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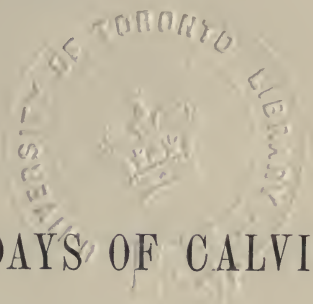

COLLEGE DAYS OF CALVIN.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

THE design of this little volume is to set forth the facts in the early life of John Calvin, in a manner that may interest the youth of Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes. If imagination has lent a very slight tinge to a few passages, it has been permitted simply to give life to reality, and vividness to facts. There is no departure from the events and experiences in the student-life of the immortal reformer. The facts are presented substantially as they are given by his biographers, particularly, Dr. D'Aubigne, in his "History of the Reformation in the time of Calvin."

The "College Days" include the years when Calvin studied law and theology at Orleans, Bourges, and Paris, extending to the time when he was twenty years of age, and covering almost the entire period of his life in France. It will be followed by a volume of similar size and design, entitled "Young Calvin in Paris."

The author is persuaded that the youth of our times need to study more attentively the history of Protestantism and the lives of the Reformers, as one means of guarding them against many great evils that are threatening the true Church of Christ. If this unpretending volume shall

contribute to this end, he will hope, that certain broken hours of recreation from severer studies for the pulpit, and from the pressing duties of a pleasant pastorate, have been well employed in the service of the Divine Master, to whom an account must be rendered for all time and for every talent.

W. M. B.

TRENTON, N. J.

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CHAPTER I.

THE LITTLE CHAPLAIN.

A YOUNG student was sitting in his room, in Paris, one evening, in the year 1519, thinking what he should do for an hour. His college lessons were learned, his Latin and Greek books laid aside, his pen was in his hand, and he wished to quiet his mind by writing a little. "July 10; this is my cousin John's birth-day," he said to himself. "I will write to him." Let us imagine ourselves looking over his shoulder, with his permission, as he thus writes:

"My serious cousin: If I should say *ego amat*, you would think my love better than my Latin. You would smile for once, and correct me by replying *amo*, and then you would have some of the doctors of the Sorbonne down upon you. You are but ten years old, and some of them may be seventy, yet I hope that what little Latin you know, is more correct than theirs. They so hate all new ideas, that they prefer the old wrong way to the new right

way. What is strange is, that the priests hate good grammar more than they do bad lives. But I must be careful what I say, for you will not allow anything to be said against the priests."

"I wish your father was able to send you to a good school; do not let him rest till he does. But do not study too hard. You do not play half enough. If I were writing to the Montmor children, I would say play less and study more; but you need to learn how to fish in the Oise and hunt in the woods, as the cavaliers did in the times of Charlemagne, when our good town of Noyon was the capital of the empire. When I am home again I must take you to Pont l'Eveque,* and give you a romp in your grandfather's cooper-shop. I do not mean that play is the grand object of a boy's life, but only that it may help to give him health and cheerfulness. Need I tell you what to live for? Your kind parents will do that; but yet as this is your birth-day, I may remind you that you ought to be a good Christian."

"I am delighted with my studies. * * * I must tell you of a dear old man, who is one of our teachers. His name is Doctor James Lefevre.† I am proud of him because he is a Picard. He was once a poor boy in the village of Etaples, where he was born about sixty-five years ago. Perhaps there

*A village near Noyon in Picardy. There is another Pont l'Eveque south of the mouth of the river Seine.

†Sometimes spelled Faber.

is some hope for us Noyon lads, if we will be as studious and pious as he has been. He is a small man of a mean appearance, but his great soul, his vast learning, his deep piety and his powerful eloquence make him the most charming man in the university. He has travelled into Asia and Africa, and it is whispered about here that he saw things in Rome which he does not consider to be Christian, but of which it will not do to tell. We all know that he reads and talks about the Holy Scriptures, as few others do in our day. A child can understand him when he preaches. Some of the students are beginning to make an uproar about the gospel that he preaches to us. They think he is fighting against the church. But I am sure that he tells us more about Jesus Christ than we ever heard before.* The students all love him, unless there be some who turn everything holy into ridicule. But it seems that nearly every priest in all Paris hates him, just because he would have us study the Bible and follow the Lord Jesus Christ."

"I suppose your father will read this letter, and I want him to be ready to study a book which I will soon send him. It was written by Lefevre. I

* "It is probable that among the small number of scholars who defended the truth, was young Peter Robert Olivetan, born at Noyon, about the close of the fifteenth century, who afterwards translated the Bible into French, from Lefevre's version, and who seems to have been the first to draw the attention of a youth of his family, [John Calvin,] also a native of Noyon, to the gospel."

D'Aubigne.

do not yet know whether the lovely old man is right or not, but he says that if we become as little children, and simply believe in Jesus, we will be saved. Does this mean that I am to confess my many sins to Jesus, and not to the priest? that I need not go to mass, nor pray to the saints, nor pay money to be confessed, nor believe in images, vows, and relics? Is the church of our fathers all wrong? Must we look to Christ, and not to the great Roman church, to interpret the Holy Scriptures? Oh, I do not know as yet what to think! And I hear it said, that we shall be punished if we dare to believe such things as the good Lefevre teaches." * * *

We imagine the young student fears that he has written too much about the gospel, which is beginning to be read and believed in Paris. He dares not add more, and sending many messages of affection, he signs it—Peter Robert Olivetan. He directs it to his cousin John, in care of Gerard Calvin,* apostolic notary and secretary to the bishop of Noyon.

Let us follow the letter, as it goes about seventy-five miles northward from Paris. The mail-carrier is weary enough, when he approaches near to the old town of Noyon. He is glad when his eye first catches the sight of the ancient Gothic Cathedral, and he hastes to a house quite under the shadow of its towers. There he leaves a large packet of

* The family name was Cauvin, or Chauvin, until latinized into *Calvin* by the great reformer.

letters; for Gerard Calvin holds several important offices, both in the church and in the state, and he expects a full budget whenever the courier comes. It is dark, and the secretary takes his letters to the lamp and begins to sort them over. His oldest son Charles eagerly watches him. The address upon one of them draws his eye very closely. He turns it over and over; he cannot be mistaken; it is certainly for John, his second son. He looks about the room, and asks, "Charles, where is your brother John?"

"He went into the garden with mother."

"Call him." Charles starts, for Gerard has taught his children to obey at once, when commanded. "No, you need not call him now." Gerard thinks of how his excellent wife, Jean Lefranc, of Cambray, has long been accustomed to spend an hour of the evening beneath an open sky, in communion with God. And if she is there praying with his favourite child, or telling him of the Lord Jehovah, who counts the stars and numbers his people, she will know best when to break the devotions of her solitude. The heavenly Father may be employing such hours to partly prepare John Calvin for grasping the most sublime thoughts concerning the glory and sovereignty of the omnipresent and merciful God. Steps are heard near the window, and the voice of a child, saying, "Mother, will you show me the stars again, and tell me more about the good Lord?"

The letter is soon in John's hand, and he is eager to read it. His father watches him with delight, almost wishing to help his son to make out every word. But John is quite independent, as if the letter were meant to be one of great privacy. He is naturally shy and timid, and he now wears meekly the honour of having a letter from Paris.

"Is it from your uncle Richard?" asks Gerard, rather impatient to have a hint of what is so interesting to his son.

"It is from cousin Robert. But who is Doctor Lefevre?"

"What! Doctor Lefevre? A man whom it is just as well for my son to know very little about."

"He must be a good man, for hear what Robert says about him." Gerard's hearing was never more acute. He, as the secretary of the bishop, had learned many rumours about Lefevre, most of which were false, and he regarded the aged doctor as a dangerous man in the church. He could scarcely refrain from taking the letter out of his son's hand, while listening to it.

"So Robert does not know what to think," said Gerard. "Very well, if he goes on at this rate, the church will teach him. I hope my sons will never dare to believe anything contrary to the church."

"Do you think," asked Charles, "that any body would punish cousin Robert? How could they? What would they do?" John also urged several like inquiries.

Gerard was a clear-headed man, but he did not like so many questions at once, especially on such a subject. He wished his children to have a horror of "heresy," but if he should tell them that their cousin Robert might be thrown into prison, cruelly treated, and perhaps burned at last, they would feel that his persecutors were altogether in the wrong. After evading their questions, he said, "John must give me the letter."

"Why, father, is it not mine?"

"Yes, but you are not your own master. The letter may do you a great deal of harm. Robert ought never to have written to you about his doubts and skeptical opinions, and I shall take care to open the next one and see whether it is fit for you to read. Let me have it."

It was hard for John to give up his treasure, so precious to him and read only once, but his father must be obeyed. This was the great law of his home. Gerard was strict, and sometimes severe; his children must bend to the inflexible rule of duty. Yet he was kind; he loved his children, and often showed them great tenderness, particularly just after enforcing some rigid command.

John had already taken refuge in his mother's arms, and was weeping, when his father said rather sternly, "Come to me." The child, naturally timid, and rendered still more so by his father's severity, shrank back at first, but seeing that the invitation would be enforced as a command, he went with a

plunge, as if he were braving the coldness of a bath, and flung himself upon his father's knee. Gerard drew him close to his breast, and John knew that he was loved. But still he wondered why he must be deprived of his letter, and what there was in it so bad that he must never read it again.

"Your father is not unkind," said Gerard with gentler voice. "He simply wants to keep all wrong ideas out of your head, and to have his dear little son safe from error. It would be an awful thing if you should learn to think ill of the good priests, and the holy mass, and the Catholic church. In these days there are too many young men who are beginning to talk like your cousin Robert. They get a few new ideas and become very independent. They imagine that the church is all wrong, and claim to have Christ as their teacher," (Gerard was speaking for Charles' benefit,) "and I want my children to have faith in the church."

"Yes," said the tender-hearted mother, "we wish our children to be good Catholics, and serve God as the bishop tells us to do."

"And if the excellent bishop would tell the young people a little more about confessing to the priests and attending mass," said Gerard, "it would be well. He should warn them against reading the Holy Scriptures for themselves, and tell them to listen to the poor and holy monks who preach to them. It was so when I was a boy, and I hope my sons will follow the old way."

Thus, Gerard Calvin sought to confirm his children in all the superstitions of popery, and make them submissive to the Romish church. He taught them to observe strictly all the outward devotions imposed by men who were but blind leaders of the blind. His wife, whose beauty and elegance would have won admiration at the royal court, and whose calm meditative piety would have marked her in those days for a nun, taught them something of the spiritual worship which they owed to God. She endeavoured to lead them into a higher region of religious life than mere formalism. It was not enough to direct them to a priest as their guide; she must bring them in prayer to the Saviour.

"Did you complete the arrangement for John's studies?" inquired the mother, wishing to change the subject.

"We did," replied Gerard, and the words aroused the boy from his sadness. There was a tear in his eye, but the eye was fixed upon his father's face. "He is to go to the mansion of the Montmors and study the same lessons as Claude de Hangest. The bishop will oversee their studies. As he is a Montmor, he will see that his young relatives pursue the right kind of learning. How will you like that, my son?"

"Nothing ever pleased me so much. I will study hard."

"But your cousin advises you not to neglect playing a good deal. I think he was wise on that

point. And Claude's younger brothers will be ready to help you in that, for they are wild enough."

Soon after this, John was placed in the neighbouring Montmor family, one of the noblest in all Picardy. His father had gained one object of his ambition. Proud of his precocious son, he hoped to see him become a scholar and a polished gentleman. Gerard had risen somewhat in the world. If he once felt it no reproach to be the son of a cooper at Pont l'Eveque, he did not now undervalue the dignity of holding high offices at Noyon. He had reached these honours by his abilities, sound judgment, and worthy character. It was clear to his good wife that he magnified his office. She was pleased that "her husband was known in the gates when he sat among the elders of the land." His two strong points were, to deal honestly with the state, and to keep heresy out of the church. He defined heresy to be anything that did not agree with the Church of Rome. He was highly esteemed by the clergy and the nobility of the district, and the bishop, Charles de Hangest, was pleased to have John under his general charge.

His mother daily missed her boy from the corner of the room, or the shade in the garden, where he had pored over his books almost from infancy, but she thought of him as her little Samuel placed under the care of an Eli, and dedicated to the Lord. She remembered the vows made when he was baptized in the church of St. Godoberte. Nor did she neglect

the little coat in completing the parallel. There was another strong point in the comparison; the younger brothers of Claude were quite as like the sons of Eli as their years would allow. We are not surprised to hear of their mocking an aged monk as he passes along the way.

"It is wicked to laugh at old men," is the rebuke that John gives them. They cease, for they feel the power of his influence.

"I was glad to hear your reproofs," the bishop tells him shortly afterwards; "come in and see me." But John shrinks from the splendid apartments of his patron and chooses to seek some corner where he may remain alone. Claude may seek him, sit down and study with him, and he is delighted. In such retirement his mind is forming itself to great thoughts.

Gerard was poor, but he felt bound, in honour, to pay for his son's board and books. He was proud to know that the lad excelled all his schoolfellows, and was their example in seriousness and morality. One day his cousin Robert's letter came to his mind with more force than usual. His feeling of loss had gradually worn away. But now he felt that he must see it. He knew that it must be among his father's papers. How easy to go to his desk, at some hour when his father was absent, and search for it. Who would ever know it? What a satisfaction to read again the few words that Robert had written about Christ! But no! his conscience

fortified him against the temptation to search a forbidden desk for a forbidden letter. He then began to think that all this was a temptation of the evil one to make him cherish Robert's doubts, and to neglect the duties which the priests laid upon him. He entered with new zeal into the formal devotions of the Romish Church. Many who noticed him said, "How well he says the *Pater Noster* and the *Ave Maria!* How familiar he is with the mass! He will yet be a priest!"

"A bishop, I hope," his father would have replied, "or something higher than that." Gerard had ambitious hopes concerning his son.

"Your son should be promoted," said the bishop one day to his secretary. "Put him into the college of the Capettes, along with Claude de Hangest." This college had been founded in Noyon, by Hugh Capet.

"Then I must live on less bread, so that my son may have more knowledge," replied Gerard. "But I will gladly do it."

"I can secure you an additional office. You can be treasurer of the county of Noyon."

"Then I shall be tempted with the public money."

"You can resist the temptation. You will get a little more salary, and I will see that the college does not bring you into debt."

The plan was effected, and soon the name of John Calvin was on the college-roll. So quiet and retiring was he, that his presence was scarcely known,

except to his class-mates, whom he surpassed in acuteness of mind and strength of memory. None of them could allure him into youthful follies or idle neglect. He took courage and reproved the evil deeds of his associates.

"To-morrow is *Corpus Christi*,"* said some of them. "We will have a holiday. What sport shall we have?" Various proposals were made.

"I shall walk in the procession," said John, with solemn tone, "and pay honour to the crucified body of the Lord Jesus."

"Pay honour to a mere wafer!" replied one of them, whose daring skepticism was much nearer the truth than the implicit faith of many Romish devotees in those times.

"Are you not ashamed to teach us your infidelity?" answered John Calvin, with knitted brow. "Are you not afraid of the curse of the most holy God?" They held their peace.

The next day all Noyon was astir, in gay dress, and with waving banners. The bishop walked with a Cardinal who had consented to grace the occasion; shoeless friars made a show of their bare feet and uncouth hoods; certain monks, who looked as if they lived richly in their convents, made a virtue of their pretended poverty, calling forth the cutting satire of the irreverent students; a train of priests chanted aloud in the streets; then came nobles,

* The day on which a wafer, representing the body of Christ, is carried by a procession through the streets.

professors, officials, citizens, women, children, everybody; all bore crosses in their hands, but in the long procession was a lad, who knew not that he was attracting attention, bearing aloft a sword with a cross-shaped hilt, instead of a crucifix; this was little Calvin. The priests wondered what he meant; and long after, when he became a mighty reformer, they remembered the incident, and said that it was a "presage of what he was one day to become, a man fighting against us under the pretence of preaching the cross." He was yet to wield the sword of truth.

"These colleges are death to our youth," said his grandfather, who had come from Pont l'Eveque to witness the display. "My little grandson will soon be a mere shadow if he does not take more recreation. Come home with me, and learn how to grow and be strong like an honest cooper. There is more health in one of my hammers, if you will make noise enough with it, than in all your books. And what is the use of all your learning?"

"It makes one very happy, and may make him useful after a while," replied the pale student.

"Happy indeed! You look as if you never sang a song or roared in laughter. Come, see our rustic boys; they will show you how to be as cheerful as the larks."

Rough as this unlearned grandfather was in some of his pleasantries, he was still the favourite of all the children. And John was delighted to

spend his summer vacation at the small cottage where his father was born. He needed exercise, and had he roamed over the hills, waded the brooks, and shouted in the woods, he might have gained more of the robust vigour of Farel and Luther, sharing with them in their boldness and power of endurance. But he seemed to be a born student, and we see him stealing away from the cottage and from the village lads, to a shade in the meadow, there to lie on the grass and stride on mentally into the "wonder-land of knowledge," far in advance of his class-mates.

The slender purse of Gerard lay heavy on his large heart. The education of his promising son was costing him more than he could afford. A new idea occurred to him during John's twelfth year. It was to devote him to the priesthood, attach him firmly to the church, and secure him a benefice. He knew that the Cardinal of Lorraine had been appointed an assistant bishop at the age of four years, in order to receive the salary. Pope Leo X. had been ordained at the age of seven, made an abbot at eight, and at thirteen a cardinal. Leo gave a cardinal's hat to Alphonzo of Portugal when he was eight years old. It was a common practice to confer upon some favourite child a title which secured to him certain revenues of the church. Custom made law, and the law seemed right in the eyes of most people of that age.

"It is whispered," said Gerard to the bishop,

"that the chaplain of La Gésine is about to resign: You know how I wish to bind my son to the church, and, though the salary is small, yet it would aid him."

"I understand; he shall have the chaplaincy. It will only cost him the loss of his hair; not so dear a sale as Samson made of his long locks." The benefice was conferred on the 21st of May, 1521, when John was not quite twelve years old.

On the eve of *Corpus Christi* he must undergo the imposing ceremony of the shears. The lad presented himself, as we suppose, according to the Romish ritual, in a black cassock before the bishop, with a surplice on his right arm, and a lighted taper in his hand. He knelt, and the mitred bishop repeated a prayer. The bishop sat down, cut five different locks from the head of the candidate, and, after other services, the choir sang an anthem, to which Gerard must have responded a hearty *amen.* This tonsure made John Calvin the incumbent of the La Gésine chapel in the Cathedral of Noyon. The little chaplain closed the ceremonies by presenting the lighted taper to the bishop, who gave him his blessing. Thus a child of twelve became a member of the clergy, capable of entering into holy orders, and of holding a benefice without residing on the spot, or performing any duties of his office. If his chapel had been a thousand miles away it would have made no difference. He received the salary, and, small as it was, it aided him in his

education. The serious lad was quite astonished at the work of the bishop and of the shears; but in his veneration for the Romish Church, he did not suspect the lawfulness of the tonsure or of the revenues. Moreover, Gerard ordered it, and he scarcely knew any other will than that of his father.

Two years passed away, when Noyon was visited by a dreadful pestilence. "Oh, the great death!" was the sigh of the people. "Oh, the scourge of the Lord!"

"Who knows but our John will be the next," said his mother, as she saw the corpse of a student borne by the door. "How pale he is! He has studied too hard. Let us send him to his grandfather's."

"They are dying at Pont l'Eveque as rapidly as here," replied Gerard, who feared that the hope of his life might be suddenly torn from his tender, but ambitious heart. He went to the bishop for counsel.

"Send him to Paris," was the advice. "Claude and his brother are going there to prosecute their studies."

