we shall mention more circumstances in the following part of this narrative,) and Peter Blanchet. The lot, for this was the method of their appointment, fell on Castellio, who changed his mind, and impudently refused to undertake the burden. The senate would not allow the lots to be taken a second time, contrary to Calvin's inclination, and Blanchet himself, therefore, undertook the whole charge. Other weighty affairs also occurred at that time: for the controversy concerning the Lord's Supper engaged the attention of Peter Tossanus, pastor of Montbelliard; and some at Basle, Myconius opposing without effect, were desirous to overturn the foundations of church discipline, which had scarcely yet been firmly laid, and held two conferences with Calvin. Farel had been invited to preach at Metz, with great success, but very much hindrance was given to the work of the Lord, partly by the apostate P. Caroli already mentioned. The various labours in which Calvin was thus involved by writing, admonishing, and exhorting, and by other methods of affording assistance, are clearly proved by the great number of his published letters, and the testimony of many survivors.

But the Sorbonne, increasing in boldness, supported by P. Liser, first president of the parliament of Paris, whose memory is universally detested, had the courage to attempt a measure, which, to the astonishment of every one, was endured by the bishops, and even by the pope. These last, being constantly employed, like robbers, in dividing the wealth of the church among themselves, voluntarily resigned their own proper duties of distributing the word of life to such of their brethren as they denominated good doctors, provided those last suffered themselves to be treated like dogs, which gnaw the bones that their masters, after repeated nibbling, have left. The Sorbonne had the audacity, unsupported either by human or divine authority, to prescribe such articles of Christian faith, as both by their falsehood, and their very trifling character, so commonly to be met with among this body of divines, deservedly lessened their authority in the opinion of all those, who were not wholly devoid of judgment. Some had subscribed these articles through fear, and others from ignorance, on which account Calvin answered them in such a manner as to refute, with great learning and

by solid reasoning, the errors they contained, and he exposed their folly by a beautiful vein of irony, to the amusing derision of all men of common discernment.

The following year experienced equally destructive ravages from the dearth of provisions, and from the plague which infested Savoy. Calvin was constantly employed in strengthening his own flock at Geneva, and in boldly repressing the enemies of the church abroad, particularly by publishing four books on free will, dedicated to Melanchthon, in answer to Albert Pighius, a Dutchman, and the most skilled sophist of the age, who had selected Calvin as an adversary, expecting that he would obtain a cardinal's hat as the reward of the distinguished victory he hoped to gain.

He was, however, disappointed in his expectations, and reaped, what the enemies of the truth justly deserve, the contempt of all learned and sensible men, while he was deceived by Satan himself. Melanchthon testified by his letters the esteem in which he held these works of Calvin, and we considered it right to publish their correspondence, that posterity may have a certain and clear testimony against the calumniators of such distinguished men. A letter written this same year to the church of Montbelliard affords a sufficient answer to such as complain of his too great severity in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline.

Calvin in the following year, 1544, stated his opinion concerning the plan which the church of Neuchatel should adopt in their ecclesiastical censures. Sebastian Castellio, in Geneva, whose fickleness we have already noticed, concealing under an apparent modesty a foolish kind of ambition, and evidently belonging to that class of men, which the Greeks call self opinionative, became irritated with Calvin because he disapproved of his conceits in a French version of the New Testament; who carried his indignation to such a height, that not satisfied with maintaining some erroneous opinions, he even ordered, in a public manner, the Song of Solomon to be erased from the canon, as an impure and obscene song, and reviled with very violent reproaches the ministers of Geneva by whom he was opposed. They justly thought that it was not their duty patiently to endure such conduct, and summoned him before the senate, where, after a very patient hearing, on the last day of May, and a calm examination of the charges brought against him, he was condemned for calumny, and ordered to leave the city. He afterwards settled in Basle, and his conduct there will be considered in another part of our narrative.

Charles 5th, in the year 1543, advancing with all his strength against Francis 1st, had taken care to secure for the two great religious parties in Germany the enjoyment of equal rights, until the meeting of a council which he promised to convene. Pope Paul III, feeling very indignant at such a proceeding, published a very grave admonition to Charles for his having thus placed the heretics on a level with the Catholics, and for putting his scythe into a crop which belonged to another. Charles returned what he considered a fair answer. Calvin repressed the audacity of the pontiff for the severity with which he had attacked in these letters the truth of the gospel, and the moral conduct of the reformers.

Calvin embraced the opportunity offered him by the diet assembled at Spiers, for publishing a book on the necessity of reforming the church, which in my opinion, is one of the most nervous, powerful treatises published in our age on that subject.

Calvin, the same year, so refuted, in two books, both the Anabaptists and libertines, who had revived the most monstrous heresies of antiquity, that I think no attentive reader, unless designedly and knowingly, could have been deceived, or, if he had formerly been in an error, would not voluntarily have returned to the right way. The book published against the libertines very much displeased the Queen of Navarre,

because, which is almost incredible, she had been so infatuated by the two principal leaders of this horrible sect, Quintin and Pocquet, whom Calvin had expressly attacked, as to consider them, though she did not adopt their mysterious views, good men, on which account she thought herself in some measure deeply wounded through their sides. Calvin, on learning this, answered her with uncommon moderation, mindful of her dignity, and of the several kindness which this queen had conferred upon the church of Christ; he blamed her too great imprudence in an ingenuous and discreet manner with great address, becoming a courageous servant of God, for harkening to such men, while he asserted at the same time the authority of his own ministry. His writings produced the effect of confining the followers of this horrid sect of the Libertines, which had begun to spread in France, within the boundaries of Holland, and of the adjacent countries.

After he had terminated so many labours in 1544, he was again involved, in the following year, in new disputes of a still more serious kind. For as if a pestilence inflicted by God himself was not sufficient to waste the city and the whole neighbourhood, some of the very lowest classes, whose assistance was required by the rich in cleansing their houses and healing the sick, were induced by avarice to form a shocking conspiracy, for the purpose of infecting the posts and thresholds of their doors, and of every thing in their road, with an ointment that conveyed the disease and communicated this dreadful scourge. They also, by a terrible oath, mutually taken in the most solemn manner, bound themselves as slaves to Satan should they ever be found to betray their accomplices, though the rack itself were used to extort confession. A considerable number of them were detected both in the city and adjoining country, and received a punishment merited by their enormous crimes. The reproach is incredible which Satan, by this artifice, raised against Calvin and the city of Geneva, as if the prince of darkness plainly reigned in that city where he was most violently opposed.

This year was disgraced by a massacre of unparalleled cruelty, occasioned by an edict which the parliament of Aix issued against the Waldenses of Merindol and Cabrier, and the whole of that tract of country; it was not confined to one or two sufferers, but extended to the whole people without distinction of age or sex, and the villages were consumed in one common conflagration. These evils pressed more heavily on Calvin, who afforded solace and succour to the few refugees that fled to Geneva, because he had on a former occasion used means, by sending letters and supplying pastors, to have them purely instructed in the gospel, and by his intercession with the German princes and the Swiss states, had preserved them from impending danger.

The unhappy controversy respecting the Supper of our Lord was at this time again renewed. Osiander, a proud man and of a strange disposition, stirred up the flame of discord, which seemed to be extinguished, and Calvin used every exertion in his power to terminate it, as appears by his letters written to Melancthon, and published under my inspection. But Osiander's want of moderation prevented him from listening to the sound advice of these two great men, by whom he is denominated Pericles.

In the mean time many excellent characters fell victims to the plague which raged in the city. But Calvin thundered with all his power from the pulpit against the vices of some, and particularly against fornication, which the scourge of the plague could not terminate. The good supported him, but the efforts of the pious were weakened by a few demagogues, until, as will be stated in its proper place, they voluntarily plunged themselves in irretrievable ruin. These evils were increased by the unseasonable disputes concerning the right of the city; nor could faithful pastors in other parts of

Europe endure to see church property, taken from the Roman hierarchy, improperly managed in many places. Clamours and complaints were at that time very frequent on this subject, and much labour devoted to it both in writing and speaking, but generally without effect. Calvin, indeed, openly professed that he was by no means a friend to so many sacrilegious proceedings, which he knew must finally meet with a most severe divine scourge, but acknowledged the just judgment of the Lord God because he would not allow revenues, acquired formerly by priests in so base a manner, to be brought into the treasuries of the church.

Calvin felt deep concern this year, both from a domestic and foreign cause.

A Genevese of the name of Troillet, young, indeed, but artful, after having counterfeited for some time the hermit in France, had returned to Geneva.

Calvin, distinguished above most men for his sagacious penetration into character, developed this person, who concealed himself in the commencement under the appearance of piety. Calvin first admonished him mildly, but afterwards rebuked him more freely, when his conduct in the congregation was distinguished by insolence and ambition. He did not bear such reproof properly, and endeavoured to secure the aid and zealous favour of such as were generally condemned by Calvin on account of their vices. On the death of one of the pastors, Troillet openly endeavoured, with the assistance of his friends, to canvass for the office of a minister of the gospel, when the appointment of a successor was under consideration. In short, the senate interposed its authority, and ordered him to be preferred.

Calvin and his colleagues opposed the measure, proving how much such a system of canvassing was contrary to the word of God, and obtained, with the approbation of the senate, the enforcement of the written laws of the church.

There were also at that time in France certain persons, who, having renounced the protestant religion at the commencement, through fear of persecution, had begun afterwards so far to flatter themselves as to deny there was any sin in being present with their bodies only at the celebration of the mass, provided they embraced the true religion in their hearts.

Calvin, whom they blamed for the excess of his severity, plainly refuted, by his clear and elegant writings, this very pernicious error, which the fathers had long ago condemned. He annexed also the opinions of the most learned reformers, Philip Melancthon, Peter Martyr, Bucer, and the church of Zurich, and so far restrained the progress of this error, that the Nicodemites, which name they had acquired by adducing the example of this most holy person as a pretext for their false sentiments, he fell into bad repute in the church.

The year 1546 was not less stormy than the past. For it was necessary to fortify the minds of the people against the frequent accounts circulated concerning the designs of Charles 5th in opposition to religion, and against the fraudulent schemes of the pope, who was reported to employ a number of emissaries as incendiaries. The state of the city itself also particularly excited his commiseration, for the petulance of the wicked, so far from suffering itself to be subdued by so many scourges, became still more insolent, and at last broke through all restraints. For Ami Perrin, a very audacious and ambitious character, denominated on this account by Calvin, in his letters, the mock Caesar, had succeeded, by the suffrages of the people, in obtaining the nomination of captain-general, and some time before had become leader of the opposers of order. This man imagining, as was the fact, that neither he nor his accomplices could succeed, while the laws were maintained with rigor, and Calvin in particular continued to thunder against their wanton and disorderly conduct, began openly to discover this year what he and his associates had long projected. He continued silent

for a while, when he had been punished and crushed by the authority of the senate, merely with a view to disclose afterwards his wickedness in a more open manner. For, a short period having elapsed, one of the senators, secretly instigated, as is supposed, by two ministers addicted to wine, who had good reason, as well as others, to dread the severity of the laws, accused Calvin of false doctrine before a considerably large assembly. Calvin continued unmoved by such attacks. This senator was tried, condemned, branded with infamy by his own body, the two false pastors were conjointly suspended from their office, and the taverns deprived of their license. Such was the result of the machinations of the wicked, who were completely disappointed. The general conflagration which had been smothered this year, burst forth in 1547, which was the most calamitous period during that age. The churches in Germany were reduced to the greatest extremity, her princes and cities either surrendered to the emperor, or were taken by force, and a work, which had been raised by the unwearied labours of so many years, seemed to be overthrown in one moment. Many considered those happy, who had been rescued by a timely death from such dreadful tumults. Who, then, can picture the anguish that wrung the pious breast of Calvin in those public calamities by which so many churches were overwhelmed?