"He shall go." The secretary then presented a petition, asking the cathedral officials to grant the little chaplain "liberty to go wherever he pleased during the plague, without loss of his allowance." This was granted him until the feast of St. Remy. The permission was afterwards extended through several years.

"You will lodge with your uncle, Richard Cal-

vin," said Gerard, "and I am sure he will take good care of your health. Take more exercise, my son; an early walk to attend mass every morning at daylight may be good for you." There was too much dignity upon the tonsured crown of the lad to permit of play being recommended.

"And your cousin Robert will help take care of you if you should be sick," said his mother. Gerard shook his head. A second thought prevented him from uttering a caution, for he thought, "My son is a chaplain now, and he will be proof against heresy."

Thus John Calvin left his father's house at the age of fourteen, never to make it his home again for any long time. Years afterwards, when he had become a celebrated reformer, a canon of Noyon wrote: "Thus flying from the pestilence, he went to catch it elsewhere." His father would have said the same thing had he lived long enough to see him renounce the Romish Church.

CHAPTER II.

MATHURIN CORDIER.

THE college of La Marche in Paris never had a better professor than Mathurin Cordier. He was one of the few men who are willing to sacrifice their own advancement for the sake of elevating others in knowledge and character. The highest class in the college was under his tuition, and he taught it with great credit; but it pained him to find that his students had not been thoroughly drilled in the elements of knowledge. They could not appreciate the excellence of classical literature, because they knew so little of grammar. He was dissatisfied. Why adorn a house that had no solid foundations? In the middle of the lessons he would pause and say, "Young gentlemen, it is useless to proceed. You must first learn the simple elementary lessons. You may not be so much to blame as the primary teachers. Alas! that there are tutors in the colleges who take no pains to see that their scholars are well grounded in their studies!"

He went to the president of the college and said, "The scholars, who join the first class, bring up nothing solid; they are puffed out only to make a

show, so that I have to begin to teach them over again. I wish to resign my place."

"We cannot spare you. And why do you turn from the brilliant career now opening before you? Just when students are flocking to you from all quarters, you sacrifice fame and fortune. What do you propose to do?"

"I propose to devote myself to making fame and fortune for my students. If they cannot yet come up to me, I will get down to them and give them a lift. I will take the fourth class; give up the Seniors and take the Freshmen."

"And rank as a mere tutor?"

"If I can set a good example to the tutors, reform their methods, and teach them that something else than black gowns must give them dignity, I shall do well. But the young men must be well grounded in the rudiments, and I will undertake the labour." Thus the good man laid aside personal ambition, and devoted his whole life to the patient and often thankless work of teaching youth the simplest lessons.

One day, shortly after he had taken this humble department, in the year 1523, he saw a lad enter the school, thin, pale, diffident, serious, and with a look of unusual intelligence. Next to the attraction of his piercing eye, were the neatness of his dress, the artlessness of his manners, and the order evinced in every movement. He presented his testimonials, and when the professor's eye had scanned

them, he said: "Perhaps my young friend does not know what compliments are paid him by the bishop de Hangest. Will you enroll your name?"

The lad of fourteen went to the desk with a manly step, and wrote his name, John Calvin. A young student will look with great interest on the man who is the author of the books he has studied, as if he must be a wonderful being. The little chaplain now almost stared at his new teacher, for he had learned his Latin grammar from the "Colloquies" of Mathurin Cordier. But the professor's gaze seemed to be quite as closely fixed upon the new student, who began to say to himself, "he means for me to attend to my book." John was at first shy and timid in the presence of the learned Cordier; but the teacher, discovering that he was a student of a new kind, became strongly attached to him, and took delight in guiding his large grasping intellect. The Noyon lad began to feel at home. They were congenial spirits; the boy of fourteen seemed as the younger brother of the man of forty-four.

The kind Mathurin now found one who could appreciate him. "How I wish the benches were full of such boys," said he; "I would not feel tied down to the monotony of Latin and Greek. We would branch out into the paths of science, leading in every direction. We would enter into the antiquities of the past and revel in the glories of the ancient civilization."

"You would need better scholars than I am to make it an enjoyment," said the very modest youth, "but really, I wish that I could be in such a class."

"We will be a class by ourselves then. Come to me, and we will spend many of our evenings together. We will drink in the eloquence of Cicero; we will lay to heart the beautiful moral lessons of Seneca; we will see the battles of Alexander and of the Cæsars fought over again, and we will have old father Herodotus tell us of his travels and his history."

"When shall I come?" asked young Calvin, overjoyed at the prospect of having new knowledge thus imparted to him.

"Shall we meet in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and attend vespers? for our studies must not interfere with the devotions of the church.—No; come and sup with me, and let us have a walk before vespers. That will put the tongue in play, and the mind will crowd words upon the lip." The enthusiastic professor and the ardent student were not long in setting out for the environs of Paris, where we will suppose them to meet one of the "pilgrims and strangers on the earth."

In the forest of Livry, about seven miles from Paris, dwelt a hermit, who had built his hut from the ruins of an old abbey of the Augustine monks. In his wanderings, begging through the country, he had met some men who told him of the wonderful

reformation at Meaux. Farel* and Lefevre were there teaching the gospel. Meaux might have become the Wittemberg of France, had not the bishop proved false to the gospel, and Noel Beda been commissioned to persecute and slay the believers in justification by faith. Driven from Meaux, the disciples went everywhere preaching the word. By some wayside this poor hermit learned the true way of salvation. His heart leaped for joy. He had once thought that, by living a life of solitude and denial, he was best imitating Christ and the holiest saints, and that his extreme poverty would save his soul. But now he renounced the supposed store of merits he had laid up for himself, and believing in Jesus, began to publish his faith. He went from house to house in the surrounding villages; he pointed out the way to heaven to the poor peasants in their lowly huts; and at the door of the mansion where the inmates gave him a crust, he offered them in return the ever new bread of life. It was not long until he was known in the suburbs of Paris.

One evening he was about leaving the banks of the Seine, thinking less of the long walk before him than of the poor cottagers whom he was leaving happier for his words and prayers, when he saw two persons standing and gazing at the setting sun.

"Let me tell you of a glorious Sun of righteousness that never sets," he cried out to them. The

* See *William Farel and his Times.* Published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

voice startled Mathurin Cordier and his pupil. The professor's astronomical descriptions were suddenly broken off, and they turned to see the aged man, bent and broken, walking towards them with his rough cap in the hand extended toward them. Supposing he had a long story to tell, which he would wind up with an appeal for money, the generous professor was about to toss him a franc, and thus cut short the interview.

"I ask not your silver and gold," said the hermit; "I am rich. I come to show you the richest pearl that ever dropped from heaven. Yes, I am richer than the king." Cordier thought him deranged.

"In what does your wealth consist?" inquired the professor in a tone of pity.

"Not in the merits and good works which I once imagined myself to have; but in the grace of Jesus Christ. He is my confessor now. He has granted me, I trust, a perfect pardon; one that no man can buy of a priest; one that he purchased with his own blood. Why, good gentlemen, why give your money for naught in paying for masses and absolutions, and to deliver souls out of purgatory?"

"Would you have us give it to you?"

"Nay, nay, kind gentlemen; but I would have you accept the salvation of my Lord Jesus Christ as a free gift."

"Where do you live, my aged friend?" was the

next compassionate inquiry of Cordier, who thought that the poor man should be taken up as an object of public charity.

"I stay in my hermitage; but my heart lives in heaven with my blessed Lord Jesus. There are poor people here in these huts around us, who would gladly give me a home; but I choose to spend the rest of my few nights on earth in my old abode. And when I am sick, these kind peasants come to see me, and sometimes the rich come, and then we talk of what great things the Lord hath done for us, whereof we are glad."

"Do you not hunger sometimes?"

"The bread which came down from heaven is my food."

"Does not the rain pour down upon you?"

"The Lord is my shelter; the shadow of the Almighty is over me."

"Are you not cold when the winter storm beats?"

"The love of God is a fire in my heart."

"Are you not afraid to dwell alone in the forest? Afraid that you will die with no friends near you."

"No friend near me! Ah, kind gentlemen, you neither believe nor understand. Perhaps you are a nobleman and his son, living in yonder castle, with great bolts on your doors, and a retinue of servants and soldiers around you."

"Oh, no; we are quite humble persons, and good Christians too, I trust."

"Yet you do not know that I am never alone.

My Lord is always with me, and if I should die, his holy angels would take me right up into heaven. How can good Christians be ignorant of this? Do you believe that a man is justified by faith and not by works?"

"Not, perhaps, in your sense of the words. God has given us the church as the channel of his grace. Through the church, built on St. Peter, we believe in Christ. The good works which we do in the church are done to Christ."

"Oh, kind gentlemen, you are too learned to believe the simple gospel. You cover up the sense by words, and faith by works. You make a Saviour of the church, and Christ is so hidden in its dark shadow that you do not find him. I know all about it. I have read your books. I once thought as you do. I retired from the world, and dreamed that I was far away from its sins. I imagined that I was a saint. But Christ came to my soul, and he showed me that I was a great sinner. I had an awful fear that I was doomed and lost for ever. Then he came again with his Holy Spirit. I confessed my sins to him. I took him at his word, as he said, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee.' And now I renounce the learning which perverts the word of Christ. Enough for me that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

The professor and the student looked at each other, abashed and confused in their thoughts, for they did not yet know the Scriptures. They felt

the deepest pity for the old man, whom they supposed to be under some strange delusion. Such simple faith was to them a mystery. And their looks seemed to say, "Why talk farther with an insane hermit?"

"I perceive that you will not believe," said he, as he bowed politely and turned away. "It is growing dark; my walk is long and weary; may God give you light, and show you the free way to heaven. Remember Christ's pardon is free; it may be had by a prayer of faith. Good-night, kind gentlemen." They heartily returned the adieu to the hermit of Livry, the mild and fervent missionary for the simple people of the suburbs and villages.

There was silence for some moments between the professor and the pupil, as they turned their steps toward the Latin quarter where the colleges were situated. It was too late to be in haste, for the vespers were already ended at Notre Dame. "After all," said Cordier, "the old man may not be more insane than many others in Paris. There have been very learned men who talked in this same strange way. In fact, you might suppose that all Germany was running wild in delusions. They have a great man across the Rhine, whom they call Luther, who preaches just like this aged hermit. Thousands are led astray from the church, because he persuades them that they can have a free salvation in Christ. But Luther was not the first to teach such heresies; there were men in Paris who

preached on justification by faith four or five years before he did."

"Did you know an old man named Lefevre?" inquired young Calvin, who had heard his name sometimes mentioned at Noyon.

"I knew him well; a brilliant man, a thorough scholar, a popular lecturer, and he might have won a lasting fame, if he had not given himself up to the study of the Scriptures, and imagined that he found therein a new religion. He began to preach such dangerous doctrines, that it was necessary for the church to silence him. He now is wandering over the earth, I know not where; a warning to us not to tamper with holy things. Let us be dutiful to the church, and not inquire into matters which were not meant for our private judgment."

Such were the views of Mathurin Cordier at this period of his life, and the little chaplain of La Gésine was in no need of being confirmed in them. He was already steeped to the eyes in the superstitions of popery. From the day that he entered Paris, he had allowed no hours of devotion to pass without observing the formalities imposed upon him by the priests, who were intent upon keeping so promising a youth in the church. They knew that so bashful, retired and studious a pupil might one day become a great thinker, and if he should dare to be a reformer, he might prove more powerful than scores of bold men who had made the attempt in all Europe, from Florence to the banks of the

Severn. The papists understood that if they would prevent another Savonarola, or Huss, or Wickliffe, or Luther, or Lefevre, from rising up with a loud voice of reform, they must watch their youth, and give the brightest of them a special training in the ceremonies and traditions of Romanism.

Where is Robert Olivetan? Scarcely has his cousin returned from his walk, to his lodgings at his uncle, Richard Calvin's, when Robert enters his room. It is late, for the earnest Mathurin has been gazing long at the stars, pointing out the planets to his young friend, and expatiating upon the Latin and Greek poets and orators. These cousins have seen each other every day since Calvin's arrival, but Robert has said almost nothing about the birthday letter which he had sent four years ago. He has learned that in Paris a student must be prudent. Moreover, the firm, positive, and rigid Gerard Calvin had answered that letter by a scathing reply, in which he said, "When young upstarts are pronounced by competent authority to be fully equal to our bishops, or, indeed, superior to the pope in their wisdom, it will be time for you to throw into the mind of my child your doubts about the mass, confession, and prayers to the saints. You may then assume to be his spiritual adviser, and I will give him over into your hands. Your relatives will appreciate the new reformer, their learned cousin, who dares to overthrow the authority of the church. But, until then, let us have no more heresy from

your flowing pen; and look to yourself, lest the fate of a heretic be yours. I have reason to know that a severe storm is preparing for those whom you have taken to be your directors in religion. Neither the church nor the state will allow the fire of heresy to spread over the land. It must finally consume those who have kindled it. As for the book, I thank you; you need not send it."

Robert was thinking of this repulse to his advances while he sat with his cousin, and talked of going to Noyon. "When will you return to us?" asked John, with a look that foreshadowed how lonely he would be.

"I shall not soon return to this city," replied Robert with a sad voice. "It is growing too fearfully warm here for men who dare to read the Holy Scriptures, and to think differently from the ignorant priests, or to believe only in Christ for salvation. The fires are preparing for those whom the Romish Church calls heretics."

A shade of terror flitted across the animated face of young Calvin. He had been kept in careful ignorance of the threats uttered for years against those who acknowledged no master in religion but Jesus Christ. In his innocent mind there was yet no strong suspicion of the church being so cruel as to burn "heretics." All he could say was, "Surely, cousin Robert, you are not in danger!"

"I am in great danger. My beloved teacher, Lefevre, has been driven from the city, and Beda is

threatening him at Meaux. The good Louis Berquin, the most learned of the nobles, was quietly seated in his house last May, surrounded by the books that he loved, and translating for us some of the tracts of Luther and Melancthon. An officer entered, seized him and his books, and cast him into a dungeon. And this too by order of the parliament! Beda is at the bottom of it all. This blood-thirsty Beda is a native of Picardy, and the greatest brawler of the day. I fear Berquin will never breathe again the fresh air of Artois. Other Picards are banished—the brothers Arnold and Gerard Roussel—and my turn may come next, insignificant as I am, for I have some dangerous books in my chest."

"Are they bad books?"

"One is the Greek Testament, edited by the learned Erasmus. Shall I give it to you? Will you accept it?"

"I must first ask my father. I promised to consult him about everything that I read?"

"God gave to men his word in Hebrew and Greek; have you not a right to read what your heavenly Father would put into your hands?"

"I have heard it said that Greek and Hebrew are the cause of more heresy than all else put together."

"Indeed! Thus the priests, who can scarcely read their Latin missals decently, would frighten you from the pure fountains of wisdom and eternal

life. Our Lord said, 'Search the Scriptures,' and those Scriptures were in Hebrew and Greek. The church says, 'Burn the Scriptures! Let no man dare to read the Bible!' Which must I obey?"

"My father and the bishop de Hangest say, that the church is the true interpreter of the Scriptures, and that we must listen to the priests and high prelates."

"Let the priests then study the word of God, read it to us, preach it in our hearing, and exhort us to obey it. Then the church would become what it was in the days of the apostles. But they will not do this; and we must study the Bible for ourselves, or starve our souls and perish.

"I dare not disobey my father; he would take me out of college if I dared to read this book. Yet what beautiful Greek it is? How inviting it looks! Do you know that I cannot read Greek?"

"You can easily learn. But I must not get you into trouble with your kind father. May God open his eyes to the truth, and guide you into the riches of his word. I must leave you. It is now late in the night. I will start in the morning." Robert gave the parting hand, and received from his cousin a load of love to be borne on his lips to their kindred at Noyon.

Thus we have supposed that John Calvin came in contact with the religion of free grace and holy truth; but he put himself in conflict with it. There is a great law involved in the commandment which

reads, "Honour thy father and thy mother." It is, that obedience to an earthly father tends to lead the child into obedience to the heavenly Father. But this law is fulfilled only when the parent instructs the child in the knowledge of God, and impresses his mind with the divine authority and truth. Here Gerard Calvin had failed. The obedience, extending beyond himself, which he taught, was not so much to God as to the Church. Hence, by strictly obeying his earthly father, the son was long prevented from rendering such obedience to his heavenly Father as the gospel required. He was a slave to the vain traditions of men. A deformed church stood between him and Christ, asserting her mastery over him. Not until many struggles are passed will he learn to obey his true Master and Lord.

Meanwhile, he directs his mind chiefly to Latin literature, under the leading of Mathurin Cordier. From this renowned teacher he is becoming able to employ the language of the Romans, and of the Roman Church, with an elegance, purity and power that will henceforth excite the admiration even of his enemies. Its terse phrases will drop from his pen to charm, and convince the learned; its riches will be transferred to the French language, when he comes to express a theology to the common people, and persuade them in eloquent words that a Swiss peasant can understand. He goes to Master Mathurin with all his perplexities; he sits silent at

his feet and receives new instructions, dropping like rain from the lips of this literary Gamaliel; he shares the warm sympathies of this great friend whom he will never forget. Long years hence, when he has become one of the great doctors of Europe, he will remember these days of privilege with gratitude, and say,* "O, Master Mathurin! O man, gifted with learning and great fear of God! When my father sent me to Paris, while still a child, and possessing only a few rudiments of the Latin language, it was God's will that I should have you for my teacher, in order that I might be directed in the true path and right mode of [human] learning; and having begun the course of study under your guidance, I advanced so far that I can now, in some degree, profit the church of God. The instruction and the training you gave me have served me so well, that I declare with truth, that I owe to you all the advancement which has followed. I wish to render testimony of this to those who come after us, in order that, if they derive any profit from my writings, they may know that it proceeds in part from you."

When Cordier read this tribute, and saw what an influence Calvin exerted for the truth, did he regret that he had once resigned the teaching of seniors and condescended to drill the plodding freshmen in

* At Geneva, in 1550, he dedicated to Mathurin Cordier, then a reformer at Geneva, his Commentary on First Thessalonians. The professor in Paris became the pupil at Geneva.

their elementary studies? He had thus come down to take a lad by the hand, and help lift him up to the highest position in the reformed church of Christ.

But we are writing of Calvin's college days. The lad so quiet, serious, and ready to rebuke the follies of his companions at Noyon, still held himself aloof from the plays and revels of his fellow-students at Paris. He felt a horror of vanity and vice too great for him to express; he often reprimanded the disorders of young men older than himself. He accused them of their sins, and they nicknamed him *the accusative case.*

"Inform on us then," they would say; "tell your story to the professors; act the coward, since you will not join in our sports."

"No, I will not turn informer," he would reply. "I would rather say what I think to your own faces. You ought to have consciences of your own."

"That is fair," says Claude de Hangest to the students. "It is manly, but yet you are quite severe." Claude had some pity on his wild brothers.

The students generally, in their cooler moments, admitted that they deserved these reproofs. They respected him as he daily took his seat on the benches of La Marche. The idler ones felt ashamed as he recited perfectly what they had attempted, when their failure provoked the laughter of their comrades and the sarcasm of their professor. But

Calvin never even smiled at their blunders; they gave him pain, and he was ready to aid and encourage every young man who did the best he could. He did not assume the least degree of superiority in intellect or morals; he seemed unconscious of genius, and modestly grasped those high truths which few of the students could reach. He excelled because he toiled. Sleeping genius never makes a scholar.

Thus the little chaplain was a moral and literary reformer without knowing it. Strictness of morals would lead him to strictness of doctrines and of piety. He gave promise of being a man who would deal seriously with all principles of truth, and firmly require in others what he was resolved to perform. He would learn by experience the moral inability of the sinner to obey Christ, and show how it is overcome by the free grace and Holy Spirit of God. If ever any man was born a reformer, he was John Calvin.