When the churches enjoyed the most profound peace, our reformer felt as ardent an affection for the most distant, as if the weight of them all rested on his own shoulders. What pungency of grief must he at that time have felt, when he beheld those illustrious characters, Melancthon, Bucer, Martyr, his dearest friends, exposed to such imminent danger, as to be placed on the very brink of death! His writings, however, testify, and the fact itself proved, that Calvin overcame these storms with the greatest fortitude. Though persecuted in a very severe manner by the wicked at Geneva, he did not move a step from the high station of constancy and integrity which he had taken.

To return to Calvin's domestic disputes, — when his whole time was employed in proving that the gospel he preached was not a mere speculative doctrine, but consisted in a pious Christian life, he necessarily incurred the enmity of those, who had proclaimed war not only against all piety and virtue, but even against their very country. Perrin, as already stated, still continued their leader, for his own condition and the state of his associates were so bad, that it was evident they must make the most desperate efforts; and the abandoned openly declared it was necessary for the cognizance of all questions under discussion, that they should be removed from the presbytery to the senate. The presbytery, on the other hand, insisted that the laws established concerning church discipline were agreeable to the word of God, and they implored the aid of the senate to prevent the church from receiving any injury. The senate determined it necessary to ratify the laws of the church, and confirmed them accordingly. After Perrin had exposed himself to very great danger by his own audacious conduct, the whole affair was settled by expelling him from the senate, depriving him of his captaincy, and reducing him to a mere private station. Though all these transactions were carried on before the magistrates, yet it is impossible to state how much trouble they occasioned Calvin. On one occasion there was great danger of blood being shed in the court itself, where the council of two hundred was assembled, by the swords of the contending parties. Calvin coming up with his colleagues, at the risk of his own life, since the faction of the wicked was chiefly aimed against him, quelled the riot. He still persisted to hold up to detestation, in the most solemn manner, their criminal conduct, and to rebuke them in the strongest terms according to their deserts. Nor was his denunciation of God's judgment vain, since a certain person was then apprehended for writing a libel, and fixing it to the pulpit, in which he

produced many base charges against the ministers, and declared, in a written document, that Calvin himself ought to be cast into the Rhone. He was summoned to trial, convicted in an unexpected manner of a great variety of other blasphemous proceedings, and beheaded. After his death a paper was found professedly written with his own hand against Moses, and consequently Christ, and his impious conduct left no doubt of his having also infected some others.

Calvin wrote, this year, in the midst of all these contentions, his “Antidote against the seven Sessions of the Council of Trent.” He also sent an epistle to the church of Rouen, fortifying them against the artifices of a certain Franciscan preacher, who was disseminating the poison of the errors of Carpocrates that were renewed by the libertines.

The following year, 1548, the disorders of the factious again broke forth in Geneva by the device of Satan, who made Farel and Viret instrumental to this result; a fact scarcely credible, because they were most desirous to cure all the evils. These ministers came to Geneva in the beginning of the year, and addressed the senate in a very solemn manner on the necessity of healing their contentions, since Calvin only demanded reformation of manners. Perrin, with his associates, that he might recover his former situation, pretended to agree to whatever was proposed. Every thing now appeared to be amicably arranged, but the result afterwards showed that he had only imposed upon the pious. On Perrin’s restoration, the wickedness of the abandoned citizens went to such a height, that they openly used certain breastplates, cut in the form of a cross, as a mark for distinguishing each other; some called their dogs Calvin, others transformed Calvin into Cain; a considerable number declared they refrained, in consequence of their hatred of Calvin, from the Lord’s Supper. Our reformer and his colleagues rebuked all this conduct with much boldness, summoned them to the senate, and the innocence of the pious was easily victorious. An amnesty was finally again ratified on the 18th of December by a solemn oath. The event proved that Perrin had been dissembling in the whole of his late conduct, and the only object he had in view was to rise to the syndicate, for the purpose of more completely opening to himself and his associates a still more certain access to these offices, which might enable them to involve all in one common ruin.

Calvin was not diverted from his labours by these disputes, but he illustrated six epistles of St. Paul, by very learned commentaries, as if he had enjoyed the utmost leisure, he refuted what was termed the “Interim,” that was published with a view to ruin the German churches, by a work written with great force, which pointed out the true method for restoring the church. He exposed, in a very elegant paper, the falsehood and vanity of judicial astrology, of which many at that time entertained a high opinion. Having received an obliging letter from Brentius, banished to Basle, he consoled him with much tenderness and friendship, and I wish Brentius had not broken the bonds of this union. He then also candidly exhorted Bucer, when banished to England, to speak and write his opinion more openly concerning the Lord’s Supper, and comforted him in a friendly manner. At the same time he took great pains to give advice, by letter, to the Duke of Somerset, protector of England, who afterwards very unjustly suffered an ignominious death; and had Calvin’s plans been followed, the Church of England would in all probability have escaped many storms. (IX.)

The church of Geneva wonderfully increased in the midst of these disputes, and this grieved Satan and bad men to a very great degree.

Calvin’s zeal on the other hand was very much increased, by entertaining, in the kindest manner, those who were banished from their country on account of religion. The faction of the seditious, though not entirely extinguished, was much subdued the

following year, and afforded him more leisure for attending to the distresses of the suffering Protestants, he required, indeed, a cessation from such disputes, for he now sustained a very severe domestic affliction in the loss of his wife, who was distinguished by a most excellent and choice character. He endured his trial on this occasion with such constancy as to leave a singular example of fortitude to the whole church in a similar dispensation of Providence. (X.)

The churches of Saxony not being agreed respecting the nature and use of indifferent things, Calvin was this year consulted and gave his opinion frankly on the subject; he also admonished Melancthon of his duty, who was unjustly accused by some of too much gentleness in his views on this question, as Calvin afterwards more fully discovered.

It was not then known what spirit actuated the evil-genius of Flaccius, and the whole tribe of his followers, by which they afterwards caused such disturbances, and to this day so subvert the work of the Lord, that they could not have done it more audaciously and furiously had they been hired to it by the gold of the Roman pontiff. But the Lord, while this wound was inflicted upon the German churches, granted a contrary blessing to the Swiss; for Farel and Calvin made a visit to Zurich, that, as certain persons considered the latter in some measure to favour consubstantiation, all Protestants might be entirely satisfied concerning the unanimous agreement of all the Helvetic churches in this important article. It was not difficult to unite good men devoted to the truth. An harmony was drawn up with the unanimous approbation of all the Swiss and Grison churches, which had the effect of still more closely uniting Bullinger with Calvin, and the church of Zurich with that of Geneva, to which we still adhere, and hope by the blessing of God to do so to the end. The conclusion of this year was productive of happiness to the church, when it is contrasted with the preceding; and I state this with greater pleasure, because I was now first introduced into the sacred office on the call of the church of Lausanne, and at Calvin's instigation.

About this time Calvin wrote two letters, abounding with profound erudition to Lelius Socinus, of Sienna, who died at Zurich after a long continued residence.

These letters evidently prove the scepticism of Socinus, which was not fully known until many years had elapsed, and death itself had closed his labours. He visited the various churches, and deceived even the most learned, and among the rest particularly Melancthon, Calvin, and Camerarius, who bears in his life of Melancthon a very honourable testimony to his character, which he does not deserve. It is ascertained beyond doubt, that he was afterwards in a great measure the author of the confused Bellian controversy, and a favourer of the wild opinions of Servetus, Castellio, and Ochinus, an account of which we shall give in its proper place. His commentary also upon the celebrated first chapter of John is yet extant, in which he has much surpassed the impiety of all the heretics, who ever corrupted that very divine passage.

The year 1550 was remarkable for its tranquillity with respect to the church. The consistory resolved that the ministers should not confine their instructions to public preaching, which was neglected by some, and heard with very little advantage by others, but at stated seasons should visit every family from house to house, attended by an elder, and a decurion of each ward, to explain the Christian doctrines to the common people, and require from every one a brief account of their faith. These private visits were of great use to the church, and it is scarcely credible how much fruit was produced by this plan of instruction.

The consistory gave directions that the celebration of the birth of Christ should be deferred to the following day, and that no festival should be observed as holy, excepting the seventh, which is called the Lord's day.

This proceeding gave offense to many, and for the purpose of reproaching Calvin, there were some who circulated an unfounded report of his abrogating the Sabbath itself: though this subject was discussed before the people, and the decree passed without the request or even the knowledge of the ministers, yet Calvin did not think it worth his while to excite any dispute. In consequence of many being offended with such changes, Calvin embraced this opportunity for writing a "Treatise on Scandal," dedicated to his old and very faithful friend, Laurence of Normandy. (See note B.) The disputes in 1551 fully compensated for the tranquillity of the two preceding years. The death of Bucer, much beloved by Calvin, and of James Vadian, consul of St. Gal, a person of singular piety and erudition, deeply afflicted the whole church, and especially our reformer. The wickedness of the factious burst forth with greater violence, in proportion to the length of time it had been smothered: they openly asserted that the right of citizenship ought not to be granted to strangers, who took refuge in Geneva; and not content with this, they mocked and jostled Calvin on his return from preaching beyond the Rhone.

Raymond, his colleague, passing over the bridge across the Rhone by night, nearly fell headlong into it, in consequence of the factious secretly removing one of the piles. They excited a considerable tumult at the church of St. Gervais, assigning as a pretext, that the minister had refused to give the name Balthazar, which had been expressly prohibited by laws made on sufficient grounds, to a child whom they had brought for baptism. Calvin, not being able to remedy these evils, bore them with Christian resignation, fortitude, and invincible patience. But another new evil attacked the church of Geneva at this time. Jerome Bolsec, late a Carmelite monk at Paris, was the occasion of this confusion; who, having laid aside the habit a few years before, retained the spirit and character of a monk. He fled from Paris, and was banished from the court of the Duchess de Ferrara, who had been deceived by him, and having been made physician in the space of three days, paid a visit to Geneva. Being held in no repute among learned physicians, he aimed to establish his credit as a divine, by beginning to prate something privately concerning the falsehood and absurdity of predestination, and afterwards in the church. Calvin at first was content with refuting him, and used mild remonstrance, but afterwards, by private conversation, our reformer endeavoured to correct his errors. But Bolsec, whether excited by monastic ambition, or goaded on by the seditious, who had been seeking for some one to attack Calvin, on the 16th of October, when the preacher was explaining in the church the following passage: "He that is of God heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God," (John 8:47,) openly dared to support free will, and the foreknowledge of works, for the purpose of subverting the decree of eternal predestination, which is superior in order to all causes. He attacked the true doctrine with contumelious language, and a purely seditious arrogance; and he is thought to have done this with greater boldness, because he considered Calvin to be absent, as Bolsec did not happen to behold him in his usual place. He was indeed absent at the commencement of the sermon, but as he came in after the preacher had proceeded with his subject, he had remained behind some of the rest of the congregation. When the discourse of the monk was finished, Calvin suddenly appeared, and though he evidently spoke without premeditation, displayed on this occasion, as much as on any other, his great talents in controversy. Calvin indeed confuted his opponent with so much force, adduced so many passages from Scripture, so many quotations in

particular from St. Augustin, and, finally, so many, and such weighty arguments, that all, except the monk himself, with his shameless front, blushed exceedingly for the daring assailant. He was seized by a magistrate in the congregation, who was empowered for that purpose, dismissed the assembly, and committed to prison as a seditious offender. In short, the cause was discussed in various disputations; the senate requested the judgment of the Swiss churches, expelled him from the city, after being publicly condemned for sedition and downright Pelagianism, and threatened to inflict corporal punishment, if they should again apprehend him either in the city or its territory. Bolsec retired into a neighbouring city, where he caused many and great disturbances; and having been twice driven from the Canton of Berne, he went first to Paris, and then to Orleans, canvassing for the charge of the ministry among the French churches, which he expected would continue tranquil, affecting, by strange arts, repentance for his conduct, and expressing, of his own accord, a desire to be reconciled with the church of Geneva. When he appeared as if really prepared thus to act, the persecution of the Protestant churches, contrary to his expectations, alarmed him, and, resuming the study of medicine, he openly forsook the Protestants, and returned to the popish profession, having abandoned also his wife to the canons of Autun, and became a gross railer against the truth, which practice he still continues in that city. But the College of Ministers at Geneva, in a public meeting, asserted the true doctrine of predestination, and approved the statement afterwards given of it by Calvin in a treatise published on that subject.

Satan, by these disputes, was the occasion of so much light being thrown upon this article of our faith, involved before in very great obscurity, that it has been made clear and evident to all but the friends of contention.

In the following year it appeared more certain what such a flame the impure Bolsec had raised, although condemned by the common judgment of so many churches. For the difficulty of a question, which had not yet been sufficiently explained by the greater part of the ancients, and the discussion of which had not always ended in the same conclusion, excited in a peculiar manner inquisitive minds to investigate this important point.

The factious also considered this to be an excellent opportunity for effecting the complete subversion of all order, if Calvin could only be expelled. It is impossible to state the various disputes which followed, not only in the city, but in every quarter, as if the trumpet was sounded by Satan himself. For though the ministers of the principal churches beautifully harmonized, there were, however, some of the neighbouring churches of Berne, which threatened to enter into controversy with Calvin, as if he made God the author of sin, evidently forgetting that Calvin had long ago professedly refuted this very destructive opinion, in his treatise against the libertines. At Basle also the good and simple man, Castellio, the greatest part of whose conduct was marked by secrecy, supported Pelagianism with considerable openness. Even Melancthon himself had commenced writing on these subjects in such a manner, that notwithstanding he had expressly before this period subscribed to Calvin's book against Pighius, yet some thought he pointed to the ministers of Geneva, as if they were introducing a stoical fate. I wholly omit mentioning the Catholics, who now again repeated the same calumnies, which had been a thousand times refuted. These circumstances necessarily distressed Calvin's mind with much greater keenness, because, occasionally during that period, the power of error had been so great, that in some parts public authority seemed to interpose for preventing the ministers to declare the truth.

Nor was this a controversy finished in a few years: but, first of all, the good hermit, Troillet, already mentioned, came forth this very year to enter the field of controversy with Calvin, who some time before, after being rejected as an unsuccessful candidate for the ministry, had become a lawyer, and the patron of the factious. This cause was discussed on both sides before the senate with considerable warmth. Calvin defended his doctrine by the sole authority of truth, while his opponent conducted the discussion, supported by the impudence and the favour of the abandoned.

The truth was victorious; and the writings of Calvin, which is a striking fact, were even recognized as orthodox and pious by the suffrages of his opponents.

We must not conceal the repentance of this Troillet some few years after, who, on his death-bed, sent for Calvin, with great earnestness, as a witness, to inform him that he could not die with peace of conscience, unless he was reconciled to him before he departed. He confessed in what an unworthy manner he had carried on his attack against Calvin, who not only paid him every attention, but with the greatest kindness raised and comforted his drooping spirit, and confirmed his faith until his dying hour. But the year 1553, the wickedness of the seditious hastening to a close, was so very turbulent, that both church and state were brought into extreme danger. They made so great a progress by threats and clamour, the virtuous part of the society enjoying no liberty in consequence of the great number of the seditious, as to disannul the ancient edicts for electing and appointing senators, which, by the kind favour of God, afforded all argument for the virtuous, to adopt afterwards such an improvement in their councils, as secured more completely their own rights. They expelled some from the senate, deprived all foreign refugees of their arms, under the pretence of fear, and allowed them only the use of swords when they went into the country. Every thing seemed to be in a state of preparation for accomplishing the plans of the seditious, since all was subject to their power.

Satan then presented another occasion for exciting disturbance. For that real enemy of the sacred Trinity, or rather of all true deity, and therefore a monster formed from all kinds of the most absurd and impious heresies which had formally taken possession of the human mind, Michael Servetus, after wandering as a physician for some years in various parts of Europe, under the feigned name of Villanovanus, disseminated his blasphemies at Vienne, in a thick volume. Arnollet, of Lyons, was printer, and William Gueret, corrector, as it is termed, of the press, who was long ago devoted to the seditious at Geneva, and a few months before left that city for Lyons, to avoid the punishment to which he was exposed, on account of fornication and other crimes. Servetus, after publishing this work, abounding with blasphemies, on account of which he had been imprisoned at Vienne, whence, by contrivances, with which I am wholly unacquainted, he afterwards escaped, now came, under unfavourable auspices, to Geneva, with an intention of going to some more distant place, if the providence of God had not so arranged that he was cast into prison by one of the magistrates; who was informed of his being in that city by Calvin, who recognized him soon after his arrival, having been well acquainted with Servetus long before. A book was published, where a very full account may be met with of the controversies then discussed, and of the importance of the subjects examined. The result of the whole was, that this ruined character, in whose ear it was thought one of the seditious, being assessor with the praetor, whispered advice calculated to harden the mind of the prisoner in his sins, was betrayed by his own vain confidence, and condemned for impiety and an infinite number of blasphemies, according to the sentence even of all the Swiss churches. This unhappy person was burned alive, without manifesting the least mark of repentance, on the 27th of October. [See note C.] Farel was so broken

down with disease this year, that he was left by Calvin, who had come to visit him at Neuchatel, apparently in dying circumstances. He was, however, afterwards restored, contrary to all expectations, and continued to comfort and refresh the church. This year was hitherto evidently spent by us in an alternation of hope and fear, but the grief we experienced was followed by the feelings of joy.

For while the proceedings were going on in the case of Servetus, Bertelier, one of the factious, a man of the most abandoned impudence, who had been forbidden the Lord's table by the presbytery on account of his many crimes, entered the senate, and petitioned them to authorize the abrogation of his sentence, had this request been granted, all the bonds of church discipline would undoubtedly have been broken, and all church order immediately dissolved. Calvin, therefore, with great earnestness and boldness, in the name of the presbytery, opposed it, and proved that the magistrate ought to be the avenger, not destroyer of the sacred laws, and he neglected nothing which so momentous a dispute required. The false clamours of those, who asserted that the presbytery, in some cases, usurped the power of the magistrates, triumphed; and a resolution was passed, on the question being brought before the grand council of two hundred, that the final decision, on all cases of excommunication, should be vested in the senate, with a power to absolve such as they thought fit.

Agreeable to this decision, Bertelier secretly obtained letters abrogating his sentence, and confirmed by the seal of the state, from the senate, which did not at that time direct its attention to the careful investigation of this subject. Perrin, and his faction, expected that Calvin would either disobey the orders of the senate, and thus sink under popular tumult, or, if he obeyed them, all the authority of the presbytery, and with it all the powerful restraints upon the wicked, would, without difficulty, be afterwards broken for ever. But Calvin, having received notice of this revolution only two days before the administration of the supper, as usual, in September, uttered, during the sermon, with uplifted hands, and in a solemn tone, many severe denunciations against the profaners of mysteries, whose sacred character he described; and "for my own part," said he, (after the example of Chrysostom,) "I will rather suffer myself to be slain, than allow this hand to stretch forth the sacred things of the Lord to those who are lawfully condemned as despisers of God." This voice, wonderful to state, produced such an effect, even upon his unbridled enemies, that Perrin immediately gave secret orders to Bertelier, not to present himself at the table, and the sacred mysteries were celebrated with a surprisingly profound silence, and under a solemn awe, as if the Deity himself had been visible among them. But, after dinner, in the Course of his explaining that remarkable passage in the Acts of the Apostles, where Paul bids farewell to the church of Ephesus, Calvin protested that he was not the man who either himself knew any thing about resisting magistrates, or taught others to do so, and exhorted, at considerable length, the people to persevere in the doctrine which they had heard. And in conclusion, as if it was the last sermon he would preach at Geneva, he said, "Since affairs are in such a state, permit me also, brethren, to apply to you the language of the apostle, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace."

These words struck his abandoned enemies dumb, in a surprising manner, and the good were more seriously confirmed and admonished of their duty.

Calvin, the next day, accompanied by his colleagues and the presbytery, deliberately demanded of the senate, and the council of two hundred, that their case should be determined by the people themselves, since the law, whose abrogation was then under consideration, had been made by the people.

The opinions of these two ruling bodies were changed after such observations, and it was resolved that the decree of the two hundred should be suspended, the four reformed states of Switzerland consulted, and no alteration in the mean time should take place in the existing laws.