CHAPTER III.

RAPID PROMOTIONS.

"WHAT is the trouble now?" said Mathurin Cordier when his favourite student entered his room, in quite an ill humour.

"Dear Master Mathurin," replied Calvin, "the President of the College says that I am too far advanced for your room, and must be removed to another. Why should he arrange my studies according to his own will, or rather his foolish fancy? He will not allow me to enjoy your instruction any longer; he is putting me too soon into a higher class."

Did ever the good Mathurin see the like! He smiled, saying, "You are the first student that ever I knew to be out of temper because he was to be promoted."

"But I do not wish to leave you. What other professor will ever be such a friend to me?"

"You are not going far away—only to another department of the same college. Come often and see me. Little separations strengthen friendship."

The promoted student added, if possible, to his zeal, when among new class-mates. While they

crept along lazily, he soared with rapid flight into higher regions of knowledge. In the intervals, between his lessons, he ran to the affectionate Cordier; he hung upon his lips; he found relief from the little fits of anger to which he was subject, and sought in Mathurin a father's guidance and a mother's tenderness. Quietly slipping in at one of his recesses, he said,

"We have had an exciting time in our class to-day."

"Has some one had a better lesson than yourself?"

"He was learning a lesson which the professor does not propose to have recited. A young German has often been seen reading little books at his desk during the hours for study. He has been reproved for it; but to-day he had his tract again. The professor asked for it, but when it was put in his hands, he could read only the name of Luther on the title page. He grew angry in an instant, and declared that it was all heresy.

"'How do you know that it is heresy?' replied the German. 'By one glance can you judge of its contents? You cannot read it. I assure you that there is nothing in it but the golden truth.'"

"'Nothing of this sort must be read here,'" said the professor, and he tossed the little book into the fire. The student snatched it from the flames, and stamped out the blaze with his foot.

"'Do you know that, by the rules of this college, you will be expelled?'" inquired the teacher.

"'Expelled for the word of God; very well, drive me forth. Send word to Beda; let him hunt me out of the city. Inform parliament, and let them gravely debate for three days what shall be done with an insignificant student for reading such truths as may save his soul.' The young German will leave Paris to-night."

It was no new thing for students to be thus expelled, as a warning to others who might dare to read the writings of the reformers. Yet if books of the most licentious character were found in their hands, the admonition was very slight. Young Calvin felt no temptation to read books of either class, being too Romish to examine the one, and too pure in his mind to touch the other.

Three years had nearly passed when John Calvin began to think seriously of leaving the college of La Marche. It was his father's order that he should study theology in one of the theological colleges established for the training of learned priests. There were two of these in Paris; the Sorbonne and the Montaigu. "Which shall I choose," he one day asked of Mathurin Cordier.

"The Sorbonne is the more ancient. It was long called 'The poor Sorbonne;' but now holds the highest rank."

"Too much will be expected of me there, and besides, their Latin is detestable; I prefer Montaigu. It will afford a more secluded retreat."

"I wish I could go with you, for it has been a

growing purpose of mine to study theology. What delight you will take in those exalted studies!"

"But I must be separated from you. It grieves me to think of it."

Mathurin was struck with the deep emotion of his young friend. He had seen his eye ever beaming with honour, and occasionally flashing with anger; but he had never seen it filled with tears. When Calvin loved at all, he loved with his whole heart.

"We will be in the same city," said Cordier, "and will often meet. We will stand together at mass, and chant together at vespers, and when you become a settled priest, who knows but that I may come and teach your parish school?"

The fame of the Noyon student had already reached Montaigu college, and when he entered it, in 1526, he found himself expected with curious interest. He looked to see if there was any hope of finding another Master Mathurin among the professors. His eye met that of a Spanish doctor; they were drawn to each other. Both were grave, reserved, silent; those who knew not their deep affections, might have supposed they were cold and distant. Each studied the other calmly and deliberately; each saw that the other had concealed a loving heart, which was likely to be lonely in Montaigu.

"I must win that man," said the young Picard, "by excelling in my recitations."

"What a wonderful genius!" exclaimed the Spaniard to his colleagues, after putting Calvin to the test. "If he is not led away by these so-called reformers, he will become a shining light in the church."

Calvin watched the Spanish professor at the churches, and saw that he had brought from Spain the fervour, the blind zeal, and the minute observances that were peculiar to his nation. This greatly increased his admiration, for he regarded it as a virtue never to miss a fast, a mass, or a procession. He belonged to the strictest sect of the papists. Long afterwards, in looking back upon the days when ignorance was the mother of his devotion, he said, "I was, at that time, so obstinately given to the superstitions of popery, that it seemed impossible that I should ever be pulled out of the deep mire."

The Spaniard was surprised to see the young Picard leave all his comrades behind, and he said to him;

"I will promote you. The other students must not hold you back. You can enter the class of philosophy."

"I am not old enough," was the reply.

"You may be too young for the rule, but the rule is too old for you. It must be set aside in your case."

Perhaps a few envied his powerful talents, and were filled with jealousy as they saw themselves

lagging behind one whom they at first supposed would hardly prove their rival. But he won many friends among his class-mates. They were impressed with his weight of character. He soared high above them in morality. There was no affectation, no pedantry, no domineering spirit; but when walking in the college courts or halls, he could not witness their quarrels, their follies, their levities of manner, and their indecent conversations, without uttering a faithful rebuke.

"He finds fault with everything," said those of loose life and lax conscience.

"Profit rather by the advice of one so young and so true to his convictions of right," was the reply of the wiser ones. The faults he rebuked were really great crimes of lewdness, and that too among candidates for the priesthood! Verily the reformer was needed.

"What light is that in yonder room, burning always at such late hours?" asked the agents of Beda, who in his zeal against heresy kept up a sort of detective police. It was not long before they found out. They told Beda, who was the principal director in Montaigu.

"What!" Beda replied, "the Noyon student under suspicion of reading heretical books? You are mistaken. He pleases me. It is long since the colleges had so pious a devotee of the church."

Young Calvin seemed to forget the hours for meals, and even for sleep. The people of the neigh-

bourhood, returning to their homes during the late watches, used to show each other a tiny, solitary gleam from a window that was lit up through the night. They long talked of it in that quarter of Paris, These hours were devoted to the study of theology—not that of the Bible; but that of scholastics. Theology was not the chief study for young priests; the word of God was not recognized, if, indeed, it was even known by most of the candidates of Montaigu.

Gerard Calvin was delighted with the progress of his son. It strengthened the hope of making him a dignitary of the church. There was no little of the politician in the notary of Noyon, and he was not content that his gifted son should continue simply chaplain of La Gésine. Why not secure his early promotion? He cultivated the favour of those who had offices to bestow.

"The living of Martville is vacant," he said to the bishop; "have you made any appointment?"

"Your son can have it," said the bishop, reading the wish of his secretary. "He need not resign his present chaplaincy. He can have both livings."

Gerard went home delighted, saying to his wife, "Now we can afford to have him visit us." In a few days John was running to Mathurin Cordier with his father's letter, and joyfully saying, "I am to spend my coming vacation at home."

"I supposed you were hurrying to tell me why the great bell of Notre Dame is ringing so loudly."

"Shall we go and see what it all means? The students seem to be rushing to the spot."

"If there be anything ill, we shall hear of it soon enough; if it be something good, it would not make us more joyful than we will be here together." So they sat down to talk of young Calvin's late promotions and his new plans.

All Paris was in commotion. Through all the principal streets the people were flocking toward the front of Notre Dame Cathedral. The deep tones of the bell drew the workman from his toil, the lounger from the taverns, the soldier from his idleness, the merchant from his counter, the student from his books, and learned doctors and grave bishops too were moving forward in haste. What were they going to see? A frail reed burned because it whispered in the open air and told of God's free grace.

The aged hermit of Livry had become such a fearful missionary of Christ in the villages and the suburbs of Paris, that the whole forces of the Sorbonne were thrown into alarm. He must be put out of the way, lest they should not be able to counteract his influence among the people. By telling his simple story in the cottages and fields, he was persuading them to cease paying for masses and prayers, and to receive the free pardon of Christ. Beda and his police were set upon the watch. He was seized, dragged from his hermitage in the forest, thrown into prison in that great city

which he had ever shunned, and condemned "to suffer the exemplary punishment of the slow fire."

In order to enforce the warning example, the fire was to be kindled in front of the most splendid cathedral of the city. As much pomp must be displayed as if the occasion were a solemn festival. The great bell rang to call all Paris around the stake. An immense crowd gathered upon the square. All were impatiently waiting. At length a band of officers were seen approaching, leading the old, decrepid man. His head and feet were bare; upon his shoulders hung the cloak which was assigned to obstinate heretics.

"Do you see what threatens you?" said the priests who attended him, when he was brought near to the stake. "Do you now recant?"

"I cannot recant; I have a free pardon from my Lord," he replied.

"Look on this crucifix; let it move you to repent of having sinned against the holy church." They held a little cross before his eyes; but he refused to gaze upon it. He stood calm, firm and determined, making no other reply than to declare that his only hope was in the full pardon of God.

"Poor old man!" whispered certain of the people. "He looks more like a saint than the Sorbonnists."

"We must make more noise," said the agents of Beda, "or the people will demand his release. The man will say nothing to excite their indignation."

The doctors of the Sorbonne, standing in the front ranks, and fearful that the constancy of the martyr would excite the sympathy of the spectators, cried aloud, "He is damned; they are leading him to hell-fire!" It is Beza who reports this awful and angry language.

The great bell increased its clangour, stunning the ears of the people, and adding to the terrors of the scene, until the last fagot was put in order, and the match ready to be applied. The bell ceased; the priest asked his final question.

"I am resolved to die in the faith of my Lord Jesus Christ," answered the hermit. And thus did he die, burned by a slow fire. Thus went up into heaven a man to whom history gives no other name than "the hermit of Livry."

It might have been well for Calvin had he left his room at such hours when the bells were wildly tolling, and run with the citizens to see a devout Christian go up through the flames to glory. He would have learned the lessons of his times, a new faith, from new martyrs. Did he hear of a young fellow-countryman, whose death excited no little attention in Paris? Perhaps, and we here record his name and martyrdom to help fill up the picture of the days when Calvin was in college.

A young Picardin went to Meaux about the time that Calvin entered La Marche. He was James Pavanne, whose learning, sincerity, and uprightness rendered him attractive. He may have learned

from the good Picard doctor, Lefevre, the true way of life. He was ardent for the Reformation. Meaux had become as a city set on a hill, casting light into all quarters around it. The young disciple could sit at the feet of its bishop, who then was labouring to make his "diocese an image of the renovated church." He was assisted by Lefevre, Farel and their friends who had recently fled from the rage of Beda and his crew. It was a time of great privilege to the earnest Pavanne. But the deceiver came. Among the refugees was the eloquent Martial Mazurier, who had been preaching the gospel with boldness. In his zeal he, one day, threw down an image of a saint that guarded a convent gate. He was thrust into prison, and there recanted in order to regain his liberty. For some reason, James Pavanne was also thrown into prison. Mazurier wished to show his devotion to his old church, and to cover his own shame by making the prisoner fall, as he had done, from the faith. He visited him in his cell, and began his intrigues by telling the young man that he was farther advanced in the truth. "You are mistaken, James," was his repeated answer to sound arguments from Scripture; "You have not gone to the depths of the sea; you only know the surface of the waters." Nothing that threats, promises, and sophistry could do, was spared. The unhappy youth gave way, and publicly recanted on Christmas 1524. But from that hour a spirit of sadness and remorse came upon him, as

if sent by the Almighty whose gospel he had denied. "Alas," he sighed continually, "there is nothing but bitterness for me in life."

He went to Paris, expecting at least to pass unharmed among the agents of Beda and the chancellor Duprat. He might have been seen going about with a sad look, fixing his eyes on the earth, and inwardly groaning that he had proved false to the Saviour whom he had loved. The persecutors wanted a victim in order to terrify all inquiries for the truth. They saw that Pavanne had no heart for popery. He had been at Meaux, and that was enough. He was seized, imprisoned, and put in chains. This was all that he required: he felt comforted in suffering; faith revived and Christ came back to his soul. He made a bold confession. The cruel persecutors were delighted to see him so firm, for their victim could not escape. The young man's gentleness, candour and courage, won from them no pity, no tenderness. He could love them for having put him in the way of peace and joyful hope, but they could scarcely wait to have the mock trial ended. It was soon over, a pile was raised on the Greve, Pavanne was bound to the stake, and died with the martyr's invisible crown upon his brow.

There was terror in Paris and in all France, but there was also power given to the truth. Hidden disciples felt their faith strengthened as they whispered by their fire-sides of the glorious death of the

young believer. The Sorbonne must follow this up with another case, for if only the lesser ones could be seized there must be more of them. They had failed to get Lefevre into their hands, for Margaret of Alençon was ready to plead his cause before the king. They wanted a new victim whose death would be talked about at court, in the colleges, and in the work-shops of the city. They soon found him.

Nicholas Doullon had known good days and high life. He had often gone to the royal palaces of the Louvre and Fontainebleau, met King Francis I., mingled with the nobles and talked with the Duchess Margaret of Valois. He had been an officer under Pope Clement VII. These may have been good days for a devout Romanist, who was a priest of some dignity, and who held several benefices. He was thirty-six years of age, when he began to enjoy better days and a holier life, through the gospel. Having been so long and so grossly deluded by superstition, he felt a sort of revenge against it, and a jealousy for the truth so precious to his heart.

"I deny," said he one day, "that the Virgin Mary is to be worshipped; I simply honour her as an excellent woman, who was by nature a sinner and by grace a saint. I deny that the wafer called the host is the real body of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The clergy heard it. They took advantage of

the king's absence, seized the suspected priest on the charge of having blasphemed "the glorious mother of the Lord," and her son Jesus, and four days later led him to the stake. He was firm to the last, and died triumphant. The execution of such a man caused a great sensation, especially in the colleges. What a lesson to young candidates for the priesthood! Perhaps Calvin heeded it, taking even greater caution lest he should receive the taint of heresy. But the time was soon coming when he would heed such examples in another light; he would regard them as proving that the faith, for which they died, was worthy of his serious consideration and acceptance.

Calvin made a visit to Noyon, probably during his vacation in 1527. "He has made himself a great name in the colleges—so Claude de Hangest says," remarked his former companions. "Do you think he will condescend to speak to us?"

But he was not the man ever to forget or renounce his friends, and meeting them with the former modesty and diffidence he would say, "You have advanced so greatly in wealth and position since we last met, that I feared you would hardly recognize a poor college student."

He visited his new parish at Marteville, but whether he preached there on this visit, is uncertain. When Beza says, "Although he had not yet taken orders in the church, he delivered several sermons before the people;" the reference must be

to a later day. It is certain that he had a parish at eighteen. He was not expected to reside in it and preach. He held it according to a prevailing custom, that the small salary might aid him in completing his studies, and not for the love of gain. Calvin was never given to the least avarice, nor extravagance. He was ever economical towards himself and generous to others. The offices which he held were mere toys compared with the knowledge which he sought.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TWO COUSINS.

Again was Calvin at his place in Montaigu College. There was one visitor whom he could scarcely keep from coming often to his room, even had he hinted that the young man was intruding upon his studies. This was his good cousin, Peter Robert Olivetan, who had now returned to Paris. He had not the genius of the notary's son; but his life was to prove that he had a solid mind, great perseverance in duty, unshaken fidelity to his convictions of right, and a holy boldness in defending the truth, or combating error. The bent of his mind was now, more strongly than ever before, toward the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, which he was some time to translate for the French people and the Waldenses. It is quite remarkable that the three men, who were to do most for the translation of the Bible into the French language, were Picardins—Lefevre, Olivetan and Calvin.

It was not to pass away time, nor to talk of the points of difference between Scotus and Aquinas, that this Noyon cousin visited Calvin. It was to lead him to the word of God, to the mercy-seat, to

the Crucified, to heaven. He had found the way of life, and wished his studious relative to walk therein. When Calvin found that the mate of his childhood was really tainted with heresy, he felt the keenest sorrow. "What a pity!" he thought, for one so learned might become a monk of great influence. Perhaps he might yet be reclaimed, and persuaded not to be deluded with the new doctrines, nor to run the risk of being burned under the shadow of Notre Dame. Calvin would try to convert him back to the church.

Olivetan had just as much pity for his cousin, whose learning might be of great use to the Reformation, and, more than all, whose soul might be saved by the gospel. He would try to make Calvin a proselyte to the Christian faith. Thus they were in earnest to convince each other of error. They had many long and warm discussions when shut up in a room by themselves.

"There are many false religions," said Olivetan, "and only one that is true."

To this Calvin gave his consent, without claiming that his own was the true one.

"The false are those which men have invented, according to which we are saved by our own works. The true is that which comes from God, according to which salvation is given freely from on high. . . Choose the true."

Calvin made a sign of dissent.

"True religion is not that infinite mass of cere-

monies and observances which the church imposes upon its followers, and which separates souls from Christ. Oh, my dear friend! leave off shouting out with the papists, 'The fathers! the doctors! the church!' and listen to the prophets and apostles. Study the Scriptures."

"I will have none of your doctrines," said Calvin. "Their novelty offends me. I cannot listen to you. Do you imagine that I have been trained in error all my life? . . . No! I will strenuously resist your attacks."

The two cousins parted, not at all satisfied with one another. Calvin fell on his knees in the chapels, and prayed the saints to intercede for this misguided soul. Olivetan shut himself up in his room and prayed to Christ, who had power to prevail over a mind that refused the light.

The student of Montaigu had not defended his false religion. It did not satisfy him; it was a broken staff, but he had no other. Rather than have it taken away, he put his cousin to silence. It was all that he had for his soul to rest upon, and he wished to make the most of its consolations. Later in life he glanced back at these times, and wrote of these Romish ceremonies. "When I had attended to all these things, and while I yet trusted to them in some degree, I was still very far from enjoying peace of conscience; for whenever I descended into myself, or raised my heart to thee, such extreme horror surprised me, that neither

purifications nor satisfactions [of a human kind] could heal me. Alas! the more closely I examined myself, so much the sharper became the stings of my conscience. To such a degree was this the case, that neither solace nor comfort existed for me, except in so far as I could deceive myself and forget myself."

Perhaps he could partly "forget himself" in his deep solitudes of thought and study, and therefore he cut short the talk with Olivetan, who was bringing himself to remembrance. But he could not forget nor forgive himself after his kind relative was gone. He shut his door and began to pry into his own heart and life. He asked, "What am I? Whither am I going?" He had a fierce struggle in his little room. The voices of men had ceased to be heard, the books over which he had pored, no longer spoke to him, a "still small voice" whispered to his soul. His eyes and his spirit turned heavenward. "O Lord," he said, "thou knowest that I profess the Christian faith, such as I learned it in my youth. . . . . And yet there is something wanting. . . I have been taught to worship thee as my only God; but I am ignorant of the true worship that I ought to give. I have been taught that thy Son has redeemed me by his death; but I have never felt in my heart the virtue of this redemption. I have been taught that some day there will be a resurrection; but I dread it as the most terrible of days. Where shall I find the light that

I need? Alas! *thy word, which should enlighten thy people, has been taken from us.* Men talk in its place of a hidden knowledge, and of a small number of initiates whose oracles we must receive. . . O God, illumine me with thy light!" He thought the Bible a forbidden book, and dared not read it. In this delusion lies the power of Romanism.

The superiors of Montaigu College, with their sharp vision, saw that their best student was venturing on the path that led to a reformed faith. They began to be uneasy. The Spanish professor was horrified at the prospect of seeing the young man, who had so charmed him, become discontented with the traditions and rites of the church, and at last forsaking them. Could the genius of their classes fall into heresy? The tutors drew him into conversation, and showed their affection for him by seeking to strengthen him in the Romish faith. "The highest wisdom of Christians," said they, "is to submit blindly to the church, and their highest dignity is the righteousness of their works."