Thus the storm being broken rather than quelled, the leaders of the faction endeavoured, from the occurrence of particular circumstances to make it fall upon the head of Farel, which, contrary to all expectation, had been averted from that of Calvin. For Farel, who had suffered so severely from a violent disease in the month of March, visited Geneva as soon as the restoration of his health allowed. In his sermon, relying on the justice of the cause, on his age, and former influence, he reprov'd with great keenness, the supporters of faction. They complained loudly that Farel had done them a serious injury, and on his return to Neuchatel they procured letters from the senate to the government of that state, for the purpose of allowing Farel to be summoned to Geneva, and to answer for himself on the day appointed. Farel came, and was exposed to considerable danger from the factious who cried out, that he ought to be thrown into the Rhone for his conduct. A prudent, discreet, courageous young man, in the first place, frequently warn'd Perrin to use every exertion that the common father, as it were, of the city, might not suffer any injury. He was afterwards joined by one of his companions, another young man of integrity, who advised such as were friends of good order what measures they ought to adopt. The concourse of a great part of the city took place when Farel seated himself in the court. His accusers, astonished at this circumstance, and being now anxious for their own personal safety, earnestly entreated for the acquittal of Farel, after all audience had been given him. Thus nearly the whole of the year was spent against the wicked, in contending either for good doctrine, or wholesome discipline. The result was every where prosperous, if we accept the wound, which not only England, but all Christian churches, suffered in the death of the most pious King Edward the 6th, who was cut off in the flower of youth. Calvin was so intent upon his studies during this year, as to publish his excellent commentaries on John. We may here declare, and I heartily wish it were without cause concerning Servetus, what the ancient fathers of the church, taught by experience, wrote of these two monsters, Paul of Samosata, and Arius of Alexandria, that they commenced conflagrations, which afterwards set on fire nearly all the churches of the Christian world.

Servetus was justly punished at Geneva, not as a secretary, but as a monster, made up of nothing but impiety and horrid blasphemies, with which, by his speeches and writings, for the space of thirty years, he had infected both heaven and earth. Even now it is impossible to state how much he has increased the rage of Satan, since the flame, raised by him, first seized upon Poland then Transylvania and Hungary, and would to God it had not extended even farther. Servetus may justly be considered as having uttered a prediction, with a spirit evidently satanic, when he selected the following sentence, with the same feelings of conscience that dictated all his other writings, as a frontispiece to his book, which is trait, if the particle with, not against, be used: "Great war took place in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting with the dragon."

The ashes of this unhappy man were scarcely cold, when the question was discussed concerning the punishment of heretics. Some thought it right to restrain within due bounds, but not to punish heretics with death; others determined to leave them to the judgment of God, from a conviction that the word of truth is not sufficiently clear on heresy, and that, according to free practice of the academicians, different sentiments may be entertained by both sides concerning all the articles of religion: even some

good men supported this opinion, fearing lest, by adopting contrary sentiments, they should appear to inflame the cruelty of tyrants against the pious. The principal supporters of this sentiment were Castellio and Lelius Socinus, the former in a more secret manner, the latter with greater boldness.

Socinus, in his preface for perverting the Holy Bible, has evidently studied to destroy the manifest authority of the divine word, and has expressly stated in his notes to the First Epistle to the Corinthians, for the purpose of withdrawing our attention from the written word as imperfect, that Paul had taught some of his perfect disciples, with whom I am wholly unacquainted, a certain more profound system of divinity than what he has delivered to us in the Scriptures.

Calvin, in the beginning of 1554, published a copious refutation of the doctrine of Servetus, which was subscribed by all his colleagues, and assigned reasons why, and to what extent, after proper legal investigation, heretics ought to be punished by the magistrates. This refutation was answered in the name of one Martin Bellius, who was Castellio himself, though he afterwards denied it on oath, in a confused work, formed out of extracts from the corrupted writings of pious doctors, and from the manuscripts of certain unknown fanatics. They forged the name of the city where, they falsely pretended, this confused treatise had been published, and inserted it in the preface. I afterwards returned an answer to this work, which contained not only the error already mentioned, but many blasphemies, with a view to free Calvin from the troublesome interruption he would have experienced in the prosecution of works of greater importance, especially in writing his very learned commentaries on Genesis, and also in his unwearied labours for warding off other dangers, hereafter to be stated, by which the church was threatened. For the factious persisted in their innovations; and though, on the 2d of February, an amnesty was again ratified in the presence of the senate with a solemn promise, yet they daily increased in wickedness. Calvin continued to be very much occupied, while he laboured by his usual reproofs to recall the abandoned to habits of virtue, and to confirm the good against the vile conduct of the wicked: for they had advanced to such a dreadful height of vice, as to parody the word of God itself in obscene songs, and to knock down, and sometimes even to plunder, foreigners, whom they met in the evening. They called in also the private and special assistance of Bolsec, Castellio, and certain other characters, who forsooth displayed great anxiety about the truth, for the purpose of renewing the controversy concerning predestination. They were not satisfied with disseminating that famous anonymous work, replete with calumny, in which Calvin, the faithful servant of God, was reviled in a very surprising manner; but Castellio sent another Latin work to be published secretly at Paris, which I afterwards answered, and Calvin himself refuted some foolish absurdities of the same argument comprehended in certain articles. Calvin was at this time occupied with the care of the numerous strangers, who had been obliged to quit England, some of whom had retired to Vezel, others to Emden, and the rest to Frankfurt, who all frequently solicited his advice. He was much distressed by the audacity of certain pastors, belonging to the French church at Strasburg, formerly founded by him, who were supported by the secret favour and assistance of some of their colleagues.

The great labours in which Calvin was engaged this year, for the interest of various churches, appear from his numerous letters, by which he induced many princes to embrace the gospel, and confirmed with very great advantage, many of his brethren, either exposed to the most imminent danger of their lives, or confined in chains.

We have already spoken of the published harmony of the doctrine of the sacraments among all the Swiss and Grison churches, which afforded great joy to the learned and

good of all denominations. This harmony displeased the spirit of error, with whose power we are already well acquainted. He easily got one Joachim of Westphalia to stir up the covered embers, who having sounded the tocsin, was supported by Heshusius, then minister of the word of God, and now made a bishop, of whom we shall afterwards give a more full account. Calvin published, at that time, an explanation of this harmony, which, in proportion as it excited the furious indignation of these writers, proved more highly useful to all the lovers of truth.

The following year, by the wonderful kindness of God, produced a desired rest for the church and state of Geneva from its domestic contentions. The factious ruined themselves in consequence of the timely detection of a dreadful conspiracy, by the petulance and audacity of certain drunkards concerned in it; some of them were condemned to a capital punishment, and others left their native country. And although they harassed the city for a considerable space of time afterwards, yet all shared at last a shameful death; and in this way exhibited a singular example of the late, but just judgment of God. The republic was thus freed from these pests of society; and God conferred another blessing by the answer of the four Swiss states, which was returned a short time before this event, whose opinion the senate had determined to take the preceding year, as already stated, concerning the discipline of the church of Geneva. All the edicts of church government, contrary to the expectation of the factious, were ratified, and confirmed by the unanimous suffrages of the citizens.

Calvin was not left without occasion for strenuous exertions, as in foreign affairs he took great pains in promoting the establishment of the churches in Poland, according to the will of the king. The dreadful tempest excited on the change of government in England hurried away to heaven, along with innumerable others in that country, those three bishops and martyrs of unrivalled piety — Hooper, Ridley, and Latimer, and at length the great Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. Calvin was very much employed in comforting his French brethren in bonds, and especially the five martyrs of most distinguished bravery, who were burned in the most cruel manner at Cambray.

But the ashes of Servetus began again to spring up afresh at home, whose blasphemies were favoured by Matthew Gribaldo, all eminent lawyer, who had accidentally come to Geneva, as Fargias, a village in the neighbourhood of that city, belonged to him. Calvin, on being introduced to him by certain Italians, among whom he had been a teacher at Padua, refused to give him the right hand of fellowship, unless they were agreed about the first article of Christian faith, the sacred Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Such conduct left no room for exhortations or arguments, and he in reality experienced afterwards, what Calvin even then predicted, that the dreadful judgment of God was impending over him for his obstinate impiety. He first escaped from Tubingen, where he had been introduced by the kindness of Virgerius; and was afterwards taken at Berne, where he renounced his heresies, in order to escape the dangers by which he was threatened, he afterwards returned to his former principles, and became the supporter and guest of Gentilis, to whose conduct we shall on another occasion revert, he at last died of the plague, by which he was suddenly seized, and thus escaped the punishment prepared for him.

Another circumstance prevented Calvin from experiencing uninterrupted joy this year. A faction arose of a few neighbouring ministers, who were of their own accord opposed to Calvin, and under the influence of Bolsec.

These persons, though of infamous characters, thinking to acquire reputation by attacking so illustrious an adversary, accused him, in scurrilous language, of making God the author of sin, because he taught that nothing is exempted from the eternal

providence and appointment of God. Calvin despised at first these calumnies to which we have already alluded, but compelled at last by their railings, solicited permission to repair to Berne, accompanied by envoys from the republic, to maintain the cause of truth before the inhabitants of that city. After advocating his cause, Castellio was banished with infamy from the territory of Berne, and Bolsec was also ordered to depart; nor did they think it then necessary to draw up any definite articles on the subject discussed, since the Lord himself took his own plans for supporting the interests of his church.

Calvin would otherwise have appeared to have gained his object by authority or favour, which was subsequently supported by the voluntary confession of his opponent. For all these calumnies soon afterwards vanished into smoke, and Andrew Zebedee, Calvin's bitterest accuser on this occasion, retracted his errors on his death-bed, after Calvin's decease, having sent for the principal citizens of Newburgh, four miles distance from Geneva. He manifested his perfect detestation of his former conduct, by ordering all his own papers to be burned before his eyes, which was certainly a better decision than if these orders had been issued by a thousand decrees of the senate.(XI.)

In the following year, Calvin, in consequence of his imprudence, was attacked with a tertian fever when preaching and obliged, contrary to his inclination, to leave the pulpit. This circumstance gave rise to many false reports, which were so acceptable to the Roman Catholics, that a solemn procession was held at Noyon, his native city, and the canons returned public thanks to their idols for the death of our reformer. But the prayers of the pious prevailed, and Calvin was so far from falling a victim to the disease, that he seemed, as it were, to be renewed in strength, and commenced an unusually long journey to Frankfurt, where he had been invited for the purpose of terminating the disputes of the French Church.

Calvin, on his return from Frankfurt, though something impaired in his death did not remit his daily labours, having published, the following year, his remarkably learned Commentaries on the Psalms, accompanied with a very valuable preface. Part of this year, which was very turbulent, and distinguished for tumults, excited by some factious ministers, and by the very great price of wheat, Calvin devoted to the defence of the truth against Joachim of Westphalia. After Calvin had answered Westphal, in consequence of his continually prating on this subject, I engaged in the controversy myself with a success, by the grace of God, that leaves me to cause to repent of the part I took in this question. Then also the Calumnies of Castellio against the eternal providence of God, which he had circulated without affixing his name to the work, were refuted by us both.

The news of the very dreadful persecution of the Protestants, which particularly began in Paris, where the congregation in James' street was seized, assembled for celebrating the Lord's Supper, deeply, and in an especial manner affected Calvin. Nearly eighty of them were seized, (the rest escaping by means of the darkness of the night,) and dragged to prison about break of day, with much reproachful and contumelious language, though several ladies were observed among them of the first quality. The courtiers, and circumstances of the times, had awakened the king's anger against the Protestants, for this affliction took place soon after the news had arrived of the defeat of the French at St. Quintin, and their assemblies were held at night, not being permitted to meet in the day. These old and stale calumnies, formerly invented against the first Christians, were again revived by Demochares, a doctor of the Sorbonne, pretending that all the disasters of the state were to be attributed to Protestants alone. They procured also false witnesses to prove that the putting out of

the lights was followed by prostitution, which many were credulous enough to believe.

Twenty-one of them were condemned to the flames, and, as only seven were executed at a time, this spectacle was exhibited at three different periods, to make the example more dreadful. The first who entered the flames was a lady of rank, whose constancy, and that of other six, particularly of the two last of the young men who suffered, was truly admirable.

This storm was in a great measure assuaged, by detecting the calumny of the doctors of the Sorbonne, though even this did not silence them, by the mother herself appearing before the judges to prove the chastity of her captive daughters. An excellent treatise was likewise published by a very learned pastor, residing for some months in that neighbourhood, who easily refuted all the falsehoods in circulation; and the earnest intercession of an embassy from the German princes, procured by Calvin's exertions with the utmost speed, assisted to allay this storm of dreadful persecution. The following year shone forth with great happiness upon the state of Geneva, by a perpetual alliance between the inhabitants of Geneva and Berne, contrary to the expectation of such as had been banished from the first city. Several unpleasant occurrences from other quarters diminished this happiness, besides the last abortive efforts of the exiles, which I shall wholly pass over.

The persecution abroad was rekindled in France, and the most mischievous and terrible heresy of the Tritheists, revived from the ashes of Servetus, by Valentine Gentilis, a native of Cosenza.

For the purpose of affording assistance to those suffering from persecution, an embassy was sent to the princes of Germany, with letters from Calvin, to demand their intercession in the calamities of the church, which they depicted with great feeling. Calvin in the mean time strengthened the hands of the persecuted, by keeping up a constant correspondence with them.

I will give a brief statement of the whole proceedings with Gentilis, and an account of the death of this monster. For the whole of this history is faithfully related in part by Calvin himself, from the public acts, and partly by Benedict Aretius, minister at Berne, having added a refutation of the blasphemies uttered by this heretic. All these treatises, and some others pertaining to the same subject, were published in this city in the 1567th year of our Lord. Shortly after the death of Servetus, Gentilis, possessed of a sagacious, but vacillating and sophistical understanding, meeting, some time after the punishment of Servetus, with his work, and its refutation by Calvin, easily perceived that neither the phantasms nor ideas of Servetus to colour the heresy of Paul of Samosata, nor the confusion of the persons with the essence introduced by Sabellius, nor the fictitious deity of Christ, taught by the impure Arius, could be reconciled with the word of God. Perceiving also that the views given us in Scripture, with regard to three distinct persons in one essence, are above our comprehension, he did not, as is usual with such characters, submit himself to the wisdom of God, but was satisfied with the truth of such opinions as were agreeable to human reason. He attributed the monarchy and supreme authority to the person of the Father alone, whom he would have to be the only sovereign God. He began openly to avow the doctrine of essentiation, namely, the propagation of essence, and as there were three persons, so there must be three numerically distinct essences, that is to say, three Gods, eternal, almighty, and immense. To maintain this heresy, he perverted, with matchless impudence, the Scriptures, and the council of Nice, for he wholly renounced the Athanasian Creed, and wrested the more ancient writers of the Church, Ignatius, Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Lactantius, to support his opinion. For he not only

rejected all the orthodox divines, followers of the Nicene council, but treated them with scorn, as guilty of impiety. This blasphemy was the forerunner of others concerning the hypostatic union.

At first he proposed his opinions privately among a few, and particularly to John Paul Alciat, a military officer, from Milan, and George Blandrata, a physician of Salusses, professing only to consider it as a subject for discussion. But the Presbytery of the Italian church at Geneva, having been informed of this circumstance, convened an extraordinary assembly, at which, in the hearing of a certain number of senators chosen for the occasion, and of all the ministers and elders, the reasons adduced in support of that doctrine were patiently considered by Calvin, and refuted from the word of God. This conference induced all the Italians to sign the orthodox faith, with the exception of six, who shortly afterwards, being examined separately, subscribed it with their hands, but not, as the event proved, with their hearts. Gentilis, returning to his former habits and dispositions, was found again disseminating the same blasphemous opinions; he used no dissimulation on his arrest, and had as long and as frequent an audience granted him as he desired. At last, as if vanquished, for he could answer Calvin by nothing but obstinacy, he feigned an incredible repentance, a copy of which is yet extant, signed by his own hand. To be brief, he openly renounced his opinions in the streets, and was dismissed, after taking an oath that he would not leave the city. But, regardless of this obligation, he soon after fled to Gribaldo in Savoy, and was some time after followed by Alciat and Blandrata. These two last retired to Transylvania and the adjoining countries, where they destroyed the faith by disseminating their heretical opinions.

Gentilis, the judgment of God even then hanging over him, continued with Gribaldo, since they both despised their other associates for want of learning and skill, and prepared a work against Athanasius and Calvin.

From Savoy he went to Lyons, where he had it printed, and dedicated the preface to the prefect of Gez, who was wholly unacquainted with the crimes. He was afterwards, I know not how, arrested at Lyons, when, on acquainting them with his writing against Calvin, he was dismissed, as one who had deserved well of the Catholic Church. From thence he went to Moravia to visit Blandrata, Alciat, and others, in no respects better than himself. When he could not agree with them, because the greater part had forsaken Tritheism, and embraced the doctrines of Paul of Samosata, he returned to Savoy to his friend Gribaldo, as if Christ, by his own hand, were dragging him to punishment. But another plague had taken off this pest of the church. By this time also we were deprived of Calvin. After this, either from madness, or because he trusted none could overcome him in argument since Calvin's death, he went immediately to the prefect of Gez, who indignation he had justly merited. On recognizing Gentilis, the prefect went him to Berne, by the just judgment of God, to plead his cause, in consequence of the former change of his opinions, when he was convicted of perjuries and manifest wickedness. Every effort having afterwards been used to restore him to the right path, without success, he was beheaded, and justly punished according to his numerous crimes. Such was the issue of this affair.

And even now there are not wanting many excellent advocates of Christianity, both Catholics and ubiquitarians, who dare calumniate Calvin as the author of these blasphemies, nay, as one who had opened a door to Atheism and Mahometanism. These men, sunk in ignorance, were altogether unacquainted with the fact, that Calvin was the first, and almost the only person in our time, who with so much labour proved the falsehood and error of these blasphemies.

The cardinal, at Paris, by whose direction the king transacted all the affairs of state, endeavoured to remove trials for heresy from the ordinary judges and laymen, to the triumvirate of cardinals. The parliament of Paris opposing this plan, more by divine interference than any human exertions, on the ground of the cardinal pleading his own, not Christ's cause, he abandoned the whole of his intended wicked scheme.

This last year was the commencement of a still greater source of grief to us, for Calvin was seized with a quartan fever in the month of October, and the result of our experience has too strongly confirmed the prognostic sentiments of our physicians, that this disease is fatal to men of advanced life. For though the duration of this disorder was only for eight months, it reduced his body, thin and worn out with labours and constant exertions, to a state of debility from which he never afterwards completely recovered.

By the advice of his physicians, and at the request of his friends, that he should at length pay some regard to his health, he necessarily omitted his public sermons and lectures in divinity. He still however continued to devote day and night to the dictating and writing of various letters to different parts of Europe, and very frequently uttered the following sentence: "How unpleasant to me is an idle!" thought even then such of us as enjoyed a good state of health, might justly be regarded idlers when compared with him. A clear proof of this is afforded by his publishing the last edition of his "Institutes of the Christian Religion," both in Latin and French languages. He this year published rather entirely new Commentaries upon Isaiah, than a revision of his former labours on that prophet, as they had been given to the world by Galar, who took them down in writing from the lips of Calvin when lecturing on that part of Scripture.

The following year was distinguished by the peace of Chateau Cambresis, and the alliance concluded between two of the most powerful kings of Europe, Ferdinand of Spain, and Henry II of France. The republic of Geneva would, perhaps, have been destroyed this year, had not the plans of the papists, who abused the unsuspecting disposition of Henry, been providentially prevented. Henry undoubtedly enacted the most severe laws against the Protestants, and imprisoned some of the senators, who contended only for mildness in religious affairs, until a general council should be convened. The first step proposed to be taken for the destruction of Geneva was the restoring of the territory of Savoy to its former governor the duke. Calvin, though feeble in body, steadily continued his labours in Geneva, confirmed the churches most severely afflicted by such a trial, together with all the brethren, and never ceased during this eventful period, to solicit aid from the Lord with unremitted and importunate supplications. But, behold! in the midst of this terror, whose powerful influence extended in all direction, both near and remote, the king of France, in preparing for the celebration of the nuptials which confirmed the peace, received a mortal wound in a tournament, inflicted by the hand of the prefect of the royal guards, to whom the king had a short time before given orders to arrest those senators who pleaded for mild treatment in religious transactions. The following conduct of Cardinal Lorrain showed his wish to appear desirous to expiate the untimely fate of king Henry, by causing Annes de Bourge to undergo the most unjust death on the 21st of December, a counsellor of the most extensive learning, a senator of the most shaken integrity, and of the most distinguished holiness, who at last suffered as a martyr for Christ.

Geneva, however, by the peculiar form of God, during that very period, — a circumstance almost beyond the bounds of credibility, as if the Lord had again repeatedly caused a most shining light to arise from the midst of the thickest darkness,

— was inspired with such confidence, that in the very year, and almost moment, when those powerful princes were conspiring for its destruction, the inhabitants, encouraged by Calvin, erected splendid buildings for a public seminary. Eight masters for youth, and several public professors of Hebrew and Greek, philosophy and divinity, adorned this college. It was dedicated in a solemn manner, before a full assembly of the people, in the first church of that city, to the most high and holy God, where the laws which related to the object of this most useful and pious institution, and its perpetual confirmation, were for the first time read and published.

In the following year Calvin was invidiously accused by some, of having excited certain leaders against Francis 2d, heir of the kingdom of France, in the disastrous tumults which took place between the papists and Protestants at Amboise. Calvin, however, I know for a certainty, had never been made acquainted with this insurrection, and he always openly disapproved, in conversation, as well as by letters sent to his friends, of such violent attempts on the part of the reformed.

Francis Stancarus, of Mantua, as if Italy was doomed to be ruinous to the religious prosperity of Poland, began this year to propagate the opinion, that “Christ was Mediator only according to the flesh,” and to accuse all those of Arianism who said, “Christ was Mediator in his divine nature,” as if the supporters of this doctrine made the Son inferior to the Father.

Melanchthon, Peter Martyr, and others, refuted, with much solidity of reasoning, this opinion, and calumnious view of Christ’s mediatorial character. On the application of the Poles, Calvin also at that time exposed in a very brief but nervous manner, the fallacy of that error. He at the same time foresaw on this occasion, what afterwards actually happened, that some inexperienced writers on this controversy, if they were not very circumspect, would, from a zeal to refute Stancarus, be in danger of vindicating the heresy of the Tritheists, and he expressly guarded them against Blandrata, and his followers, who had adopted this view. He was desirous to induce them to maintain the belief that Christ was Mediator in both natures, without multiplying his divinity. This advice, however, had no effect on such as were determined on ruin.