"Alas! I am a miserable sinner!" replied Calvin, who was conscious of the guilt within him.

"That is true," said they, "but there is a means of obtaining mercy: it is by satisfying the justice of God. . . . Confess your sins to a priest, and ask humbly for absolution. Blot out the memory of your offences by your good works, and if anything should still be wanting, supply it by the addition of solemn sacrifices and purifications."

When he heard these words, Calvin thought how sacred was the office of a priest. Was he not the mouth-piece of Jehovah? To listen to a priest was to listen to Christ himself. His spirit was subdued. He went to church, entered the confessional, fell on his knees, confessed his sins to God's minister, (as he regarded him,) asked for absolution, and humbly accepted every penance imposed upon him. With all his energy, he at once sought to acquire the merit of good works and endurances. "O God!" he said, "I desire by my good works to blot out the remembrance of my sins." He went beyond the tasks laid upon him, he put Romanism to its fullest test, and he hoped that after so much labour he would be saved. But his peace was of short duration. A few days, or even a few hours after, he gave way to some movement of impatience or anger, and his heart was again troubled. God's eye seemed to pierce to the depths of his soul, and revealed his native depravity. "O God! thy glance freezes me with terror!" he exclaimed in alarm. He hastened back to the confessional. The priest told him, "God is a strict judge who severely punishes iniquity. Address your prayers to the saints first." Calvin tried this method, and drawing upon his experience he declared those men blasphemers, who invented such "false intercessors" and recommended penitents to pray to them for mercy with a gracious Father.

There were some hours of relief by means of these

deceptions, and then Calvin turned to his books, became absorbed in them, grew pale with midnight study and made himself familiar with the theology of the church of the middle ages. But a sudden thought rose up again; it could not be put down. Pushing aside his volumes he exclaimed, "Alas! my conscience is still far from tranquillity. Every time that I descend into the depths of my heart; every time that I lift my soul to thy throne, O God, extreme terror comes over me. My conscience is pierced with sharp stings."

Down, down, into the deeps of despair he sank; he was heart-broken, he looked like a dead man, he resolved to take no further pains about his salvation, and to make the best of this world. He lived more with his fellow-students. They were glad to see him with them in their amusements; his friends were delighted to have him call frequently at their houses in the city, and the Spaniard hoped that his favourite might be fully rescued from heresy. He sought to divert his thoughts by lively conversation and cultivated the Athenian spirit of hearing and telling some new thing.

There have been young men who sought to drown their convictions of sin and of duty, by renouncing all religion and plunging into immorality. But Calvin was not the man to make such a wreck. He had no old habits of vice to resume. He had always been strict in his outward life, and like Saul of Tarsus "blameless" in external conduct.

The great trouble was, he wanted the pure word of God which Olivetan prescribed, but the church would not allow him to read it. God had sent the stream flowing out of heaven; the church forbade him to quench his thirst. Not yet had he learned that he must first disobey the Church of Rome in order to obey Christ.

"A new form of doctrine has risen up," Calvin said to himself one day, we cannot tell the date. But he was thinking seriously of what his good cousin had said to him. "If I have been mistaken . . . . if Olivetan, if any other friends, if those who give their lives to preserve their faith are right . . . . if they have found, in that path, the peace which the doctrines of the priests refuse me?" . . .

He turned to the Holy Scriptures. It seemed that every word of God tore off the veil from his heart, exposed his sinfulness, and reproached him for his disobedience. "He shed floods of tears." The true light was shining; the true life was entering his heart; the true way to heaven was opening to his soul, and the true Saviour was visiting him. "Of a truth," said he, "these new preachers know how to pierce the conscience. Now that I am prepared to be really attentive, I begin to see, thanks to the light that has been brought me, in what a slough of error* I have hitherto been wallowing; with how many stains I am disfigured, and above all, what is the eternal death that threatens me."

* His original words are stronger—"Errorum Sterquilinio."

He was seized with trembling, and paced his room as Luther had once done in his Erfurth cell. He groaned under the crushing weight of his sin. The divine holiness seemed to bear him away to destruction as the storm would toss a leaf. He was frightened and cried out, "O God! thou keepest me bowed down, as if thy bolts were falling upon my head." There he fell at the feet of the Almighty, exclaiming, "I condemn with tears my past life, and transfer myself to thine. Poor and wretched, I throw myself on the mercy which thou hast shown us in Jesus Christ; I enter that only harbour of Salvation. . . . O God, reckon not up against me that terrible desertion and disgust of thy word, from which thy marvellous bounty has rescued me."

He began to find real peace and hope at the mercy-seat, the true Protestant confessional. He went deeper into the Scriptures, and found Christ everywhere. "O Father," he said, "his sacrifice has appeased thy wrath; his blood has washed away my impurities; his cross has borne my curse, his death has atoned for me. . . We had desired for ourselves many useless follies, but thou hadst placed thy word before me like a torch, and thou hast touched my heart, in order that I should hold in abomination all other merits save that of Jesus."

There was yet one final struggle for Calvin; the question of the church must be settled in his mind. He had fully believed that the Roman

church had been founded by the apostles, that it might gather all mankind around Jesus Christ. He said to the evangelicals, "There is one thing which prevents my believing you; that is, the respect due to the church. The majesty of the church must not be diminished. I cannot separate from it."

"There is a great difference," they replied, "between separating from the church, and trying to correct the vices with which it is stained." This was the view of the Duchess Margaret and her friends. They hoped to see the Romish church reformed, and were unwilling to abandon it for the new, or rather the restored church of the Reformation. Calvin saw that the unity of the church could not exist except in the truth. But was not the pope to be acknowledged?

"Men take him for Christ's vicar, Peter's successor, and the head of the church," they said; "but these titles are empty scare-crows. Far from permitting themselves to be dazzled by these big words, the faithful ought to look at the truth of the matter. If the pope has risen to such height and magnificence, it is because the world was plunged in ignorance, and smitten with blindness. Neither by the voice of God, nor by a lawful call of the church, has the pope been constituted its prince and head; it is by his own authority and by his own will alone. He elected himself. In order that the kingdom of Christ may stand, the tyranny of the pope must

come to an end." These friends were patient with Calvin, proved their declarations from Scripture, and gave him time to search the word of God for himself.

"I see quite clearly," he said, after some days of careful inquiry, "that the true order of the church has been lost; that the keys of discipline have been counterfeited; that Christian liberty has been overthrown, and that when the princedom of the pope was set up, the kingdom of Christ was thrown down." Thus the papacy fell, in the mind of Calvin, and Christ was elevated to his rightful throne as the only Lord of the church.

And now what was Calvin to do? Would he remain in the Roman Catholic church and labour to be a reformer in it? This had been the course of Lefevre, Margaret and her preachers. It was an experiment fairly and fully tried in that age. It had been attempted by men in the preceding age—such men as John Huss, Jerome of Prague, Arnold of Brescia, Savonarola, Wessel and Wickliffe. It had failed, it was failing again. It was dangerous for a reformer to remain in the so-called Catholic church. His work would be soon ended by his martyrdom. This experiment also failed in the age after Calvin, when tried by the Port-Royalists, by Fenelon, Massillon and Madame Guyon. It may be doubted whether it ever will succeed. It is not safe to abide in a house whose old foundations must be entirely removed, and new walls built under it. Those who lay the new foundations are

especially in danger. In Calvin's times the spiritual temple must be rebuilt with apostolic materials, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. We, of this later day, can easily perceive this; Calvin could not so readily see this necessity. It was not building a new church; it was returning to the old, whose builder and maker was God.

Or would Calvin break away from the Romish communion? This appeared, at first, to him like schism. It had been the course finally pursued by William Farel, the first great Frenchman, who had boldly left the Roman Babylon when everything was Babel to an honest Christian, and whose powerful voice was just beginning to shake the Alps. If this plan had been adopted at Meaux, it might have saved the good bishop Briçonnet from his sad fall and shameful recanting, and made that city a Wittemberg or Geneva in the heart of France. It was the method of Luther in Germany, Zuingli in the Zurich valleys, Cranmer in England, Knox in Scotland, and all the reformers in Christendom who accomplished a permanent work for the world. None of them could remain with Rome and be like the apostles of their Lord. They heard the heavenly voice, "Come out of her, my people," and they obeyed. Would Calvin obey this voice, and be joined for ever with the great men who separated from the church of Rome in their return to the church of Christ? It was no easy question for him then to decide.

Theodore Beza, his intimate friend, says, "Calvin, having been taught the true religion by one of his relations, named Pierre Robert Olivetan, and having carefully read the holy books, began to hold the teachings of the Roman church in horror, and had the intention of renouncing its communion." He "*had the intention*," but yet he lingered, lest his own mind might be deceived. He resorted to prayer for light: "I desire concord and unity, O Lord; but the unity of the church I long for is that which has its beginning and ending in thee. If to have peace with those who boast of being the first in the church, I must purchase it by denying the truth, then I would rather submit to everything than condescend to such an abominable compact."

The Lord permitted him to have a fuller experience of the system which he was to help overthrow. He must know more of the work to be done. His purpose then was to remain in the Roman communion, if it would permit him to hold the truth, practise and preach it. Ambition and preferment, so strong in the mind of his father, had nothing to do with the decision of young Calvin. The truth should govern him.

A poor student of Montaigu had changed his opinions; why should the professors be troubled about it? Why should the intolerant Spaniard look so fiercely at him? He could not help this change of faith, for God had changed his heart. He afterwards said, in his preface to the Psalms,

"God, by a sudden conversion subdued me, and made my heart obedient to his word." The walls of a town may be for months assaulted and battered, but in some sudden hour they are given up, "the conqueror enters and plants his flag on the ramparts." For long hours of the night the sun is climbing up the eastern side of the world, but there is one sudden moment when the first beams shoot across the ocean and the plain. So it was with the day-dawn in Calvin's soul; when the Sun of righteousness proved to be the conquering king of glory, and when the truth was, Christ himself was taking possession of his heart.

The date of this "sudden conversion" cannot be precisely fixed. Even Calvin may not have been able to tell the very hour, or day, or time of year. There is evidence that it was about the year 1527, when he was studying for the priesthood. Not that the Holy Spirit's work in his soul was then fully accomplished; not that he was led out of all darkness into the fullest light; not that he saw himself a thoroughly renewed man, or counted himself as one entirely dedicated to God; but we mean that he was now regenerated in his heart and life. His Christian experiences had begun in earnest. The truth had started to grow, the tender blade was there, and after a while would be seen the strong stalk, the forming ear, the full corn in the ear.

He did not immediately make his conversion

known. The professors, who knew most of his spiritual struggles, tried to hide them from the students. They regarded them as symptoms of a *fever* that would soon pass away; but yet they knew that such a fever was contagious. They dared not have it spread, or it would work changes of an enduring character. Why are those who call personal convictions of sin and salvation a mere excitement, so fearful of the permanent results of regeneration? If it will soon pass away, why are they so unwilling to let it have its course? It is not the "excitement" that they fear; it is the real, vital, and permanent change in the soul of him who is under the Almighty power of the Lord.

Calvin hid his treasure, waiting for the day when he could buy that field. He stole away from his companions, and in some retreat held fellowship with God. Long had he loved retirement; once for study, but now for prayer and reading the Scriptures; once with an earthly craving for knowledge, but now with a heavenly thirst for Christ. He was confessing Jesus to his own soul, and before the Father and the holy angels. It was necessary to profess him before men. This he was not yet ready to do. He afterwards wrote of this period. "I have always loved peace and tranquillity; accordingly, I began then to seek for a hiding-place, and the means of withdrawing from notice into some out-of-the-way spot."

All at once a great change came over the plans

of the Calvins; one in the ambitious father, the other in the studious son. News had gone to Noyon of John's relations with Olivetan, and the father was alarmed at suspecting heresy in the son of his pride and hopes. There must have been many letters passing between them, but we have not their light, for they are lost to the world. We wish in vain for Calvin's tender expressions to his brothers and sisters, especially that brother Charles, who refused "extreme unction." He had a passion for writing letters, and for persuading his friends to adopt his own views. So honest and frank was his disposition, that we must imagine him giving some hints to his father about his struggles and change of faith. So ambitious was Gerard for his son, that we cannot imagine his disappointment when he found that the new doctrines had captivated the young curé of Marteville. What trouble in the family if John should go off with the "evangelicals!" How the episcopal notary would be humiliated! Verily, the hand of the bishop's secretary would tremble, and almost refuse to record the apostacy! No more hope of a bishop, or cardinal in his house; but it was not yet too late to arrest the sad matter. John must be drawn away from Paris, away from all heresy, away from the priesthood, and away from his doctrinal studies. In his immoderate thirst for John's honours, his fertile mind hit upon a new scheme of success.

The study of law would be most inviting to the

young man; his mind was fitted for it; he would plunge at once deep into the science; he might thus forget his new ideas of faith and spiritual life; he might shake off the awful heresy, and be rescued from a martyrdom. John might become a distinguished lawyer. The profession opened up quite as sure a road to wealth and high position as the priesthood. Had not Duprat been a plain lawyer, then president of the parliament, and was he not now high chancellor of France, and the first personage in the realm after the king? Besides all this, the pope was about to grant his minion a fat benefice or two in the church, as a reward for his zeal against the "heretics." John might reap high glory from both law and religion; from both church and state. As the church-road had proved rather dangerous, the state-road might be safer and shorter. Thus Gerard went on building new castles in the air, in each of which his son was enthroned as the presiding genius.

In the management of John, however, there must be no little tact, lest his honest soul should spurn the offers of the tempter. With his new faith and new life, he might refuse the new plan of his father. Law, as a profound science and elevating, ennobling study, would have charms for the delving intellect of one who desired to know everything possible. Or the scheme may have been this: John need not give up his living at Marteville, for the Montmors would indulge him with the revenues, as a means

of pursuing his studies; he need not renounce all intentions of some time being a priest, but simply turn aside from the road to that office for a time, in order to make a diversion into a science quite akin to theology; and then, after getting rid of his new doctrines, he might enter upon the duties of the confessional, the pulpit, or the professor's chair. One leading idea was to entice him out of his heresy; the other was to secure his future promotion. Such is our theory of the matter, to account for certain facts in the history of the case.

Now a more candid, ingenuous, and single-minded man than John Calvin cannot be found in the annals of biography. He could not be guilty of double-dealing. We do not believe that he fully renounced the priesthood, and still consented to hold the living of a priest in order to support himself while preparing for the profession of the law, and with the design of being a lawyer all his life. We can believe that he consented to do what was very common, and regarded as right in a candidate for the priesthood; and retain his living while engaged in a new study. We find no proof that he had entirely given up the priesthood at this time. It is not credible that he merely pretended to give it up, for he assumed it afterwards, as a matter of course.

Moreover he exhibited a touching illustration of filial obedience. He felt bound to obey his father; he was not of mature age: Gerard's word, in matters of this life, was law. His father said that he

must turn to new studies, and he submitted. It was not for him to ask his father's motives and purposes; he was, no doubt, ignorant of most of his schemes. The law was an inviting study, then more nearly associated with religion than in our days. He was delighted to have the privilege of exploring the mines of jurisprudence. The Montmors, the bishop and the canons were agreed to allow him his slender revenues, and let him go to the celebrated school at Orleans. We may suppose him saying farewell to his companions in Montaigu College; calling at La Marche and pressing the hand of the good Mathurin Cordier; weeping at the parting with Olivetan; spending a short time at Noyon with the loved family; and on an early morning bidding good-bye to his father, who gazed up the road until he was out of sight, saying, as he turned away, "That will cure him of his heresy."

Thirty years afterwards, Calvin wrote in his preface to the Psalms, "My father had destined me, from my childhood, to theology. But observing how much the science of law enriched its professors, he suddenly changed his purpose, and recalled me from the study of philosophy, to that of jurisprudence. In this I obeyed the will of my father, and endeavoured to give faithful attention."

CHAPTER V.

UNDER THE STAR OF THE LAW.

THE ancient city of Orleans, bears the name of the Roman Emperor Aurelian, whose edict ran thus, "We have heard that the laws are violated by those, who, in our times, call themselves Christians. Let them be arrested; and unless they offer to the gods, let them be punished with divers tortures; yet so that justice may be mingled with severity, and that the punishment may cease, as soon as the end is gained of extirpating the transgressors." Changing a few words, the pope might have reissued this edict, as the decree of the Roman church, against all who were true Christians under the reign of Francis I. Orleans was ready to put it in force. Its spirit was that of the olden times. To be a believer in the Christ whom the apostles preached, was to violate the law, and the law had such full sway that the gospel could find no public door of entrance. He who would bring it, must be morally braver than Joan of Arc, when with desperate and fanatic courage she brought relief to the beleaguered city, a hundred years before. A young man going thither to study law, was not at all likely

to come in contact with the newly revived gospel. Gerard Calvin was, doubtless, perfectly satisfied on this point, for Orleans had the intolerant spirit of Aurelian. It was thoroughly royalist. "In the course of the history of France," says M. Guizot. "this is incontestably one of those [cities,] which have most strongly, most constantly, adhered to the crown." It would still adhere to Francis I., so long as he frowned on the reformers. No public movement for reform was to be expected in this city, for there seemed to be a fierceness in the very air, on which floated the names of Attila, Cæsar and "the Thundering Legion." But there was now to be a quiet, hidden, under-current of truth flowing through it, that would refresh those who were athirst for the river that gladdens the city of God. A Christian teacher had gone there, a converted student was going there to study law, and when they departed, they should leave the gospel behind them.

Not only was Orleans so full of law as to shut out the gospel, but the prince of French jurists was teaching with great credit in its university. This was Pierre de l'Etoile (Petrus Stella,) of sufficient renown to please the notary of Noyon, in his veneration for great men. His students said, "Reuchlin, Aleander and even Erasmus have professed in this city, but the star (Etoile) eclipses all these suns." In the autumn of 1527, John Calvin left home, went southward one hundred and fifty miles,

to place himself under the star of the law. How they regarded each other when first their twinkling eyes met we might surmise, for in every case before, Calvin had riveted the attention of his chief professors upon him, without the least effort. He appeared as a living study for the acutest lawyer of the kingdom. No sooner was he met than he was tenderly loved by one who had in his heart the solicitude of a mother for all who were placed under his care. They conversed; they argued, as it seems; they did not agree in religious opinions, but they were friends from first to last. We must often remark Calvin's power to bind to himself the hearts of so many and such great independent men, in lasting bonds. It will correct much of the wrong common sentiment about him. The professor was struck with the beauty of the young man's genius and the charms of his solid character; and though opposed to his religious views, he was proud of having a pupil who could think for himself, and hold his own in a discussion.

Calvin, shy and quiet as ever, kept himself apart from the students, being repelled by their noisy vivacity and attracted to his new researches. If he wished to ramble into deep solitudes, he might enter the neighbouring forest of nearly one hundred thousand acres, and meditate under the oaks. But he was too much inclined to shut the doors and pass wakeful midnights in his little room. Yet an eminent lecturer and new studies were not enough

to satisfy him; he sighed for a friend, so that both mind and heart might have their wants supplied with learning and with love. His full, observing eye singled out a young scholar from Noyon, the modest Nicholas Duchemin, who was preparing himself for a professorship of *belles lettres*. Perhaps they had met before, or heard each other's names. Their natures were somewhat in contrast; Duchemin was mild, extremely prudent, sagacious, not at all susceptible, careful to examine every opinion before adopting it, equitable in his judgment, and a little slow in all his movements; Calvin had so much vivacity, ardour, severity, activity and susceptibility that he would pass, the world over, for an intensely earnest man. Both were timid by nature and temperate in all their habits. Their differences served to attract and bind them together, for each hoped to find in the other what he felt lacking in himself. Strong friendships thrive best on the soil of a distinct individuality. Little clashes of opinion give a charm to friendly conversation.

The means of Duchemin were very moderate, and he received students into his house, as was the custom of many of the citizens. Calvin begged to be admitted, and a room was given him at a rate that agreed with his purse. He found in his host all that had pleased him in a Montmor, an Olivetan, and even more; so that he loved him with all the energy of a heart of twenty. He wanted to share everthing with Nicholas, and talk with him during

all his spare hours. A larger store of the new doctrines would have made them like Farel and his host Œcolampadius at Basle. Ardent as was this friendship, it was not blind. Calvin, true to his character, gently hinted the one weak point in his townsman; "Take care lest your great modesty should generate into indolence." Idle moments were not part of Calvin's life.

With this noble friend to take off the chill of strangeness, the notary's son began to examine the university population around him. The students had come from all quarters to receive light from the great, brilliant star. The party from each kingdom or province formed "a nation" of their own. At first there had been ten *nations;* they were afterwards reduced to four. These composed the university. The "Picard nation" asserted themselves with no little earnestness. The "German nation" stood highest for elegance of body, manners, mind and scholarship. Its library was called "the abode of the muses."

Calvin was surprised to see crowds of students loitering on the streets, caring nothing for learning, so far as he could tell. Young lords strutted about in tight hose, richly embroidered doublets, small Spanish cloaks, velvet caps, and general insolence. Showy daggers hung from their belts. Young gentlemen ordered their servants to attend them, took the wall, tossed their heads haughtily, cast impertinent looks on each side, and wanted the

whole walk for themselves. The sons of wealthy tradesmen roved about in noisy bands, and went singing and "larking" to some of the forty tennis-courts in the city. Did Calvin reprove them as had been his manner in every other place where he studied? Perhaps they were ready to shout out "law," and sneer at him for his gospel. It is no small persecution to fling derision in the face of an honest corrector of vice, in order to crush the words that tremble on his lips.

In such a world Calvin made a singular figure, with his small person, sallow face, thoughtful walk, and spirit of order and precision. But the chivalrous Spaniard might assume his airs, and the ruddy German broadly laugh; yet one thing delighted the northern provincial; said he, "The university is quite a republican oasis in the midst of enslaved France."

Calvin was born for republican ideas, and to lay the foundations deeper and stronger than ever before for those liberties which would prevail in Switzerland, Holland, England and America. Providence designed that he should find this "oasis" of the Orleans University, and study sublime law under the man who was the only undisputed authority in the ancient city, which was second in rank to Paris. The students were quite free in their thoughts, opinions and discussions; quite democratic in their little "nations," and Calvin took the right advantage of his liberty. Beda seemed to leave

everything to Etoile, and the star was unusually tolerant of free thought.

There were no fogs in the teachings of the celebrated professor. If not always right, as we may see, yet he was always clear. It was a time when all great men must define their position in regard to the treatment of heretics. The students were eager to have his opinion. In a general council he had uttered his judgment in favour of their punishment. As his view was that of the more liberal men of that severe age, we are interested in knowing what he thought. From his desk he thus discourses: "The prosperity of nations depends upon obedience to the laws." We assent to this in all reason. "If they punish outrages against the rights of man, much more ought they to punish outrages against the rights of God." Not always, we say to ourselves. God is the punisher of those outrages against his own rights. When malice results in an overt act of injury to a man, we may punish the offender according to law; but secret, undeveloped hatred is a sin against God; we have no law to punish that. Unbelief is the sum of all sin against God; but unto him alone is the "heretic" accountable.

"A thief may rob us of our purse," he continues; "but a heretic may deprive us of heaven. Those insensate and furious men who proclaim heretical and infamous opinions . . . . ought first to be delivered up to divine vengeance, and afterwards

visited with corporeal punishment." This last sentence he quotes from the code of the land. It was the law, but it was not God's law, nor the gospel of Christ. It was the doctrine of those times, and Calvin was, one day at Geneva, to expound a liberty which would correct it. But not yet did he perceive the fallacy of the reasoning. The young disciple was not qualified to rise up against a venerable teacher, and draw the line between the temporal and the spiritual domain in government.

The very man who declared these principles was not ready to apply them in his own practice, or he must have made Calvin an example. To no one was he more tender and tolerant. The kind treatment he received blinded Calvin's eyes to the plausible but dangerous errors asserted. Etoile seemed to be the last man to arraign and punish another for his belief. He appeared as a model for Calvin, for while he was inflexible as a judge, there was no cruelty in his heart. It was not so much the *error* in principle as the *cruelty* in practice among persecutors, that first called forth the protests of the reformers. Etoile was not cruel, and had he been in Beda's place, the Reformation might have swept through France at the voices of Lefevre, Farel, and their co-labourers. He loved Calvin, even while he discountenanced his religious doctrines, with a noble Christian equity and touching, enduring affection.

The bashful Noyon student began to be courted

by the young gentlemen, and he threw off his reserve. He became free among the republican spirits of the classes, talked readily with all, and had none of that clannish disposition which limits its sympathies to a clique. His large mind and heart took in the interests of every "nation" in the university, and he sought their unity; for the love of unity was one of his leading traits of character. Perhaps he occasionally indulged in some of the pastimes of the students, and gained skill enough to engage in such exercises in later years at Geneva. Beza says, "He would sometimes join his intimate friends in a game of quoits, or some other pastime not forbidden by the laws. But this occurred very seldom; for he was generally occupied the whole day in writing or studying; except that after dinner he would walk about his room for a quarter of an hour, if he had anybody to keep him company."

He was doubtless as exemplary among the extravagant students as when Beza said of him, "In conformity with his singular modesty, he observed in his dress a just medium between over-nicety and slovenliness; in like manner with regard to diet, as he was far removed from luxury, so on the other hand his frugality was decent. He ate but little, and gave but little time to sleep."

The Picards felt proud of their colleague, elected him into their "nation," and raised him to the highest post, that of proctor. He took the solemn oath—"I swear to guard the honour of the univer-

sity and of my nation." He was thus in the front rank in the public discussions and university assemblies. It was his duty to call meetings, examine, order, decide, execute, and sign diplomas. But he resolved to teach his *nationals* a lesson on temperance and economy. He noticed the disorders that had crept into their convivial meetings. He must correct them. Instead of convening the "nation" for a jovial banquet, he paid over to the treasurer the sum that would have been thus expended, and made a present of books to the university library. It was a bold step; it might give offence, but he acted with a clear conscience. Before long his office compelled him to display that firmness which distinguished him all his life. Along with much other new material, D'Aubigne furnishes an incident which he is the first to record in history.

A singular custom had long been observed by the people of the little neighbouring town of Beaugency, on each anniversary of the Finding of the Body of St. Firmin. The villagers appeared in the church of St. Pierre, and after the epistle had been chanted, handed to the proctor of the Picard nation a piece of gold, called *maille de Florence*, of two crowns' weight. Calvin was now expected to receive the money; but he must know in what this ceremony originated. They told him thus: "On the thirteenth of January, 687, the body of St. Firmin the martyr, which had been solemnly exhumed, caused a miracle. A marvellous change

took place in nature. The trees put forth fresh leaves and blossoms, and filled the air with a supernatural odour. Simon, lord of Beaugency, having long suffered from leprosy, went to the window to witness the ceremony over the relics, and was restored to health by the sweet savour. In token of his gratitude, he settled an annual offering of a golden *maille*, payable at first to the chapter of Amiens in Picardy, and afterwards to the Picard students composing their nation at Orleans."

Calvin did not have great faith in the miracle, but the custom seemed to him then as only a harmless amusement. The tribute had not been paid the year before, and he resolved to go with his nationals and demand it. He assembled his fellow-students, placed a band of music and the beadles in front, and led the procession upon the gay march. The joyous troop entered the village, presented their claim, and the money was placed in his hand. On the front was an image of John the Baptist; on the reverse side the fleur-de-lys of France, with the word *Florentia*. The Picard nation was satisfied; it crowned the holiday. With their illustrious and bold chief at their head they tramped back to Orleans, bearing their trophy, with a little of the pomp of Jason and the Argonauts returning from Colchis with the golden fleece. The procession re-entered the city amid the shouts of the university, the venerable star, probably, smiling in his window. Calvin was one day to rob the papal

dragon of a richer treasure, and nations more numerous were to show their joy by louder shouts of gladness. He would look back upon such customs as "the old follies and nonsense which men substitute for the glory of Jesus Christ."

Calvin would not separate from his fellow-students, nor repel them from him by severe rebukes, yet he often was pained at what he saw in this noisy, dissolute multitude. There were excesses, revels, surfeitings, drunkenness, intrigues, quarrels and duels, from which he shut his eyes in disgust, or turned away to seek the calm retreat to which his books invited him. A Roman Catholic historian tells us that the vivacity of his wit, the strength of his memory, the remarkable style in which he clothed the lessons of his masters, the ease with which he caught up certain expressions and sentences which fell from their lips, "the starts and flashes of a bright mind which he displayed at intervals," soon made him distinguished among the leading minds that guided the university.

But where was the "bright morning star" that had shined into his soul at Paris? It was to shed its beams upon him on the banks of the Loire. What had been concealed at Montaigu was to be openly manifested by him at Orleans. Those, who best knew him, loved him most, especially certain men whom the priests had attacked, and whose faith was full of Christian meekness. Every day he had a serious conversation with Duchemin. In order to

lessen his expenses, he had shared his room with a pious German, formerly a grey friar, who, as Luther said, had learned that it is not the cowl of St. Francis that saves; it is the blood of Jesus Christ. He had thrown off his filthy frock and come to France. This nameless room-mate had much to tell of the reformation beyond the Rhine, of his own experience, and of the simple gospel. Some have thought that this was what first "perverted Calvin from the true faith." D'Aubigne assigns him an earlier conversion. Dr. Paul Henry must be mistaken in saying that "now he became acquainted for the first time with a Bible," unless he means a French version. He had certainly read the Latin version at Paris.

He enlarged the circle of his friends. Next to the house of Duchemin, where the wind of the new doctrine was blowing—next to the library, whose curator, Philip Laurent, became his friend—Calvin loved particularly to visit the family of an advocate where three amiable, educated, and pious ladies afforded him the charms of agreeable conversation. It was that of Francis Daniel, "a person," says Beza, "who, like Duchemin, had a knowledge of the truth." He was a grave and influential man, a Christian, doubtless, at heart. He was very conservative, owing perhaps to his profession of law. He would hardly have carried the banner for the company that Queen Margaret was leading, but he might bring up the rear, and guard both the forms

and the ordinances of the church. This house gave relief to Calvin after the severe hours passed in the schools, the study and the library. His visits may have added certain accomplishments, which the society of scholars would not bestow. Many of his letters close with a kind remembrance of his friend's mother, wife, and sister Frances.

He sometimes met, at this house, a young student from Paris, named Coiffard, lively, active, intelligent, but selfish, and one for whom he had little sympathy. The picture needed such a personage to set forth Daniel in the fore-ground, with his mind so clear, his spirit so lofty, his conversation so profitable. On one point they agreed—the necessity of a reformation of the church. But the lawyer could not endure to see it take footing outside of the old church. "The reformation," said he, "must be accomplished in the church: we must not separate from it." The then difficult question came up anew before the student; he was more disposed to take the course that Luther had trodden. But his affection for Daniel was not severed by discussion; he could love all who loved the Lord in sincerity, and this attachment was long maintained by correspondence, after he left France.

All these friendships, however, did not satisfy Calvin. At Daniel's, at Duchemin's, at the library, and wherever he went, he heard of a man whom he was eager to know, and who was to have a greater influence upon him than all the rest. A poor young

German of Rothweil, named Melchior Wolmar, had come to Paris, and being forced to work, he had served for some time as a corrector of the press. He may have been the proof-reader of some editions of the classics demanded by the revival of letters. Greedy of knowledge, he often quitted his proofs, and slipped among the students, who gathered on the benches before the illustrious John Lascaris, Budæus and Lefevre. In the school of the former he became a fine Greek scholar; in that of the latter a sincere Christian. When he took his Master's degree, he held the first rank in the class of a hundred graduates. Nor was he one of the first-honour men, who would imagine himself on the height, and put forth no further efforts along the way of upward, endless progress. He had plans for being a commentator upon the Iliad. When again in Germany, he had to make a speech in his mother tongue, but it had lost its charm for his ear and lip; he requested that he might speak in Greek, because that language was more familiar to him.

Orleans heard of him, and he was invited to teach Greek in the university. He came quite as poor as he was learned; his salary or fees would not support him, and he took into his house a small number of young students, who would keep good order and not disturb their master. Theodore Beza was one of them, and he says, "He was my faithful instructor; with what marvellous skill he gave his lessons, not only in the liberal arts, but also in

piety!" His pupils did not call him *Melchior*, but *Melior* (better.) What Cordier had been to Calvin in Latin, Wolmar was to be in Greek, as well as be to him a guide into the life-work of teaching, not the three languages represented on the cross, but the name of Him whom they set forth as the king.

Calvin, whose exalted soul was attracted by all that is beautiful, became attached to this distinguished professor. His father had sent him to study civil law; but Wolmar "solicited him to devote himself to a knowledge of the Greek classics." At first Calvin hesitated, but he yielded at last.

"I will study Greek," he said, "but as it is you that urge me, you also must assist me." Melchior answered that he was ready to devote to him abundantly, not only his instruction, but his person, his life, himself. From that time Calvin made the most rapid progress in Greek literature. The professor loved him above all his pupils. In this way he was placed in a condition to become the most illustrious commentator of Scripture.

Melchior spoke to Calvin of Germany and the Reformation; he read the Greek Testament with him, set before him the riches of Christ announced therein. "By faith," said Wolmar, "man is united to Christ, and Christ to him, so that it is no longer man whom God sees in the sinner, but his dearly beloved Son himself; and the act, by virtue of which God makes the sinner an inheritor of heaven, is not an arbitrary one. . . . The doctrine of

justification is, in Luther's opinion, the capital doctrine, the touch-stone of a standing or a falling church."

Man was doing all that he could to bring Calvin to the very point on which salvation turns; but his chief teacher was God. He had not altogether laid aside theology for law; but his heart needed refreshing. At Orleans he had more of those fierce struggles which are often prolonged in strong natures. The light which had broken into his room and his heart at Paris, had partially faded away. He must regain it, and as it returned he was pained to know himself. "I am stung to the quick by the judgement of God," said he, when he remembered the heavenly messages to his soul. "I am in a continual battle; I am assaulted and shaken, as when an armed man is forced by a violent blow to stagger a few steps backwards. . . . I am like a wretched man shut up in a deep dungeon, who receives the light of day aslant through a high and narrow loophole." He persevered, and at length was able to say, "If I have not the full and free sight of the sun, I distinguish, however, his light afar, and enjoy its brightness." While there were fightings within there soon began to be fears without. Aurelian seemed to be coming back to Orleans.

In the early part of the eleventh century a young ecclesiastic, named Heribert, had eft the castle of his liege-lord in Normandy, and come to study at Orleans. He heard of new doctrines, and the re-

vival of free thought. It was too free, for it was somewhat mystical and rationalistic; but it charmed the young Norman. It showed him the great papal errors, and revealed to him some of the deep things of Scripture. It brought before him faith and regeneration. He found that all who believed the new doctrines were on their guard against exposure to the violence of the old church. They had a quite secret understanding among themselves, and at their head were Lisoi and Stephen, the latter having been chaplain to queen Constantia. Their piety, knowledge, and active benevolence won them favour among the people and the better noblemen. The professors in the theological school had become tinctured with their new ideas. One of the priests, Adeodatus, had held them, and was so little suspected, that he was not denied the rites of the church in his last hours, nor a sacred burial; but ere long his dust would be disturbed.

Heribert informed his lord, Arefast, of his new opinions and brotherhood in the cautious sect. The Norman noble was zealous for the church. He tried to alarm king Robert of the threatening dangers, and resolved to ferret out the little band whose power was so terrible. It would gratify his heart and glorify his name to bring this great evil to light. He was sent to Orleans as a spy in the camp. In his zeal for truth he was ready to be a liar. He pretended to be anxious to receive the new, saving knowledge, and to become one of the

brotherhood. The leaders fell into the snare, told him all, took his hand, received the traitor's kiss, and imagined that they had a strong ally in the noble convert. He went to his king, and a synod was called at Orleans. Robert was present with the queen. Agents surprised a part of the innocent band at one of their meetings, arrested them, put them in chains, hurried them before the council, and gave them a sight of their sovereigns. Arefast still played his assumed part in order to draw forth a statement of their doctrines. They supposed that they had a noble leader, and wished to be as frank as he in his open avowals. They said freely, "Think not that this sect has lately sprung up. For a long time we have held these doctrines, and we expected them to spread and be, some day, admitted by you all—this we expect still."

Was not this enough? Were they not condemned out of their own mouths? They claimed the support of Scripture. Was not all this against the law, so majestic in Orleans?

"We have a higher law," said they; "one written by the Holy Spirit in the heart of man; we can believe nothing but that which God has revealed to us. The Spirit would reveal to you all, the depths and dignity of the Scriptures. Do with us as you please; already we behold our king reigning in heaven, ready to crown us with eternal joys." One priest and one nun recanted; the thirteen others stood firm, and died at the stake. But there were

other flames which this blood would only feed, in the neighbouring streets and villages. The hunters of heresy learned that Adeodatus had been in the league; they dug up his remains and cast them from the consecrated ground, where they had lain three years. They could not entirely root out the new doctrines.

These events may not have been recited after five hundred years had passed, but similar schemes of persecution were frequent in the land. History was re-producing itself. Arefasts were to be found everywhere, and one might hasten down from Noyon and betray young Calvin and his circle of friends. Many doctors and students were already saying to him, "You are a schismatic; you are separating from the church." He was alarmed, and was a prey to fresh anguish.

The Psalms have ever been, and will ever be, the solace and strength of God's people in times of sorrow and of fear. We can say of almost every spiritual experience, that David has felt it all, and sung himself out of it. He says for us just what we wanted to express. He composed the great inspired liturgy, through which the godly of all nations and all generations should pour forth the griefs, the doubts, the joys, the triumphs, and the hopes of their own hearts. One chord is perpetually trembling in all the royal harper's music, and one line runs through all the Psalms—"I was brought low, and he helped me." The world knows how

Luther sang them entering Augsburg shouting, "A safe strong-hold our God is still!"* Of which version Carlyle says, "There is something in it like the sound of Alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes. Luther wrote this song in a time of blackest threatenings, which, however, could in no wise become a time of despair." God was his refuge, whispering comfort in the Psalms.

"O, our Psalms!" said the Huguenot, after telling how the foe came upon the mountain worshippers, when their voices were lifting them to heaven. "The psalms are our epic; and the most profoundly truthful epic which has ever been written or sung by any nation; an endless work, of which each of us becomes afresh the author; a sacred treasure, where are gathered beside our patriotic remembrances the hopes, the joys, and the griefs of each. Not a verse, not a line, which is not a whole history or an entire poem. This was sung by a mother beside the cradle of her first-born; this was chanted by one of our martyrs on his way to death. This was the line cut by a ball; this was half-murmured by an expiring father, who went to finish it among the angels. O, our psalms! Who, in human language could ever tell what you say to us in our solitudes, upon the soil crimsoned with our blood, and under the vault of heaven, from whose height are looking down upon us, those who have prayed, wept, and sung with us."

* "Ein feste Berg ist unser Gott." Psalm xlvi.