At this time also the Christian brethren, commonly called Waldenses of Bohemia, proposed certain questions to Calvin by two of their number sent to visit him. He satisfied their scruples, as was meet and right, in a kind manner, and exhorted them to enter into a close union with the other churches. At the same time many of the French reformers, after the death of Queen Mary, took refuge to England, relying upon the striking piety and humanity of her most serene highness Queen Elizabeth. The emigrants, with the consent of Edmund Grindal, Bishop of London, requested a minister should be sent from Geneva, for the purpose of establishing a French church there; and Nicholas Gallar was appointed to go to London for that purpose.

At the conclusion of the year 1560, Francis Second, king of France, died very suddenly, and at the very moment when in the midst of general despair, the Protestants of that kingdom looked only to God for help.

Scarcely had Charles the 9th, yet a child, commenced his reign, when letters written in his name, were brought to Geneva by a herald, in which he complained, that persons, sent from that city, were exciting disturbances in his kingdom. He requested their immediate recall, stating that he would not pass over such a very just ground for revenge, if they refused to comply. Calvin, summoned by the senate, in his own name, and that of his colleagues, returned as answer, that at the request of the French churches, they had advised and exhorted men of tried faith, and unimpeachable life and conversation, and on whose qualifications for such a purpose they relied, to be in

readiness to assist their country, when soliciting the aid of their own people in the sacred cause of establishing a pure church. In undertaking this measure, they had not intended to excite disturbances in the state, but to teach the gospel of peace; and they were prepared, if any other accusation were alleged against them, to answer their opponents in the presence of the king himself. This business proceeded no further. Calvin and myself answered this year a work written by Tileman Heshusius, a most light and unreasonable author.

Calvin afterwards refuted the blasphemies then published at Lyons by Valentine Gentilis, against the creed of St. Athanasius. Calvin in the dedication of his Lectures on the prophet Daniel to the French churches, declares, as in a prophetic voice, that tempestuous and severe trials were hanging over their heads. At this very time a conference between the Romish prelates and the reformed ministers was held at Poissy, when Beza, in this august assembly of the realm, presented to King Charles 9th the confession of faith approved by the French churches, and many promised themselves the speedy subversion of popery. During this session Francis Baldwin, afterwards denominated Changeling, because he had altered his religious sentiments at least three, if not four times, and who before the last melancholy disaster that befell the French churches on the 24th of August, 1572, as appeared from the testimony of men of the greatest virtue and piety, was very desirous even then to be united with the Protestants, and letters to this effect, written by the good Baldwin himself, were produced at the synod. He, being suborned by Cardinal Lorrain, and reconciled to the King of Navarre by base intrigues, offered a book to sale in the palace, published either by himself, or more probably by Cassander, who assumed the name, pious and moderate, which was worse than the Interim of Charles the 5th, because, under the mask of moderation, it defended all the corruptions of popery. Calvin, being informed by Beza of this circumstance, published a refutation of this work, to which soon after, some additions were made, that disclosed to every one the character and intention of Baldwin. This answer of Calvin, and another by Beza, excited the indignation of the lawyer, who continued, during the remainder of his life, to attack Calvin in the most vile manner.

He died, and at the same time ceased railing, in the year 1574, equally odious to God, to papists, and Protestants, who had been so frequently deceived by him, in the act either of carrying on a certain lawsuit in Paris, or pining away with envy, when he saw another person chosen in preference to himself, for the purpose of accompanying Henry the 3rd on his journey into Poland. In the year 1562, the French churches not only enjoyed peace, but toleration, sanctioned on certain terms by the royal edict itself. The King of Navarre was afterwards, by the artifices of the papists, suborned, when the Duke of Guise sounded the trumpet, perpetrated the horrid massacre at Vassy, and commenced, under such auspices, that civil war which continued during twelve years to involve wretched France in the horrors of one general conflagration. Language can convey no idea of the number and extent of care on account of the affliction of the church, which grieved Calvin's mind, whose bodily infirmities were likewise so much increased, that it might even be easily foreseen he was hastily advancing to a better state of existence. He still, however, continued to comfort and encourage such as suffered under affliction, and to preach, and deliver lectures on divinity. Calvin, this year, in the name of the Prince of Conde, and of all the states of the empire, then assembled at Frankfurt, as an answer to the calumnies which had been circulated in Germany, concerning the reformers.

It affords us satisfaction to mention, in this place, a circumstance that deserves to be stated. On the 19th of December, which was the Sabbath, the north wind having been

unusually high for two days, Calvin (although confined to bed by the gout) said, in the hearing of a number of friends, “I know not indeed what it means; I thought I heard last night a very loud sound of drums used in war, and I could not divest myself of the opinion that it was a reality. I entreat you let us pray, for some even of very great moment is undoubtedly taking place.” On the very day the battle at Dreux, distinguished for its great cruelty, was fought, the news of which reached Geneva a few days after.

In the following year, 1563, his bodily infirmities became so severe and complicated, that it is indeed incredible that such a brave and noble soul could have been any longer confined in a body of so much weakness, exhausted by so many labours, and worn down at last by such a variety of diseases. Yet when his body was even in such a state of debility, he could not be induced to spare himself. Nay, if at any period he relinquished his public duties, which he always did very much against his advice to such as consulted him, or, unfatigued himself, wearied his amanuensis by dictating to him. His two very serious Exhortations to the Polonese against the blasphemous enemies of the holy Trinity, his full answers, both oral and written, to the deputies of the synod of Lyons, his Commentaries on the four Books of Moses, written first in Latin, and translated by himself into French, and his Commentary on Joshua, his last undertaking, which he commenced this year, and finished on his death-bed, afford ample testimony to the truth of this assertion.

On the 6th of February, 1504, the beginning of his eternal happiness, and of our greatest and most long-continued grief, he delivered his last sermon with difficulty, in consequence of asthmatic oppression. From this period he taught no more in public, except that he was carried at different times, until the last day of March, to the meeting of the congregation, and addressed them in a few words. His diseases, contracted by incredible labours of mind and body, were various and complicated, as he states himself, in a letter written to his physicians at Montpellier. He was naturally of a spare and feeble frame, tending to consumption; during sleep he seemed almost awake, and spent a great part of the year in preaching, teaching, and dictating. For at least ten years he never dined, and the only food he took was at supper, so that it is astonishing how he could so long escape consumption. He frequently suffered from megrim, which he cured only by fasting, so as occasionally to refrain from food for thirty-six hours. But by overstraining his voice, and, as was discovered too late, by an immoderate use of aloes, he suffered from hemorrhoids, which degenerated into ulcers, and five years before his death he was occasionally attacked by a spitting of blood. Gout in the right leg, frequently returning pains of colic, and stone, which he had only felt a few months before his death, followed the removal of the quartan fever. The physicians neglected no remedies, and he observed the directions of his medical attendants with a strictness which none could surpass. In other respects, where the labours of the mind were concerned, he was so very careless of his health, that the most excruciating pains of the megrim never interrupted his preaching. Though tormented by so many diseases, no one ever heard him utter a word unbecoming a man of bravery, much less a Christian. Only lifting up his eyes to heaven, he used to say, “How long, O Lord!” for even in health he often had this sentence on his lips, when he spoke of the calamities of his brethren, with whose sufferings he was both day and night more afflicted than with any of his own. When admonished and entreated by us to forbear, at least in his sickness, from the labour of dictating, or at least of writing, “What, then,” he said, “would you have my Lord find me idle when he cometh?”

On the 10th of March, we, his brother ministers, on paying our visit together as usual, found him dressed, and sitting at the little table, where he was accustomed to write or study. On seeing us, he sat silent, resting his forehead on his hand for some length of time, as he frequently did when engaged in study and meditation; and then, with a voice occasionally interrupted, but a kind and cheerful countenance, he said, “I return you, dearest brethren, my most hearty thanks for all your solicitude on my account, and hope in a fortnight I shall be present, for the last time, at your consistory,” (which was established for discipline of morals,) “for I think that the Lord will then manifest his pleasure with respect to me, and take me to himself.” He did attend the consistory on the 24th of March, as usual, and when the business was finished in a peaceable manner, he observed, that he felt some further continuance was granted him by the Lord. He then took up a French New Testament, read to us himself some of the marginal annotations, and requested the opinion of his brethren, since he had undertaken to correct them. He was worse on the following day, having been fatigued with the labours of the preceding; but on the 27th he was carried to the door of the senate house, and being supported by two of his attendants, walked into the hall, and after proposing a new rector of the school to the senate, he uncovered his head, and returned them thanks for the favours already conferred upon him, and particularly for their attention in his last illness. “For,” he said, “I think I have entered this house for the last time.” Having uttered these words with difficulty, and a faltering voice, he took his last farewell of the senate, overwhelmed with sorrow, and bathed in tears. On the 2d of April, which was Easter day, although suffering from great debility, he was carried to church in a chair, was present with the whole congregation, received the Lord’s Supper from my hand, and joined in singing the hymn, with a trembling voice, but with manifest expressions of joy shining forth from his dying countenance. On the 25th of April he made his will in the following manner:

THE WILL OF JOHN CALVIN.

In the name of the Lord. — Amen. In the year 1564, and 25th day of April, Peter Chenalat, citizen and notary of Geneva, do witness and declare, that I was sent for by that excellent character, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and enrolled citizen of the same, who, being indisposed in body, but sound in mind, said he was desirous to make his testament, and to express the judgment of his last will; and requested me to take it down, and write what he should dictate and declare by word of mouth; which I profess I immediately did, and wrote down word by word as he pronounced and dictated, without omission or addition, in the following form, dictated by him:

In the name of the Lord. — Amen. I, John Calvin, minister of the word of God in the church of Geneva, finding myself so much oppressed and afflicted with various diseases, that I think the Lord God has determined speedily to remove me out of this world, have ordered to be made and written, my testament, and declaration of my last will, in form and manner following: First, I give thanks to God, that taking compassion on me whom he had created, and placed in this world, he not only delivered me by his power out of the deep darkness of idolatry, into which I was plunged, that he might bring me into the light of his gospel, and make me a partaker of the doctrine of salvation, of which I was most unworthy; that with the same goodness and mercy he has graciously and kindly borne with my multiplied transgressions and sins, for which I deserved to be rejected and cut off by him; and has also exercised towards me such great compassion and clemency, that he has condescended to use my labour in preaching and publishing the truth of his gospel. I also testify and declare, that it is my full intention to pass the remainder of my life in

the same faith and religion, which he has delivered to me by his gospel; having no other defence or refuge of salvation than his gratuitous adoption, on which alone my safety depends. I also embrace with my whole heart the mercy which he exercises towards me for the sake of Jesus Christ, atoning for my crimes by the merits of his death and passion, that in this way satisfaction may be made for all my transgressions and offenses, and the remembrance of them blotted out. I farther testify and declare that, as a suppliant, I humbly implore of him to grant me to be so washed and purified by the blood of that sovereign Redeemer, shed for the sins of the human race, that I may be permitted to stand before his tribunal in the image of the Redeemer himself. I likewise declare, that according to the measure of grace and mercy which God has vouchsafed me, I have diligently made it my endeavour, both in my sermons, writings, and commentaries, purely and incorruptly to preach his word, and faithfully to interpret his sacred Scriptures. I testify and declare, that in all the controversies and disputes, which I have conducted with the enemies of the gospel, I have made use of no craftiness, nor corrupt and sophistical arts, but have been engaged in defending the truth with candour and sincerity.