In this love for the Psalms, Calvin followed Luther, and anticipated the Huguenots, helping to make his times the psalm-singing age of the world. He tells us that he began to meditate upon them amid his fears at Orleans. He found David expressing his own feelings, and in later years he wrote, "Ah! the Holy Spirit has here painted to the life, all the pains, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, anxieties, perplexities, and even the confused emotions with which my mind is wont to be agitated. This book is an anatomy of all the parts of the soul. There is no affection in man, which is not here represented as in a glass." He found himself, turned his own heart to Christ, cast his burden on the Lord, and was consoled with strength and hope.

The point of opposition in his case was like that of David—it was against his piety. Men of the old Orleans spirit "heaped upon his head a world of abuse." They said that he was wicked, daring, profane, pestiferous, and ought to be expelled from the church. The law-student, retiring to his chamber, bowed at the true and only Christian confessional—the mercy-seat—and exclaimed: "If I am at war with such masters, yet I am not at war with thy church, O God! Why should I hesitate to separate myself from these false teachers, whom the Apostles call thy enemies? When cursed by the unrighteous priests of their day, did not thy prophets remain in the true unity of thy children? Encouraged by their example, I will resist those who op-

press us, and neither their threats nor their denunciations shall shake me." This was Luther-like, it was apostolic in heroic courage.

The tender plant, carried from Paris in Calvin's heart, and somewhat chilled under the star of the law at Orleans, now struck deeper its roots into the truth, put forth wider branches into the air of grace, and became a tree of righteousness heavy with its fruitage. At Paris he had heard the divine voice, at Orleans he studied more thoroughly the Scriptures, and began the works of the Christian calling with more intelligence and resolution. He saw that from that time he must renounce the world, and all that was merely human in the Church. He did it, and never since has the world ceased to hate him. Never since have human ritualists and formalists, and the compromisers of God's sovereign grace and truth, left uncast any reproach that might be hurled against his name. It is not necessary to take up his defence. Enough for us to hear his plea with the Advocate on high: "I have not sued thee by my love, O Christ; thou hast loved me of thy free will. Thou hast shone into my soul, and then everything that dazzled my eyes by false splendour, immediately disappeared, or at least I take no account of it. As those who travel by sea, when they find their ship in danger, throw everything overboard, so that they may safely arrive at port; so I prefer being stripped of all I have, rather than be deprived of thee. I would rather live poor

and miserable, than be devoured with my riches. . . I come to thee naked and empty; I find everything in thee."

Thus he renounced the world and human merits. But still more was requisite; he must devote himself to the Author and Lord of his new life. Lifting up his hands, he offered to God the full sacrifice of a heart burning with love. This thought and this act took possession of him. His solemn consecration became the charter of his nobility, the blazon on his shield, the design engraved on his seal. His device was a hand presenting a heart in sacrifice, with the words around it, *Cor meum velut mactatum Domino in sacrificium offero*—"I offer my heart as immolated in sacrifice to God." He gave all, he kept back nothing for himself. The outward work of the armorial bearings, is probably of a later day, but the inward act of consecration seems to have been at Orleans. Such was the symbol, such his life.

Let the Romanist Florimond de Remond give us his opinion of this young man Calvin, on whom so many eyes were turning with admiration. "A wonderful mind! a mind keen and subtle to the highest degree, prompt and sudden in his imaginations! What a praiseworthy man he would have been, if, sifting away the vices (heresy,) the virtues alone could have been retained!" We may certainly believe that a purer faith increased the solid virtues of his character, and that the right sifting was accomplished. Others saw in him the tokens of one

of the greatest men of the age, but when they began to suspect him of heresy, their jaundiced eyes saw something bilious, gloomy and severe in his nature. They knew not his happiness, nor his love for men. "There was doubtless something wanting in Calvin," says D'Aubigne, who is closely followed in most of these chapters; "he may not have had that smiling imagination which, at the age he had now reached, generally gilds life with the most brilliant colours; the world appeared to him one wide shipwreck. But possessing the glance of an eagle, he discovered a deliverance in the future, and his powerful hand, strengthened by God, was about to prepare the great transformations of the church and of the world."

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW VOICE AT ORLEANS.

CALVIN'S taste for the word of God did not divert him from the study of law. It was his father's order, and to give up jurisprudence would be disobedience. The researches also were delightful. He had then double studies—that of the law, and that of the Holy Scriptures in Greek. If double perseverance were possible, he must have put it forth. He almost fasted that his head might be clear, and often spent nearly the whole night over his Bible. Early every morning he "ruminated" on what he had learned before his brief hours of sleep. "We were his friends," said the informants of Theodore Beza; "we shared his room with him; we only tell you what we have seen." The belated citizens of Orleans could, doubtless, have joined with the Parisian night-strollers in telling of the solitary gleam from the window of a recluse. "Alas," adds Beza, "those long vigils, which so wonderfully developed his faculties and enriched his memory, weakened his health, and laid the foundations of those sufferings and frequent illnesses, which shortened his days." Thus he urged on the

labours of his profession and the labours of piety. So remarkable were his attainments in jurisprudence, that both students and professors, soon looked upon him as a master rather than a student.

One day Etoile begged him to give a lesson in his place. The students expected a good lecture with more assurance than he hoped for their attention. The young man of nineteen or twenty performed the delicate task with such skill and clearness, that his admirers declared that he would become the greatest jurist of France. The professors often employed him as their substitute. How delighted would Gerard have been could he have had this modestly told in one of his son's letters! Here was the greatest temptation that ambition could offer him, and nothing but divine grace could have kept him from walking the royal road of the law towards the fame of a judge or statesman. The temptation was to him a thing of naught. His heart was upon the heavenly calling, and if a lawyer, he would be a Christian advocate.

He "sought the company of the faithful servants of God," as he tells us, seeking to strengthen the ties of brotherly union among them. His frequent thought was that "all the children of God should be united together." He associated with everybody, even the gainsayers, and if they attacked the gospel doctrines he defended them in the spirit of Christian republicanism. But he did not put himself forward. He knew how far to go, when to

speak, what to say, in order to avoid exposing the truth of Christ to the jeers of the skeptical or the anger of the sensitive papists. When he did speak, every word struck home. They said, "Nobody can withstand him when he has the Bible in his hand."

The hand that held out his heart to God, knew what the other hand was doing when it held forth the word of life to his fellow-men. He was but the medium between God and them in conveying the truth. They began to inquire for it. Students, who knew not how to believe and towns-people who knew not what to credit, came and begged him to teach them. If the call of his Master had not assured him of his duty to give the bread of life to the perishing, he should have also the call of men. It was urgent, but he was abashed. "I am but a poor recruit," he said, "and you address me as a general." They thought if one could lecture on law like Etoile, he certainly could give some plain lessons in the gospel. The requests were constantly renewed, and he tried to find some hiding-place where he could read, meditate and pray without interruption. At one time it was the room of a friend, or a nook in the university library, or a shady retreat on the banks of the river. But he was hardly absorbed in the study of the Scriptures, before he found himself surrounded by persons eager to hear him, and who refused to retire without instruction. They were charmed with the good word and his happy way of teaching it. "Alas!" he exclaimed,

"all my hiding-places are turned into public schools!"

Still more secluded retreats were sought, for he wished to possess, before he imparted, knowledge so vast in its importance. True Frenchman as he was, he liked to see things clearly, and to teach them simply; but he went deeper into truth, and had a safer observation than is usual among his fellow-countrymen. Quick, clear, but shallow men, wrought the papal and infidel revolutions of France. Nor was Calvin a new Abelard, bringing divine mysteries to the test of human reason. He did not presume to fathom the infinite mysteries of Revelation; he was now preparing to state them more clearly than ever had been done by uninspired man. It was well that he hid himself away with God and the Bible; he was ordained to newly define clearly the great system of Paul and Christ; busier times would come when he could not sit in undisturbed thought and prayer, and now was the day for the profound study which was necessary. Yet he had no thought of such a vast accomplishment at this time; his simple desire was to find in Holy Truth the light and life of his soul.

His admirers tracked him, and entreated him to tell them what the Lord had done for him. Several citizens of Orleans offered their houses, saying, "Come and teach openly the salvation of men."

"Let no one disturb my repose," he replied, shrinking back from the duty; "leave me in peace.

"A repose of darkness," said the most ardent ones, who were athirst for the living waters; "an ignorant peace! Come and preach."

"St. Chrysostom says: 'Though a thousand persons call you, think of your own weakness, and obey only under constraint.'" This was the purport of Calvin's reply.

"Well, then, we constrain you," answered his friends, who in this case might have argued, that "the voice of the people is the voice of God."

Calvin turned his ear to Heaven. "O God, what dost thou desire of me," he would exclaim at such moments. Then in the entreating complaints of the Psalms, he would reason with Jehovah face to face. "Why dost thou pursue me? Why, despite my disposition, dost thou lead me to the light, and bring me into play?"

At last he yielded; the duty seemed imperative; he must preach to these hungry souls. He went to the houses of his friends. A few men, women, and young people gathered around him, and he began to explain the Scriptures. It was a new order of teaching, unknown in the chapels and cathedrals. Scholastics were laid aside; it was not hard logic; it was all life. The language of the young evangelist was simple, clear, pointed, practical. The arrows of God went home to the conscience; the consolations of Christ fell like gentle rain upon the desert heart. Yet there was a holy majesty in his words that lifted his hearers toward heaven. They

were completely under his sway; they forgot the man, they felt the presence of God. His finger was on the chapter of the word; their feet seemed to stand on Calvary, and their eyes were on the true cross.

"He teaches the truth," said his hearers, as they took their serious walk homewards; "not in affected language, but with such depth, solidity and weight, that every one who hears him is struck with admiration." They had heard priests before; now they had heard a preacher. All wanted to hear him again. Such is the representation of Beza, who lived on the spot at the time, and moved in the very circle which Calvin had gathered around him. "While at Orleans," he says, "Calvin, chosen from that time to be an instrument of election in the Lord's work, wonderfully advanced the kingdom of God in many families."

Thus the light in this law-student was a means of life to certain households at Orleans. Calvin's activity, along with his reluctance, is a proof that he was already converted by the Spirit of God. He reminds us of Jeremiah saying, "Ah! Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child;" or of Moses at the bush that burned, saying, "O, my Lord, I am not eloquent;" but finally submitting and declaring, "O, my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt (willest to) send." No trust in himself before attempting to speak in a private house; all confidence in God

after the duty was undertaken; the Bible was in his hand, and the word upon his lips. No self-display, but simply the manifestation of the Christian life and truth which God had put into his heart. No ambition to address an audience in a cathedral; but a simple family invitation drawing him into an humble sphere of activity. It was the preacher, in the apostolic spirit, addressing the church in the house. He could, with less hesitation, take the place of an Etoile, for that was in the line of a merely human profession; but to stand where a Peter or a Paul stood, and "declare all the words of this life," was too sacred, too much like putting forth his hand upon the hallowed ark. Verily this is not the man of a vain, proud, insensible, and ambitious spirit, ever seeking to rule, and grasping the unproffered sceptre over men.

The exact time of Calvin's conversion is of lesser account; the fact of it is all important. The most recent researches go to prove the error of several biographers, who "place Calvin's conversion at Orleans, or at Bourges, somewhat later, or even later still, during his second residence at Paris." There is reason to believe that it was wrought when he was a student at Montaigu College; that its first public manifestation was at Orleans, and that in this latter city the fruits of it were blessed to many families. Another error is corrected; his first and intimate acquaintance with Wolmar was not at Bourges, but at Orleans, where Calvin seems to

have studied Biblical theology quite as much as he studied law, becoming as proficient in both these deep sciences as the brief time of six or eight months would enable him. We are amazed at his progress, but the testimony is above question. We must remember that, as Cordier held to be so important, Calvin had laid well the foundations with the Montmors at La Marche and at Montaigu. Almost from infancy he had been a thorough student.

Growing in knowledge and acting in love, he had begun to lift his voice in Orleans, refuting gainsayers and directing thirsty souls to the streams that flow from the throne of God. What harvest afterwards ripened there, from this early sowing, we cannot tell, but near the close of his life, Calvin's influence will be seen again in that city, when the Huguenots rally at the call of Beza and the prince of Conde. An event at the home of his childhood suddenly withdrew him from this scene of Christian activity.

One day, probably during the Easter of the year 1528, Calvin received a letter from Noyon. He opened it; read the sad news; his father was seriously ill. He hurried to Duchemin, saying, "I must depart." This friend, with many others, wished to keep him in a place where he had become so useful, but he did not hesitate. "I promise you to return shortly," said he, hoping that his father would soon be better. He bade farewell to his

books, to his beloved friends, and to those families in whose houses he had preached, and took the road to Picardy.

Of his sojourn in Noyon, we have little knowledge. Assuredly he indulged at his father's bed-side, "the sweetest form of gratitude." Yet the episcopal secretary lingered on, without any signs of immediate danger. A question began to rise up in the son's mind; should he stay or go? Seated by the sick man's pillow during the watches of the night, his thoughts often carried him back to Orleans, where were his books and Christian brotherhood, he felt impelled to leave a town where he scarcely dared to avow his faith and love in Christ, and he planned a return. Suddenly his father grew worse, and he must remain. His filial affection and respect are shown in his words—"The title of father belongs to God; when God gives it to a man, he communicates to him some sparks of his own brightness."

A crisis seemed to take place; the doctors held out hopes; the patient might recover, and thus day after day passed. "There is no longer any hope of a cure," the physicians again said; "your father's death cannot be far off." Calvin began to fear lest he was taking lessons in vacillation. He took up his pen on the fourteenth of May, to write to Duchemin, for he had hardly parted from him, before he wished to enjoy his company. It is the first letter of the reformer that has been preserved. "You will admit that until now you have known me

to be a person rather overmuch attentive, not to say troublesome, in the frequency of my correspondence," he writes, and we see a reason for the rich store of letters he left behind him. Lest his long silence (of about a month!) should "bring his punctuality in question," he explains the delay by referring to his father's illness. So sensitive is his friendship, that he says, "I concluded that all the esteem you had conceived for me, during a long acquaintance and daily intercourse could not vanish in a single moment: and that a certain kindly courtesy, as well as shrewdness, is so much in your nature, that nothing is wont unadvisedly to prejudge you." "When the physicians gave some hope of his [father's] restoration to good health, I then thought of nought else, than the anxious desire to rejoin you, to which I had previously been very strongly inclined, but which was much increased after an interval of some days. Meanwhile, my onwaiting in this duty has been prolonged, until at length there remained no hope of recovery, and the approach of death is certain. Whatever happens, I shall see you again. . . . Have you given in your name yet among the professors of literature? See that your modesty does not enforce indolence upon you. Adieu, dear Duchemin, my friend dearer to me than life."*

What did happen is not quite clear. The certain approach of death must have been a mistake of the

* Letters of John Calvin; Presbyterian Board of Publication.

doctors, for his father seems not to have died until nine or ten months later. Perhaps John remained with the sick man all summer. One circumstance seems to show that he was not at Orleans during the close of the year.

In the ancient town of Vezelai lived a Burgundian family, which delighted in a new-born son in 1519, and, as they had received him from God, they named him Theodore. One of his bachelor uncles, Nicholas, a nobleman and councillor of parliament, paid his brother a visit, adopted the child, and took him to Paris, although he had not yet learned to live independent of his mother's breast. His father was a magistrate of the town, and he may have felt that he had cares enough on his hands; the uncle must have wanted some object on which to lavish his tenderness. Perhaps his boyhood in the courts and streets of Paris, prepared him to spend a few of his after years as "a brilliant and disssipated youth." When nine years old, his uncle sent him to the excellent manager of boys at Orleans. Early in December, 1528, Melchior Wolmar gave a room to the lad, who was "playful and well-bred, with a keen glance and lively wit," and wrote him on his books as Theodore de Beza. This was eight months after Calvin's departure, and Beza, who afterwards gathered up all his earliest memories of his great and dear friend, nowhere speaks of having met him that year at Orleans, and had he been residing there, he would certainly have been seen at Wolmar's.

CHAPTER VII.

CALVIN AT BOURGES.

It was the summer of 1528 when Nicholas Duchemin, sitting amid his books in Orleans, heard a very decided knock at the door of his house. Was it the carrier, in haste to deliver an expected letter from Noyon? "Poor Calvin is losing his father," thought he. "I fear it will change all his plans of study." The door opened, Calvin himself was there, wearied enough, but with so happy a face that his friend had the assurance to say, "Our Noyon friends are in good health, I suppose."

"Yours are well, but they are wondering whether you have yet been made professor of literature. My father is so much improved that he has sent me back to my studies."

"So we will have you with us again. Your friends have beset me with questions concerning you."

"No; I have only come to pack up my few books, bid you farewell, and go farther south. My father has determined that I must go to Bourges."

"A very expensive place; I do not believe that you will be pleased." But Duchemin did not un-

derstand that there was a famous professor of law delivering lectures in the university of Bourges, nor that Gerard Calvin supposed that great teachers would help his son more rapidly up to honour, wealth and power.

"I shall hear the celebrated Andrew Alciati, and that will be better than for me to be lecturing in the place of Etoile," said Calvin with a smile. Alciati, the son of a Milanese noble, was born the year that Columbus discovered America. When twenty-one years old, he wrote in three days his notes on the laws of Justinian, and thereby gained the right to plead causes when he was under the usual age. He dared to step out of the old routine, and he studied history, antiquities, language, literature and criticism, so that he might illustrate the science of law. He had an original mind, and was called an innovator. So far abroad did his fame spread, that in 1529, when he was thirty-seven years of age, Francis I. invited him to Bourges, a fine old city, one hundred and fifty miles south of Paris, in the very heart of France. The academic youths were flocking to him from all quarters to attend the brilliant lectures of one who surpassed even the star of the law. Calvin must also enjoy this privilege.

Francis Daniel was ready to protest against his going. "It looks like a slight upon our university," said he. "But our professors ought to show that they appreciate him. If they do not, it will be bad

for them. As for himself, he does not need their testimonials."

"We will confer on him the degree of doctor," said the professors. They offered it unanimously and gratuitously, reminding him that he had not only excelled in study, but had taught with great credit.

"Your kindness overwhelms me," said Calvin, surprised by the honour. "But I cannot consent to have the degree attached to my name." Had his father been present, he would have almost forbidden him to refuse. But the young man, not yet twenty years old, was too modest to desire titles. It was not vanity that led the great German reformer to call himself Doctor Martin Luther; but who ever said Doctor John Calvin?

There was, probably, another reason for his going to Bourges. The gospel was working its powerful way among the people of that city and district. He must have known something of that wonderful woman, Margaret of Valois, afterwards queen of Navarre, who did so much to encourage the revival of true religion, and to protect those who believed in justification by faith. She was not a follower of Luther, nor of Farel, who had left the Romish church. She did not go so far. She wished to reform the papal church, remove from it the grossest superstitions, restore the Bible to the people in their own language, support the preachers of the truth, and promote the doctrines of salvation by

faith in Christ. Her time, her talents, her pen, her wealth, her zeal, and her prayers were devoted to her kind of a reformation. She taught the ignorant with her own lips, gave to them the New Testament with her own hands, and was the friend of all who had no helper. She pleaded with her brother to release persecuted Christians from prison, and protected such preachers as Lefevre and Roussel in their work of proclaiming the gospel. As duchess of Berry, she had control of Bourges. She was gathering a force of pious and learned men in her university of Bourges, and Wolmar was invited to join them. Under her influence Berry had become a centre of evangelization, and she supported some of the most eloquent preachers of the day in their labours throughout the Duchy. Thus there was a breath of the gospel in the air, and a strong attraction for Calvin, and he went to Bourges quite regardless of expenses.

"As we cannot live as we wish, we live as we can," said the students at Bourges, whose resources of bread were not as abundant as at Orleans. Everything was dear; board alone cost one hundred francs a year—say about twenty dollars! but every franc had a high value in those days. "France is truly a golden country," bitterly remarked a poor youth, "for without gold you can get nothing."