But, alas! my study, and my zeal, if they deserve the name, have been so remiss and languid, that I confess innumerable things have been wanting in me to discharge the duties of my office in an excellent manner; and unless the infinite bounty of God had been present, all my study would have been vain and transient. I also acknowledge that unless the same goodness had accompanied me, the endowments of mind bestowed upon me by God, must have made me more and more chargeable with guilt and inactivity before his tribunal. And on these grounds I witness and declare, that I hope for no other refuge of salvation than this alone, — that since God is a Father of mercy, he will show himself a Father to me, who confess myself a miserable sinner. Further, I will, after my departure out of this life, that my body be committed to the earth in that manner, and with those funeral rites, which are usual in this city and church, until the day of the blessed resurrection shall come. As for the small patrimony which God has bestowed upon me, and which I have determined to dispose of in this will, I appoint Anthony Calvin, my very dearly beloved brother, my heir, but only as a mark of respect. Let him take charge of, and keep as his own, my silver goblet, which was given me as a present by Mr.

Varanne: and I desire he will be content with it. As for the residue of my property, I commit it to his care with this request, that he restore it to his children at his death. I bequeath also to the school for boys, ten golden crowns, to be given by my brother and legal heir, and to poor strangers the same sum. Also to Jane, daughter of Charles Costans and of my half-sister by the paternal side, the sum of ten crowns.

Furthermore, I wish my heir to give, on his death, to Samuel and John, sons of my said brother, my nephews, out of my estate, each forty crowns, after his death; and to my nieces Ann, Susan, and Dorothy, each thirty golden crowns. To my nephew David, as a proof of his light and trifling conduct, I bequeath only twenty-five golden crowns.

This is the sum of all the patrimony and property which God hath given me, as far as I am able to ascertain, in books, movables, my whole household furniture, and all other goods and chattels. Should it however prove more, I desire it may be equally distributed between my nephews and nieces aforesaid, not excluding my nephew David, should he, by the favour of God, return to a useful manner of life.

Should it however exceed the sum already written, I do not think it will be attended with much difficulty, especially after paying my just debts, which I have given in charge to my said brother, on whose fidelity and kindness I confide. On this account I

appoint him executor of this my last testament with Laurence de Normandie, a character of tried worth, giving them full power and authority, without a more exact command and order of court, to make an inventory of my goods. I give them also power to sell my movables, that from the money thus procured they may fulfil the conditions of my above-written will, which I have set forth and declared this 25th of April, in the year of our Lord 1504. JOHN CALVIN.

When I, Peter Chenalat, the above-mentioned notary, had written this last will, the same John Calvin immediately confirmed it by his usual subscription and handwriting. On the following day, April 26th, 1564, the same tried character, John Calvin, commanded me to be called, together with Theodore Beza, Raymond Chauvet, Michael Cops, Louis Enoch, Nicholas Colladon, James de Bordes, ministers and preachers of the word of God in this church of Geneva, and also the excellent Henry Stringer, professor of arts, all citizens of Geneva, and in their presence he hath declared and testified that he dictated to me this his will in the words and form above written. He ordered me also to recite it in their hearing, who had been called for that purpose, which I profess to have done, with a loud voice, and in an articulate manner. After thus reading it aloud, he testified and declared it to be his last will and testament, and desired it to be ratified and confirmed. As a testimony and corroboration of this, he requested them all to witness the same will with their hands. This was immediately done by them on the day and year above written, at Geneva, in the street called the Canons, in the house of the said testator. In proof and witness of this I have written and subscribed with my own hand, and sealed with the common seal of our supreme magistrate, the will above mentioned. P. CHENALAT Having made this will, Calvin sent to inform the four syndics, and all the senators, that he wished once more before he departed this life, to address them in the senate-room, whither he hoped to be carried the following day.

The senators answered, they would rather come to him, and requested him to have a regard to his health. The next day they all repaired from the senate-room to the house of Calvin. After mutual salutations, and an apology on his part, because they had waited on him, when it was his duty to have visited them, he commenced by stating “that had for some time desired to have this interview, but deferred it until he felt more certainly assured of his dissolution.” He then said, “I return you my warmest thanks, honoured Lords, for conferring such great honours on me, who had done nothing to merit them, and for manifesting such forbearance towards my numerous infirmities, which I always considered the strongest proof of your uncommon kindness.

Though in the discharge of my ministerial duty I have been engaged in various disputes, and have endured numerous insults, a necessary part of the trials even of the best characters, yet I know and acknowledge that none of these have befallen me from any fault of yours. I earnestly entreat you also, if I have not performed my duty in any instance as ought, to ascribe it rather to want of ability, than to want of will to serve you. For I can testify, with sincerity, that I have felt a deep and lively interest in the welfare of your republic; and, if I have not fully discharged all the duties of my station, I have certainly exerted myself to the utmost in promoting the public welfare. “Were I not to acknowledge that the Lord has sometimes on his part condescended to grant that my services have not been altogether without advantage to you, I should justly deserve to be charged with dissimulation. But I again earnestly entreat your pardon for having performed so little either in my private or public capacity, in comparison with what I ought to have done. I certainly grant with the greatest readiness, that I am very much indebted to you on account of your patience in

enduring that vehemence of mine, which has sometimes been immoderate. I trust God himself has pardoned all these my sins. f24 “Touching the doctrine you have heard from me, I testify that I have not taught the word of God entrusted to me in a rash and uncertain manner, but with purity and sincerity. Had I acted otherwise, I should have been as fully assured of God’s anger, already impending over my head, as I now feel confident that my labours in teaching have not been displeasing to him. And I testify this before God, and in your presence, so much the more willingly, because I cannot doubt that Satan, after his usual manner, will raise up wicked, vain, light-minded, ambitious men, to corrupt the sound doctrine which you have heard from me as the servant of God.”

Then passing, to those immense benefits which they had received from the Lord, he said, “I am the person who can best testify from how many and great dangers the hand of the Lord hath delivered you. You see, moreover, in what circumstances you are placed. Whether in prosperity or adversity, keep this truth, I beseech you, constantly before your eyes, — that it is God alone who can give stability to kingdoms and states, and on this account it is his pleasure to be worshipped by mortal men.

Remember it was the testimony of the illustrious David, that he fell when he enjoyed profound peace; from which he never would have arisen, had not the Lord, with singular favour, stretched out his own hand to his relief. What then may the lot of such little weak mortals, when this prince, distinguished for power and fortitude, experienced such a fall! It requires, therefore, great humility of mind, that you may walk with care and great fear of God, relying on his defence alone. You will thus be assured of the continuance of the same protection which you have hitherto so often in reality experienced, and may proceed with stability under his aid, even when your safety and security may, as it were, hang suspended from a slender thread. If your affairs are prosperous, be careful, I request you, not to exalt yourselves, like the profane, but rather, with deep submission of mind, return thanks to God for all your blessings. If your affairs are adverse, and death, therefore, surrounds you on all sides, still trust in him who raises up even the dead. Nay, consider on such an occasion with the greatest earnestness, that God is in this manner awakening you from sloth, that you may learn more fully to look to him alone with entire confidence. “If you would preserve this republic in security, see to it with unremitting care, that the sacred seat of authority, in which God hath placed you, be not defiled with the pollution of sin; for he is totally sovereign King of Kings, and Lord of all lords, who will honour those that honour him; but, on the other hand, will cast down, and cover with disgrace, those by whom he is despised. Worship him, therefore, according to his precepts, and let your minds be more and more intensely directed to the obeying of his will, for we are always at a very great distance from the performance of our duty. I know the temper and manner of you all, and am aware of your needing exhortation. There is none, even of those who excel, without many imperfections; and let each in this case examine himself with care, and ask of the Lord the supply of his known deficiencies. “We see what vices reign in the greatest number of the assemblies convened in the world. Some, cold and indifferent to the public interest, pursue with eagerness their own private emoluments; others, are only intent upon the gratification of their own passions; some make a bad use of the distinguished talents bestowed upon them by God; while others are vain-glorious, and confidently demand that the rest of their fellow-counsellors should sanction their opinions. “I admonish the aged not to envy such young persons as they find to be endowed by God with particular gifts; and I warn younger persons to conduct themselves with modesty, and to avoid all presumption. Let there be no interruption of one another in the performance of your

duties. Shun animosities, and all that acrimony which has diverted so many from a proper line of conduct in the discharge of their office. You will avoid these evils, if each of you confines himself within his proper sphere, and all perform with fidelity the part entrusted to them by the state. In civil trials, I beseech you to avoid all favour, or enmity; use no crooked arts to pervert justice; let none, by any plausible address of his own, prevent the laws from having their due effect; nor depart from equity and goodness. If the evil passions excite temptations in any one, let him resist them with firmness, and look to Him by whom he has been placed on the seat of judgment, and ask the same God for the guidance of his Holy Spirit. “Finally, I beseech you to pardon all my infirmities, which I acknowledge and confess before God, and his angels, and in your presence also, my honourable lords.”

Having finished his discourse, he offered up a prayer to the almighty and most merciful God, to shower down upon them, in still greater abundance, his best gifts, and by his Holy Spirit to direct all their consultations to the welfare of the whole republic. He then gave his right hand to each separately, and bade them adieu. All the senators departed in tears, manifesting deep sorrow, as if it was their last interview with a common father.

Calvin addressed all of us ministers under the jurisdiction of Geneva, who were assembled in his chamber, and at his request, on the 28th of April, in the following terms: — “Stand fast, my brethren, after my decease, in the work which you have begun, and be not discouraged, for the Lord will preserve this church and republic against the threats of its enemies. Let all divisions be removed far from you, and embrace one another with mutual charity. Consider on all occasions what you owe to the church in which the Lord hath stationed you, and let nothing draw you from it. It will indeed be easy for such as are wearied of their flocks to find means for escaping from their duty by intrigue, but they will learn by experience that the Lord cannot be deceived. “On my first arrival in this city the gospel was indeed preached, but every thing was in the greatest confusion, as if Christianity consisted in nothing else than the overturning of images. Not a few wicked men arose in the church, from whom I suffered many great indignities; but the Lord our God himself so strengthened me, and banished all fear even from my mind, who am by no means distinguished for natural courage (I state the real fact,) that I was enabled to resist all their attempts. I returned hither from Strasbourg, in obedience to a call, against my inclination; because I thought it would not be productive of any advantage. I knew not what the Lord had determined, and my situation was full of very many, and very great difficulties. But proceeding in this work, I perceived at length that the Lord had in reality blessed my labours.

Do you, therefore, brethren, persisting your vocation; preserve the established order; use at the same time every exertion to retain the people in obedience to the doctrine delivered, for there are yet among you some wicked and stubborn characters. Affairs, as you see, are not now in an unsettled state, on which account you will be more criminal before God, if they are subverted by your inactivity. I declare my brethren, that I have lived united with you in the strictest bonds of true and sincere affection, and I now take my leave of you with the same feelings. If you have at any time found me too peevish under my disease, I entreat your forgiveness, and I return you my warmest thanks, because during my confinement you have discharged the burden of the duties assigned me.”

After this address he reached out his right hand to each of us, and we then took leave of him with hearts overwhelmed with sorrow and grief, and eyes flowing with tears.

On the 2d of May, having been informed by Farel, in a letter, that he was determined, though now eighty years old, and in a state of health rendered infirm by age, to come and see him from Neuchatel, for Viret's residence was at a yet greater distance, he thus answered him in Latin: — "Farewell, my best and most faithful brother! And since God is pleased you should survive me in this world, live mindful of our friendship, which has been of service to the church of God, and whose fruits we shall enjoy in heaven. Do not expose yourself to fatigue on my account. I respire with difficulty, and continually expect to draw my last breath. It is sufficient happiness for me that I live and die in Christ, who is gain to his people in life and death. Again farewell, with the brethren. — Geneva, 2d May, 1564."

The good old man, however, came to Geneva, and after they had enjoyed an interview with each other, he returned the next day to Neuchatel.

Calvin spent the remainder of his days, until death, in almost constant prayer. His voice indeed was interrupted by the difficulty of respiration; but his eyes, which retained their brilliancy to the last, uplifted to heaven, and his serene countenance, were certain proofs of the fervour of his devotion, and of his trust and confidence in God. He often in his prayers repeated the words of David, "Lord, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it;" and at times those of Hezekiah, "I did mourn like a dove."

Once also I heard him say, "Thou, Lord, bruise me, but I am abundantly satisfied, since it is thy hand." His doors must have stood open day and night, if all had been admitted, who from sentiments of duty were desirous to see him; but as he could not, from difficulty in speaking, direct his discourse to them, he requested they would rather pray for him, than be solicitous about paying their visits. Often, also, though I always found him glad to receive me, he was very scrupulous respecting the least interruptions thus given to the duties of my office, so sparing was he of the time which he knew ought to be spent in the service of the church; and his conscientious feelings, lest he should give the smallest trouble to his friends, exceeded the bounds of moderation. Such was the manner of comforting both himself and friends until the 19th of May, when we ministers were accustomed to meet relative to the censure of morals, and to take a friendly meal together two days before Whitsuntide, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. He expressed a wish that the common supper should on this day be prepared at his house, and rallying his little strength that remained, was carried from his bed to the adjoining chamber, when he said, "I come to see you, my brethren, for the last time, never more to sit down with you at table." Such was the commencement of one of the most melancholy repasts we ever took. He then offered up a prayer, took a small portion of food, and discoursed with us at supper in as cheerful a manner as his weakness permitted. Before supper was fully finished, he ordered himself to be carried back to the adjoining chamber, and addressing the company with a distinctly smiling countenance, said, "This intervening wall will not prevent me from being present with you in spirit, though absent in body." His prediction was fulfilled, for from this day he always lay in an horizontal posture, his small body, except his countenance, which was very little changed, being so much emaciated, that breath only remained. On the 27th of May, the day of his death, he appeared stronger, and spoke with less difficulty; but this was the last effort of nature, for about eight o'clock in the evening, certain symptoms of dissolution suddenly manifested themselves. When one of his domestics brought one of the brethren, and me, who had only just left him, this intelligence, I returned immediately with all speed, and found he had died in so very tranquil a manner, that without his feet and

hands being in any respect discomposed, or his breathing increased, his senses, judgment, and in some measure his voice, remaining entire to his very last gasp, he appeared more to resemble one in a state of sleep than death. Thus this splendid light of the reformation was taken from us with the setting sun. During that night, and the following day, great lamentation prevailed throughout the city, for the republic regretted the want of one of its wisest citizens, the church deplored the death of its faithful pastor, the college sorrowed for such an incomparable professor, and all grieved for the loss of a common parent and comforter bestowed upon them by God himself. Many of the citizens were desirous to see him after he was dead, and could with difficulty be torn from his remains. Some strangers, also, who had come from a distance with a view to see and hear him, among whom was the very distinguished English ambassador to the French court, were very desirous to see only the body of the deceased. At first, indeed, they were admitted; but afterwards, because the curiosity was excessive, and it was necessary to silence the calumnies of enemies, his friends considered the best plan would be to close the coffin next morning, being the Lord's Day; his corpse, as usual, having been wrapped in a linen cloth.

At two o'clock in the afternoon on Sunday, his body was carried to the common burying-place, called Plein Palais, without extraordinary pomp.

His funeral, however, was attended by the members of the senate, the pastors, all the professors of the college, and a great proportion of the citizens. The abundance of tears shed on this occasion afforded the strongest evidence of the sense which they entertained of their loss.

According to his own directions, no hillock, no monument was erected to his memory, on which account I wrote the following epitaph: — Why in this humble and unnoticed tomb Is Calvin laid — the dread of falling Rome, Mourn'd by the good, and by the wicked fear'd.

By all who knew his excellence revered; from whom ev'n virtue's self might virtue learn, and young and old its value may discern? 'T was modesty, his constant friend on earth, that laid this stone, unsculptured with a name; Oh! Happy turf, enrich'd with Calvin's worth, More lasting far than marble is thy fame!

He lived fifty-four years, ten months, and seventeen days, and spent half of this time in the sacred ministry of the gospel. His stature was of the middle size; his complexion dark and pale; his eyes brilliant even till death, expressed the acuteness of his understanding. His dress, neither highly ornamental nor slovenly, was well suited to his singular modesty; his victuals were so moderate that they were very far removed from the pride of luxury, or the littleness of parsimony; his diet was very sparing, since during many years he took only one meal a day, assigning the weakness of his stomach as the cause. He lived nearly without sleep. His power of memory was almost incredible; so that he could immediately recognize, after the lapse of many years, any whom he had only once seen; and though he had been frequently interrupted for many hours while in the act of dictating, he would, without being reminded, forthwith resume the thread of his subject; and never forget, though overpowered by an infinite multiplicity of business, such things as it was important for him in his ministerial character to know. His judgment was so sound and exact on all subjects, that his decisions seemed almost oracular; nor do I remember an instance of any error being committed by those who followed his advice.

He despised an artificial eloquence, and was sparing in his words, but all accomplished writer; and no theologian, until the present time, it may be said, without disparaging any, hath written with greater purity, gravity, and judgment than Calvin, though none either in our own age, or that of our fathers, has written so much as our

author. By close study, during his youth, by uncommon accuracy of judgment, confirmed by the practice of dictating to an amanuensis, he was always able to speak with propriety and gravity, and his language in conversation differed very little from his written compositions. The consistency and uniformity of his doctrine from first to last, are scarcely to be paralleled in any divine of the present time. With respect to his manners, though he was naturally grave, yet, in the intercourse of social life, no one was distinguished by more suavity.

He exercised great prudence and forbearance towards all such infirmities in others, as are consistent with integrity, so that he did not overawe, or raise the blush in his weak brethren, by unreasonable or too severe reproof, nor cherish their vices by connivance or adulation, he was as severe and indignant all enemy of flattery and dissimulation, and of every kind of wickedness, especially where religion was concerned, as he was a keen and ardent friend of truth, simplicity, and candour. He was naturally of an irritable temperament, and this fault was augmented by the excessive laboriousness of his life. But the Spirit of the Lord had so taught him to moderate his anger, that he was never heard to utter a word unbecoming a good man, or which went beyond the bounds of virtue; nor did he ever speak with rashness, unless his mind was roused when treating on the subject of religion, or when engaged with obstinate characters. No attentive reader of the lives of those men who, even in profane history, displayed more than usual attachment to any kind of heroism, will be astonished to find so many excellent qualities and splendid virtues, both of a domestic and public nature, to have called forth such a host of enemies.

Nor will any one be surprised that such a most undaunted defender of sound doctrine, and so steady a follower of purity of life, should have experienced such violent opposition from the enemies of true religion and morality. But he will consider this fact chiefly to be worthy of his astonishment, that one man alone, like some Christian Hercules, could have been sufficient for subduing so many monsters by the use of that most powerful club, the word of God. Calvin achieved as many triumphs as Satan raised up enemies to oppose him, for it is certain he had none, among the great crowd of his adversaries, but such as had proclaimed war both against piety and virtue. Those enemies brand Calvin as a heretic, but Christ suffered under the same reproach, and that even from the priests themselves, he was expelled, they say, from Geneva; true, but he was solicited to return. What happened to the apostles? What to Athanasius?

What to Chrysostom? Many other charges are brought against him by another class of enemies, but what are they? He is charged with ambition, yea, with aspiring at a new Popedom; — an extraordinary accusation against a man, who preferred this kind of life, this republic, this church, which I may truly call the very seat and abode of poverty, to all other honours. They say again that he coveted wealth. Yet all his worldly goods, including his library, which brought a high price, scarcely amounted to three hundred crowns; so that he might very justly, as well as very elegantly, in order to refute this calumny of unparalleled impudence, use the following words: “If I fail in my lifetime to persuade some people that I am not a lover of money, my death will convince them of the contrary.”

The senate can certainly testify to the smallness of his stipend, and so far was he from being dissatisfied with what they gave him, as positively to refuse an advance when offered. Some object against him, that his brother, Anthony Calvin, divorced his former wife for adultery, when she was discovered. What would they have said had he continued to live with her?

If the dishonour of an unchaste female is brought against him, what shall become of the family of Jacob, of David, nay, of the Son of God himself, who expressly marked out a devil, as one of his own disciples? His numerous labours answer the charge of his delighting in luxury and indulgence. Some are not ashamed, both in their speeches and writings, to accuse him of reigning in the church and state at Geneva, where he had, as it were, elevated himself to a high tribunal. Claudius Sponse, of the Sorbonne, the rhapsodist, dared to accuse him, in a very malevolent book, of introducing some living man, wholly unknown, instead of a dead one, whom he pretended to raise to life in the presence of the whole people, which is as disgraceful a falsehood, as if he had said that he was Pope of Rome. What accusation will not some dare to bring against him? But such false statements require no refutation; and neither those who were acquainted with so distinguished a person during his life, nor the judicious in future ages, who shall form their opinion of his character from his writings, will pay the least regard to such gross and unfounded calumnies.

These are the principal events in the life and death of Calvin, which have come under my own immediate observation during the last sixteen years. I feel myself justly warranted to declare, that in him was presented to all men, one of the most beautiful and illustrious examples of the pious life and triumphant death of a real Christian; and as it is easy for malevolence to calumniate his character, so the most exalted virtue will find it difficult to imitate his conduct.