But the Noyon student cared little for the comforts of life; intellectual and spiritual wealth satisfied him. The chief anxiety was to hear Alciati,

and he was surprised to find him a tall corpulent man, with no very thoughtful look. "He is a great eater," said one of his neighbours, "and very covetous." Yet he had intellect and imagination; he was a great jurist and a great poet. He threw fine passages of literature into his explanations of the laws, and overthrew the barbarisms of language by his elegance of style. Calvin listened with admiration, but seems not to have formed any personal alliance with the Italian, as he had with all his former teachers. Alciati taught five years, and returned to Italy, allured by the hope of greater emoluments and honours.

Other thoughts soon took possession of Calvin. The Evangelists were rousing the minds of the people. They were assembling, speaking, discussing, where the sound of the gospel could be heard. On Sundays the students and citizens crowded the two churches where Michel (Simon?) and Chaponneau preached. Calvin went with the rest, and heard as much Christian truth as he could expect, "considering the time." On week-days the gospel was taught by a learned priest and a good prior.

Wolmar had already removed to Bourges, bringing young Beza with him, who there first saw Calvin. Nothing attracted the Picard student like Wolmar's house. Theodore was now to become Calvin's "son in the faith." In his heart began that filial piety, which continued all his life, and that admiration

which he expressed in one of his Latin poems, when he called the reformer,

"Of Rome in its decline the greatest dread."

Calvin was training himself, unconsciously, to be the great terror of Rome. Wolmar had confirmed in him the Christian faith at Orleans; he was to be, at Bourges, the first who invited him distinctly to enter his career as a reformer. The German doctor was often receiving books from beyond the Rhine, and he loaned them to his Noyon friend. The modest, gentle foreigner did not feel called to do in France what he could have done more easily in his native Germany, but he asked himself whether there were not some Frenchmen, who were called of God to reform France. He looked about him, and whom did he see?

In the castle library at Blois was the aged Lefevre, his teacher in Paris, who had lifted up his voice before the German reformers; had boldly preached in the University of Paris until the Sorbonne would not tolerate justification by faith; had taken refuge at Meaux, where he translated the New Testament for thousands of readers; had lived an exile in Basle until Queen Margaret secured the return of the Lord's banished ones, and ever since had laboured to make Blois "a *caravanserai* for the saints, a strong-hold of the gospel." Also in the train of Margaret's attendants was the genial, but time-serving Gerard Roussel (Le Roux,) who was

giving his eloquence to the cause, hoping, with the queen, to see the king converted, the priests reclaimed, the church purified, the universities shining with the new light of religion as well as of learning, and the whole realm filled with the salvation of God. But Margaret and her preachers feared to have the Reformation come in like a flood that would sweep away the foundations of the Roman Church; they hoped that gentle streams might bring in the truth and bear away the errors, and renew the church without destroying it.

"Let them work," thought Wolmar, who was in the queen's service; "let the venerable Lefevre whisper his powerful words to the gentlemen who break his repose in the library and to the young Parisians whom he meets in the king's palaces; let the wavering, good-hearted Roussel softly preach at the shifting court of the queen to the most distinguished men in the kingdom, who have refused to call back Farel because they disliked the thunders of his voice; it is all very well so far as it goes, but bolder men are needed. I want to see a Luther in the land." Luthers were scarce; the world never had but one. It might be well to look for a man of another stamp and as clear-cut individuality.

One day the professor invited Calvin to take a walk.

The two friends passed beyond the old towers which the fires of Cæsar and Chilperic had left standing, and had something else to talk of than the

rebuilding of the ancient city by Charlemagne, or the beauty of the river Auron, that rolled on before them, as they strolled along its banks. The fertile plains of Berry expanded before their view, and Wolmar was thinking of that harvest which was white and ripe for the reapers. "What do you propose to do my friend?" he asked. "Shall the Institutes of Law, the Pandects and the Novels (law literature,) absorb your life? Is not theology the queen of all sciences, and does not God call you to explain the Holy Scriptures?"*

Calvin's reply is not given, but here was the highest call he had ever received from man, appealing to his conscience on the ground of the irresistible voice of God to his soul. At Paris he had suspended all plans for the priesthood; now at Bourges Wolmar urged him to the ministry. He could not plead inability, for it was the very work of expounding the Scriptures which he had done with success in the houses at Orleans. He could not urge ignorance of the Word, for he had studied the Greek Scriptures with the very man who was gazing in his face for an answer to his appeal. Nor was the idea new to him. He had thought seriously of totally abandoning the priesthood and the law, and more than once had asked himself, "Shall I not preach

* Florimond Remond, a Romanist, wrote much against the Reformation that is not usually credited, but he relates this conversation which could only honour Calvin. "I cannot see," says D'Aubigne, "what object he could have had in inventing it. He ought to be believed when his prejudices do not mislead him."

Christ to the world?" But he had always shrunk from this holy ministry. He felt, what he wrote in later life, "All men are not suited for it; a special call is necessary, and no one should rashly take it upon himself." But there was one barrier; his father's command would be violated, and the indulgent man would never consent to his giving up the law, and even the priesthood, and, worst of all, joining the heretics. It would carry him more swiftly and more grey-headed down in sorrow to the grave. This difficulty was in Divine hands, soon to be removed.

Then the heavenly voice again whispered. He could not rid himself of "the great questions of conscience and Christian liberty, of Divine sovereignty and self-renunciation." He tells us "So fervent a desire, of advancing in the knowledge of Christ, consumed me at that time, that I pursued my other studies very coldly." To the call of God and of Wolmar was added another. The professor had spoken of him, and several families invited him to their houses to instruct them. He was surprised, as he had been at Orleans.

"I am quite amazed," he said, "to see learners gather around me, although I have not been here a year, and have only just begun to learn the gospel myself." He did not decline, but brought more time, energy and decision to the task. He was soon well known to the students and citizens, nobles and lawyers, priests and professors. He probably

met the Colladon family, the first in Berry to embrace the gospel, and one of which was afterwards at Geneva as the successor of Calvin in the chair of divinity.

"Come and preach these beautiful words to us," said certain villagers who heard him in the houses of Bourges. Gradually laying aside his timidity, being cheerful and now fond of walking, he visited the towns and castles in the neighbourhood. By experience he learned to say that "a graceful salutation serves as an introduction to converse with the people." His sermons were attentively heard in hamlets and at country seats. Another call awaited him.

When he was at Geneva writing the preface to his commentary on the Psalms, he remembered the urgent entreaties of the people, who had led him from his secluded study to make these visits among those who hungered for the bread of life; and he wrote, "My natural disposition was reserved; I always loved retirement and the command of my own time, and then I chose to be unmolested and unknown. This however was not granted me, and all my retreats became like public schools. At last, while it was my whole purpose to study in unknown retirement, God so surrounded me with changes, that I was frustrated in my wishes, and was forced into public notice."

A few leagues up the little Auron was the small town of Lignières, the seat of a considerable lord-

ship. Every year certain monks came to preach in the parish church, and they were hospitably entertained at the lordly mansion. They made a virtue of their poverty, and yet complained of their wretchedness in a most pitiable and begging tone. This offended the lord of Lignières, who was not given to a superstitious reverence for the friars. "If I am not mistaken," said he, "it is with a view to their own gain that these monks pretend to be such drudges." Disgusted with their hypocrisy, he begged Calvin to come and preach in their stead. The law-student went and spoke to an immense crowd, with such clearness, depth, freedom and vitality that every one was moved.

"Upon my word," said the Seigneur to his wife, "Master John Calvin seems to me to preach better than the monks, and he goes heartily to work too. Now this man teaches us, at least, something we never heard before."

The good lady of the castle was much more willing to be the attentive hostess of this entertaining visitor, than of the whining monks, who were "exceeding wroth" at his popular reception. Their craft was in danger. They cried out the alarm, whispered their intrigues, and did all in their power to have him put in prison. But he preached unharmed in the villages, the mansions and castles, spoke tenderly to the children, dealt plainly with adults, and trained up heroes and martyrs.

All at once the good work must stop. A letter

from Noyon, probably in the hand-writing of his brother Anthony, told him that his father had died suddenly. There had been months of warning, but as a friend writes me just now of one long expected to die, "You know death is always sudden." It was more than a repetition of what had occurred at Orleans. Attention to the same father called him away from the same kind of work. "While he was at Bourges his father died," says Beza, "and he was obliged to return to Noyon." His friends would have protested against his leaving for any other reason; he bade farewell to Berry, to his companions and those families who had been to him as a little parish, and hastened away on a journey of two hundred and twenty miles. Long after, when he dedicated a commentary to Wolmar, he said, "I remember how ready you were to help me, and prove your love to me, and with what diligence you laboured to instruct me. Especially do I bear in mind that period when my father sent me to study jurisprudence. I learnt Greek under your guidance; and it is not your fault, if I have not made farther progress, for you would have afforded me a helping hand through the whole course, had not the death of my father called me away."

Bourges did not fall into darkness after Calvin's departure. The queen's preacher, Michel Simon, displayed a holy courage, despite the infirmities of age. A gray friar, wearing the cord that entitled him a *cordelier*, had the effrontery to assert that a

man can be saved by his natural strength alone. Simon confronted him, and it was agreed that, in the debates, every proposition must be established by the text of Scripture. This gave a new impulse to the study of the Bible. The priests had an understanding, and prepared themselves without saying a word. They would have "a scene," and make wit more forcible than argument. On the next Sunday the venerable preacher was about to begin his sermon, when the curé, with his vicars and choristers, entered the church and began to chant the office for the dead. It was impossible to preach or hear. The indignant students rushed into the choir, threw about the books, upset the music stands, and drove out the priests, who ran off "in great disorder." Simon remained master of the situation, delivered his sermon, and surprised his hearers by repeating the Lord's prayer in *French;* and still more by leaving off the usual *Ave Maria!* What desecration to end the Lord's prayer with a "Hail Mary!" and how blind the people not to have perceived it! Just then a loud voice was heard, from the king's proctor rising up in one of the upper stalls. *Ave Maria, gratia.* . . . . He could not complete the sentence. A universal shout interrupted him; the excited women caught up their little stools, crowded around the proctor, and shook them over his head. These people were not disciples of the meek Saviour, but Roman Catholics disgusted with their priests.

When Calvin was passing through Paris, on his way to Noyon, he had only time to call a moment on his friends, especially Mathurin Cordier. "These are sad and awful times," said the professor.

"Does not the king permit you to teach that kind of literature which puts men to thinking?" inquired Calvin, with a suspicion there was a far different cause of trouble.

"The literature which we ought to be teaching is the word of God. I am bold to say it."

"And I am glad to hear you say it. This is the best news that I have heard in Paris. How long since you have come to this opinion?"

"It has slowly grown upon me. I detected a change in your faith during your last few months in Montaigu."

"How? I said nothing."

"One cannot have the true light and completely hide it. He may not speak so boldly and so powerfully too as did the hermit of Livry, indeed, he may conceal his opinions as you were doing; but his conduct will reveal his secret principles. I began to notice that you were leaving off your devotions to the church. I went early to the mass, but you were not there. I was late at vespers, but you did not meet me. I could not learn that you went to confession. You appeared thoughtful, serious, and seemed to turn your face toward heaven. 'He is trying to get near to God,' I said to myself. You lost your enthusiasm for the church."

"Very true; I did not know it then, however. But I was endeavouring to look through the clouds that men have raised to obscure and hide Jesus Christ lest sinners should go directly to him; for they know that if he had all the glory, the papal church would have no gain."

"Papal church!" exclaimed Cordier, quite shocked at the term.

"Yes, I cannot change the term. The church to which we have so long looked for salvation, is now entirely in the hands of the papacy. The pope and the priests manage it as they choose for their selfish purposes. It is no longer Christ's church. It cannot be until it is so reformed that all popery, all superstition, all priestly tyranny, all masses and indulgences, and relics are put out of it.

"Can these be abolished? Can the rulers of the Church be persuaded to give them up?"

"I am not yet sure but some bishops and priests may be persuaded to banish them from their parishes. If so the work of reform would begin; the Church might be restored to apostolic purity, simplicity and power. If not, I shall be in doubt what to do?"

"Will you leave the Church, and go with Luther, or stay in it with Lefevre and Queen Margaret?"

"I am not yet determined. The subject costs me much thought and prayer. But let me rejoice that you are in the true way of salvation. Let us settle our faith in Christ, and rest in him; we will then be able to settle our duties to the Church."

"Do not be too happy about me. I am only a poor helpless sinner seeking Jesus. I am groping through his gospel to find him. But I fear the angels are not rejoicing over me, as a sinner that repenteth."

"Do you not know that you do not have to find him? He is seeking you. The Good Shepherd is seeking the sheep; if the sheep had to seek and find the shepherd there would be little hope."

"What a comforting truth! All I have to do is to let myself be found. Oh that God would hold me still, and not let me wander farther in the wilderness, until Jesus comes! Pray for me, my dear Calvin."

The conversation was slowly turned to the true Christians in Paris, who were threatened with renewed persecution. Their numbers were increasing; there were many of God's hidden ones in the city. Lefevre's French version of the New Testament was being privately circulated. The students in the colleges were becoming more daring in reading the little books that were secretly brought from the cities of the Rhine. But there was one great and good man whose life was in danger. His name was on thousands of lips. The peasants of Artois wept when they spoke it, for he had left his chateau and gone with the gospel on his tongue and little books or Testaments in his hands, and taught them of him who came to seek and save the lost. This man was Louis Berquin.

And there was one woman as zealous as he, as condescending to the poor, as earnest to lead sinners to the Saviour, and as much the admiration of the people. She was the Queen of Navarre. "What is Queen Margaret doing?" inquired Calvin.

"It is generally reported," replied Cordier, "that she is taking wondrous pains to save those who are in danger, that she may prevent the reformation from being stifled in the cradle. She sends many young men to my school, and to the college of Navarre in this city. If Beda ferrets out their forbidden books, she holds over him the rod of her influence with the king. If they are expelled by the professors, she gives them a refuge in her castles and palaces. She is now pleading for Berquin. But we all fear that Berquin must die. The king will do nothing to save him."

Margaret was pleading in vain; "the noblest man of the nobility" was doomed by the Sorbonne, and was to be a martyr. The Queen of Navarre was his chief human support. But she found Francis almost deaf, and given to balls, hunting parties and even worse amusements. Her husband, Henry, thought her too pious, and complained because she refused to join in the royal sports, remained alone, recalled her sorrows, wrote Christian poems, and sought the *one thing needful.* Her mother, Louisa of Savoy, who had once shown a leaning towards the Reformation, but had afterwards become a zealot for the papacy, and was leading a life of more than

doubtful morality, also opposed her daughter Margaret. Thus she saw the three persons, whom she wished most to love, alienated from her. But her heavenly Lord was all the nearer to her soul. While Francis, with his lords and ladies, his horses and his hounds, devoted whole days to the chase, she walked sadly through the parks, saying to herself, what would have enlisted the full sympathies of Calvin;

Father and mother I have none;
Brother and sister,—all are gone,
Save God, in whom I trust alone,
Who rules the earth from his high throne.

All these loved ones I would forget;
  Parents and friends, the world, its mirth,
Its fame and wealth, however great,
  I count my greatest foes on earth!
    Hence ye delights!
      Whose vanity
Jesus the Christ has shown to me!

But God—he only is my life,
  I know he's near me at my call,
Dearer than husband to the wife—
  My father, brother, friend, my all,
    He is my hope,
      My resting-place,
My strength, my being and my trust,
  For he hath saved me by his grace.

CHAPTER VIII.

FATHERLESS BUT FREE.

NEVER before had John Calvin passed over the road to Noyon with such burdens on his heart. The death that summoned him from those studies which his father had ordered him to pursue, the expected martyrdom of Berquin, the threats let loose against all true Christians, his own future and the dark prospects of the Reformation—all these must have oppressed him. As he caught sight of that fine old Gothic cathedral, under whose shadows he had played when a child or meditated like a man, he was scarcely thinking of those masses, which Rome enjoined for the repose of the secretary's soul; he could simply hope that God had caused his long-sick father to trust less in the church, and altogether in Christ, or, perhaps to feel the power of that new faith from which he had wished to divert the mind of his favourite son. There was a satisfaction in his mother's embrace, as he mingled his tears with hers, and sought to bind up her broken heart. There was a delight in the attachment of Anthony and Mary, who were now to learn his doctrines more freely, and for their sake afterwards

to join him in his exile. But yet the great burden would return, and he tells us that he would have sunk under it, "like a man half dead, if God had not revived his courage, while comforting him by his word."

This darkness was a means of light and liberty. His father—that old man with so positive a mind, so ambitious an affection, so legal an authority—was no longer his ruler; he was free to give up the law, and become a preacher of the Scriptures that he loved now to explain. He felt the truth of his own later saying. "Earthly fathers must not prevent the supreme and only Father of all, from enjoying his rights." Berquin's experience was slowly teaching him that he could not preach in the Romish church, in the effort to reform its errors, without falling under the power of those who would tolerate no reformation.

The funeral of Gerard Calvin had brought many of the clergy and nobility to the cathedral of Noyon, where the bishop wept over the corpse of his faithful secretary, the nobles talked over the virtues of a man who had held important offices, and priests inquired if he had left any legacies to the church, or given orders for costly masses to be recited for the repose of his soul. It was the most solemn day that Noyon had known for a long time, and when the respected citizen was laid in the grave, the eye which seemed to take the last and longest look, was that of Robert Olivetan.

"Have you heard the rumours about that young man?" inquired one priest of another, each of whom was wishing a parish that would give him salary enough to support him in idleness at Paris or Rome.

"I know him," said the other with a wise shake of the head. "He does not feel very safe in Paris just now, when the heretics are getting their deserts. He must roam about a good deal now. And he will not take his rest very long in these parts, I imagine."

The priests saw that Claude de Hangest was looking closely at them, and they approached him after the services were over, asking, "If John Calvin would continue to hold the livings of La Gésine chapel and the parish of Marteville?"

"If he should not, there are, doubtless, many priests who would not refuse to accept them, and who think they are quite worthy of them because of their long waiting for a vacancy."

"It is a shame for them to belong to a young man who does nothing in them, and spends his time studying law, and what else nobody knows. The canons of the cathedral have often complained of his long absence."

"It would be a greater shame," replied Claude, who hoped that his first answer would silence the priests, "for them to be held by men who would spend their time in a far worse manner. As for the complaints, perhaps you know who excited

them, and I know that Calvin has always given a perfectly satisfactory account of himself. They were rarely made while his father lived; it is too late to make them now, for the incumbent will soon make himself known." The two priests wished no further conversation with Claude.

"There is no hope for us," said one of them as they turned away. "Claude de Hangest is too warm a friend of Calvin. We did not approach him on the right side."

"If we will watch the tonsured lawyer, we may detect heresy in him, and at least rout him from his nest." Calvin was to have the eye of suspicion fixed keenly upon him. Would he refuse to preach? Then he might be charged with unfaithfulness. Would he dare to preach? Then heresy might be detected.

Calvin was soon met by Olivetan, who felt that now was the trying period with his cousin. His father's firm adherence to the Romish church until the very last, might cause him to return to its communion and devotions. He knew that he would not pursue the law. "Will you now take orders in the church?" asked Olivetan.

"I cannot consent to be ordained in the papal church," was the reply. "I cannot take vows that will bind me to the priesthood, nor can I take them with the full intention of breaking them. Moreover, there is time enough for me to settle all this; I am not yet through with my studies. I

must go deeper into the theology of the Scriptures."

"But you will preach? We want to hear you. The chapel of La Gésine will be crowded." Calvin hesitated. His diffidence was very great. The Montmors would be there, the bishop, and Claude, and the wilder brothers—no, he could not consent.

"I do want to declare the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God to my native countrymen; I want to tell them the whole truth, and proclaim those good tidings which they have never heard. But if I do, you know the fearful risk; you can foretell the result to myself."

"Preach the free pardon of Christ as Paul did, and if they persecute you in one city flee to another. That must be good advice, for our Lord gave it to his apostles."

Calvin thought seriously of his duty. He felt anxious for his kindred. He was convinced that he had a call from the God of all truth. Yet he trembled, and shrank back in his timidity. He could not put himself forward. He saw the eyes of certain priests turned upon him in suspicion.

"We give you a most hearty welcome," said many of the chief clergy and nobility, who were pleased with his learning and spirituality. They hoped to see him a pillar in the church, a monument of her power, a tower for her defence. They had found nothing in him opposed to their opinions. The fact that he had studied law, did not check

them. It rendered him in their eyes, better qualified to maintain the interests of the church, and of the clergy. They endeavoured to bind him the closer to them and to the papacy. They received him with joy, and said, "We hope to hear you preach." They knew not his kind of preaching. They had not heard of his little sermons at Orleans and Bourges.

That noble friend of his boyhood, Claude de Hangest of Montmor, was now the abbot of St. Eloi. He was particularly happy to have his classmate back again at Noyon. Said he, "You may not like Marteville; it is a dull place. Let me secure you the parish of Pont l'Eveque."*

"That will delight me," replied Calvin, who saw that he would have an opportunity of preaching in the very place where his ancestors had lived, and yet where he had very few acquaintances.

"And you will preach of course. The people have a great anxiety to hear you." Calvin assented after so many urgent entreaties.

Long after Calvin's departure from the Romish Church, it was stated by a canon of Noyon, that

* D'Aubigne, History Reformation in time of Calvin, Carter's edition. In Volume II., p. 49, he quotes authorities, showing that at this time Calvin resigned the chapel of La Gésine in favour of his brother Anthony. "The act is dated, April 30, 1529." But in Volume III., p. 65, it is stated that Calvin resigned the chapel of La Gésine in favour of Master Anthony de la Mailiere, and his curacy of Pont l'Eveque to another ecclesiastic of Noyon, on the 4th of May, 1534. He did not "sell his chaplaincy," as his enemies have declared.

"he was appointed curate of Pont l'Eveque, where his grandfather lived, and where his father Gerard was baptized. Thus they delivered up the sheep to the care of the wolf!" But Calvin was no wolf so long as he remained in the papal church. They "delivered up the sheep to the care" of one whom they esteemed a most worthy candidate for the priesthood. No records give any account of his ordination. It could never be charged that Calvin was one of those discontented spirits who left the Romish Church because he was not appreciated. High salaries and lofty positions awaited him. Nor could it be said that in leaving the Romish Church at a sacrifice of fame and wealth he violated any ordination vows, for he was never ordained by Romish hands.

Calvin went at once to his charge, where he was expected with no little interest. "Let us go and hear the son of our late friend the secretary," said certain of the Noyon people. While they were on their way, the villagers of Pont l'Eveque were saying, "The new cure preaches to-day—the cooper's grandson. He is a young man, but a great scholar." Everybody wanted to hear him. It was the grandest occasion his proud relatives had ever known. The church was crowded earlier than usual. The time of waiting seemed long.

At length a young man of twenty, of middle height, with thin pale face and full lively eye, went into the pulpit—the first probably that he had ever

entered to preach. His countenance was solemn, his voice clear and positive. He opened the Bible, and explained the word of God, in a manner never remembered under that roof, which had sheltered so many priests in their vain babbling and delusive talk about the merits of Romish works and rites. Around him, pressing near the pulpit, were probably certain notable men of that district, who would afterwards be accused of heresy, and condemned by the parliament of Paris to be burned in the great square of Noyon. But the fierce edict was in vain; they had already quitted the kingdom.

"Astonishing words!" said some of them, on their return from the church. "A new style of preaching. It fills us with wonder."

"It fills us with suspicion," is the retort of certain priests, who came to spy for heresy. "They are setting wolves to guard the sheep." These grumblers made no conscience of fleecing the flock for their own gain.

"Priests may suspect, but the people admire and believe," answered some of the prominent laymen, who were growing weary of the harangues of monks and friars.

Calvin was not long without a call from his cousin Olivetan, who urged him to continue to "speak boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus."

"What else can one do? If I preach at all, I must risk my all upon the gospel. I must speak as God would speak to men. But 'who is sufficient

for these things?' I am totally unworthy and unfit to be an ambassador of Christ."

"The people urge you; their call may be the voice of God. I hope to hear good things of you. I will soon leave France. The attacks made upon me in Paris have put my life in danger. Probably I shall go to Geneva."

When these cousins separated, they had no idea of what a work God had in reserve for each of them. Olivetan would teach a school in Geneva, on the plan of Mathurin Cordier; he would declare the gospel in the families to which he would have admittance; he would gather little assemblies to hear the word of God; he would welcome Farel, and Farel would, one day, find Calvin in Geneva, and arrest him, "not otherwise than if God, from heaven, had laid his powerful hand upon him."

How often Calvin preached in the region of Noyon, and how long he remained, is not easily determined. It seems to have been but two or three months. Having fully resolved upon the ministry, he felt the need of more Biblical knowledge. Paris was inviting him. Francis I. had just founded (1529) several professorships for teaching Latin, Greek and Hebrew. It was a great step in a new direction. Not many years before he would have been ridiculed for it by the Sorbonne; perhaps he was now. But the king selected the best professors whom he could obtain: Danes taught Greek, Vatable taught Hebrew. Calvin resolved to profit

by such rare advantages, and he was one of the very first thus to show an appreciation of the new learning.

The parishioners of Pont l'Eveque part with him in great sorrow. His simple-minded relatives in that village see no harm in what he has preached concerning free grace, and full faith in the Lord Jesus. He has not made any severe attack upon the errors of the Roman Church, but has been content to tell to them what is involved in the simple story of the cross. They do not dream that their cousin, whom they so much love, will one day be cast out by them as evil, because he has become a heretic. They will hardly think that the gospel is heresy until the busy priests tell them so. It is said that when Calvin had become a famous reformer, these relatives were so full of detestation, that they changed their name, dropping that of Cauvin, by which they were known.

It was not to be thus with all his relations. We see him, at some quiet hour, sitting in the very chair that his father had sat upon as on a domestic throne, with his brother Anthony and his sister Mary near him. "It is faith that brings us to Christ;" he tells them, holding his Testament in his hand, so as to prove everything he declares, "It is his own sovereign mercy that brings him to us. If he did not first love us, we should never love him. He does not come to us through mere ceremonies, nor can mere ceremonies lead us to him."

"Is that the doctrine of the church?" inquires Anthony.

"Yes, of the true church of Christ, as it was in the days of our Lord and of his great apostle Paul." He then reads, "Jesus said, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." "Peter said, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost."

"We do not understand these words that you read to us," said Mary.

"They mean, *First*, that Jesus is the only Saviour. All saving truth is in him. The way to heaven is through his death. Our life must come from him.

"*Secondly*. That Jesus only, reconciles us to the Father. He is the only mediator and intercessor. We cannot come to the Father by calling upon any of the saints. It is easier to come to Jesus than to St. Peter, or to the Virgin Mary, for he is ever present to hear us; they are not.

"*Thirdly*. Christ's people will believe in him and follow him. The priest is not your shepherd.

"*Fourthly*. Jesus *gives* to his people eternal

life; they do not purchase it of him. What then are all your good works, your money and your masses, when offered as your price for salvation?

"*Fifthly.* If you are once truly His, you will be His eternally. For it is *eternal* life that he gives. They shall never perish. No power can take them out of the Father's hand. They will not go to purgatory after they die. We need not pray for them after they are gone from us.

"*Sixthly.* You are to employ the means of grace, to repent, to believe, to confess Christ, who alone grants remission of sins. Priests cannot forgive sins committed against God."

Such appear to have been Calvin's doctrines at this time. His brother Anthony and his sister Mary did not fully receive them at first. On his later visits they were still farther persuaded, and when he had left France, they followed him to Geneva. His brother Charles seems to have adopted some of the reformer's views. He became chaplain of St. Mary's church at Noyon. He refused to receive the sacrament in his last hours; rejected "extreme unction" in the last moments, and died under the suspicion of heresy. It is also said, that the priests would not permit his body to be buried in the consecrated ground. It must be dishonoured and cast out as that of a heretic. In order to avoid scandal it was taken by night, and in order to disgrace it, the corpse was buried under the public gibbet. But all this was, in our eyes,

an honour to the faith of Charles Calvin. Our only wonder is, that he was not made a martyr. The influence of John Calvin was thus evident in his father's family in after years.

CHAPTER IX.

DEVOTED TO THE MINISTRY.

THE day came when young Calvin must set out again for Paris. Besides the sadness of parting, he must have had painful thoughts along the way. He had noticed certain priests, who had looked upon him with suspicion; perhaps they had gone to Paris, and reported him to Beda. Weary and late he reached an inn, and soon was sleeping soundly in the city where Berquin had lately been burned. On the 27th of June, 1529, he wrote to his friend Francis Daniel of Orleans. "Tired with the journey, the day after our drive hither, we could not stir a foot out of doors. For the next four days, while I was still unable to move about, the whole time wore away in friendly salutations." The innkeeper must have wondered whom he was entertaining, that so many collegians should be flocking to the rooms of a young provincial.

One of the first of these callers was young Coiffard, his fellow-student and visitor at Orleans, who brought his father with him. "Come and lodge with us," says the giddy Parisian, "I entreat you. We will introduce you into most pleasant

society." An argument, worse than none, for Calvin was seeking a retreat for undisturbed study.

"Let me insist upon your coming," said the older Coiffard; "there is nothing I desire more than to have my son enjoy your fellowship and counsels." There was nothing Calvin desired less just then, for he had no intention of becoming the guardian of a frivolous son, who was too much for his father to manage.

"I have not fixed upon a lodging," was Calvin's reply, "and although I have many friends with whom I can reside, yet I do not wish to impose myself on their kindness."

"You have no better friends than we will prove," said the young man, whom the ladies in the house of Francis Daniel did not particularly admire at Orleans.

"I might accept your offer, but I intend to study Greek under Professor Danès, and his school is too far from your house." The father and son went away quite disappointed; their rather selfish motives were apparent afterwards. The young man did not regret that he was not under Calvin's guidance, when he afterwards saw him taking the lead in promoting gospel piety among the families which were inclined to the reformation.

Soon a more important personage entered the room. He was Nicholas Cop, professor in the college of St. Barbe; his father had lately been appointed physician to the king. He, therefore,

knew much of what was going on at the royal court. "You will need to keep your opinions quite closely to yourself," said Cop. "We will have many a talk together, but we must not fall under the suspicion of being heretics."

"I hope to see you more courageous," replied Calvin, "and willing to avow yourself among the lowly disciples of our Lord. Not many noble are called—not many like Berquin, of noble birth—not many like Lefevre of noble intellect and learning—not many like our admirable Queen Margaret of noble station—but God is calling into his true and hidden kingdom, many of the humble, the lowly, the unlearned, the labouring poor. We must identify ourselves with them, if we would have fellowship with the true disciples of Christ in this city."

"I confess my weakness and timidity."

"You know that a physician can do little for his patient until the sick man confesses that he is ill, and in need of a remedy. You must not forget that Christ is the great physician; the Father sent him to give new life to souls that are dead."

"When you are with me, I feel almost persuaded to adopt your views; but I go away, and I begin to hesitate between the church and Christ. You have been gone from me so long that you will have to lead me back over a tiresome road." Cop was yet to have more light and courage.

Calvin sits down to write a letter to a canon of Orleans. We imagine him saying, "I have tried

preaching a little, but have come to a place where two ways meet. One road leads to ordination in the church; the other leads out of the Roman church altogether. Shall I leave the church of my fathers? Is there no hope of reforming it? I am not yet decided fully what to do. But in the meantime, I will study the word of God, and having found therein the true Christ, I shall find the true church."

Suddenly another visitor is announced. It is his friend Viermey, waiting at the steps of the inn, with two fine horses, and proposing to pay his visit by having a ride with his former class-mate. He helps Calvin into the saddle, and remarks, "You could always out-run us in our studies, so that I fell back far out of your sight; but now I hope to prove your rival, and at least keep by your side. You will find this a lively horse; I keep no other kind."

How skilfully Calvin rode, we are not informed. He thought the incident worthy of mention in his letter to Francis Daniel. It shows us that it is a mistake to represent him as always absorbed in his books, or reprimanding the disorderly. He was not a total stranger to the proper modes of relaxation. Nor did he have a selfish disregard for those little affairs of politeness, which strengthen friendship. Beza knew him well, and wrote thus of him; "Though naturally grave, yet in society nobody was more cheerful. He was very sparing of his rebukes upon those vices which spring from the

natural infirmity of men, so that he neither shamed nor frightened the weaker brethren by unceasing reprehension, nor did he nourish their faults by connivance or flattery. He was as great an enemy of adulation, pretence and dishonesty, particularly where religion was concerned, as he was a sincere friend of truth, simplicity and candour."

In a few days Calvin hired a room in the College of Fortret, in the Latin quarter, where he would be near to the professors; and he resumed the study of languages, philosophy and theology. He still gave some attention to the law, a matter of great importance to him in after life, when he became a counsellor in the republic at Geneva. But when in his room, surrounded by his books, his conscience cried to him, that he ought to study the Holy Scriptures. Also, whenever he went out of his room, he was likely to meet friends, who were zealous in urging him to devote himself to the gospel. He looked upon his books, scattered about his study; he delighted in them; it was hard to give them up; but the voice in his soul, and the voice of the people prevailed. "I renounce all other sciences," he said; "I give myself up entirely to theology and to God. . . . The science of God is the mistress-science; the others are only her servants."

There were little bands of students in the colleges meeting in each other's rooms, discussing the great question of religion, and reading the Holy Scriptures. They found many difficulties; they dis-

agreed in their views, and their debates often became warm and wordy. They held their Hebrew Bibles, or their Greek Testaments in their hands, and if one quoted from the Latin version used in the Romish church, another would say, "It is thus in the Hebrew text," or "the Greek text reads thus." But with many of them, this was merely an intellectual play; they were not seeking to strengthen their piety. Calvin was invited to join them. He entered into their meetings. They gave to him the decision of their vexed questions. It was not enough for him to say, "the truth is thus and thus;" but he must ask, "do you believe it? Do you obey it? Do you govern your lives by it?"

"We admit," they would reply, "that we have not yet done so. We want to know the truth first."

"Your obedience must go along with your knowledge. You will hardly *know* until you *obey*. Our Lord said, 'If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.'"

This was practical and personal. The young men began to feel that they had souls to be saved or lost, responsibilities to bear, and duties to perform. They loved Calvin for his pointed method of sending the truth home to their own consciences. They chose him for their model. They loved that modest, unassuming young man, who planted in their hearts the truths which he gathered, as a rich harvest, from the word of God.

"These pleasant meetings remind me of those we enjoyed at Meaux," said Ronsard, one of the older students. "We used to meet with Lefevre, Farel and Roussel; the bishop too came often, and we studied the word of God. But alas! we were driven away."

"Where have you been since then?" inquired one of them

"At Metz a part of my time, where Le Clerc was burned—the first martyr of our times. Then at Lyons, and in Dauphiny, going about as a colporteur, and distributing hundreds of Lefevre's New Testament. I was arrested and thrown into prison, where I suffered for three years. But I thank God that I was there."

"Was it as a refiner's fire, purifying your character?" inquired Calvin.

"I hope that some good effect was produced upon me, for I needed it. But the Lord made me of some use to one soul in the prison. A student at Orleans had said that it was useless to pray to the Virgin Mary; that he could go to any graveyard and get as good relics as there were in the churches, or draw from any old board a nail that was as much the nail from the right arm of the cross, as any one of the dozens now exhibited under this pretence, and that the name of the Emperor Charles V., would be quite as valid upon an indulgence as that of the pope. For all this he was cast into the same dungeon with me."

"Where was the prison?"

"In Macon, where Michael D'Aranda, one of queen Margaret's preachers, filled the whole country with the glad tidings of free grace. I found my fellow-prisoner an infidel. He scoffed at the church, the priests, the mass, and the gospel, all alike. But he learned that his life was in danger. In terror of being burned, he sought to destroy himself. It was then that I remembered Paul and the Philippian jailor, and I said to him, 'Do thyself no harm; believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' But it would be better for me to let him tell his own experience."

"Where is he?" asked several voices full of wonder.

"He is here; you have known young Gerson longer than you have known me. He persuaded me to follow him to Paris."

The students could not restrain their expressions of surprise and joy. They all spoke at once, entreating Gerson, for whom they felt a most ardent attachment, to tell the story of his conversion. "Why have you not told us all this before?"

"A man does not care to publish the fact that he has been in prison," was the reply.

"It is an honour to have the papists fling a man into a dungeon."

"Not unless he is suffering for Christ's sake. It was from a bad motive that I ridiculed the superstitions of the papal church. I hated all religion,

and scoffed at everything that claimed to be sacred. But that word, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus,' went like an arrow to my heart. I had a mother who had told me of the Lord Jesus. I at once thought of him crucified, and mocked by scoffers like myself, and dying for my sins. His love seemed astonishing, as Ronsard spoke of it. To love such an infidel wretch as me! To die in order that he might pardon and justify me! To open heaven for one so desperately wicked as me! I could believe that he was willing to save others; but how could he save me? Then Ronsard told me of the thief on the cross. 'Oh,' said I, 'let me be saved just as that thief was saved.' We fell upon our knees on the hard, cold, floor; but it seemed as if I were kneeling on the soft grass of Calvary, and looking right in the face of the dying Saviour. My friend prayed for me. But I could not hold my peace. I cried, 'Lord Jesus here are all my sins; put them among the sins of thy chosen people, and die also for me.' I struggled for long days, and then came light and hope. What a delightful place that damp, dark, close cell began to be!"

"Indeed, we were happy together," said Ronsard, "we sang, and the prisoners heard us. We listened to them, as they told how they wished they could talk with us. Then we sang louder still. We sent our voices through the walls, and told them of the free pardons of Christ."

"How were you set at liberty?"

"I cannot tell," said Gerson, "unless God heard our prayers, and opened the doors of the prison."

"It was reported that, as we had not committed crimes great enough to be worthy of death, the judges said, 'Let these men go; they are too happy here; they will make themselves such heretics here, after awhile, that they will deserve death.'"

Calvin had opened his Testament to the verses, and he read thus; "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us."

"How often those words were quoted at Meaux. Poor Briçonnet! He denied the Lord. But I have a hope sometimes that he may be reclaimed. How could one labour, as he did, for the gospel and not be a true Christian at heart? Calvin, I wish you could visit him."

"Do you think it would do any good?"

"Even if you should not reach him, there are scores of hidden ones in that city whom you might comfort. They would bless God for the sound of your voice in their little private meetings."

Here then was a new field for the young evangelist, who had been so successful at Orleans and Bourges, in expounding the Scriptures in private houses, in castles and in the neighbouring villages. He made further inquiries and, in a few days, sat down and wrote to his friend Francis Daniel of Orleans:

"I am going to Meaux, a place which we often

desired to visit, that we might see what there was left of Lefevre's and Farel's harvest. We wondered whether it was possible for persecutors to root the gospel out of the hearts of a people who had joyfully received it. We lamented the downfall of Briçonnet, the bishop. But some men think that, in his inmost heart, he still loves the gospel. What a triumph, if the grace of God should once more bloom and bear fruit in his soul! . . . You have acquaintances at Meaux. You can open the door to me by giving me a letter, or by writing to your friends, among whom is Mæcenas. You know whom I mean." Calvin doubtless meant the bishop.

When Calvin reached Meaux, he soon found that he was expected by the hidden disciples of the Lord. We suppose Ronsard to have given them notice. They did not all dare to meet at once in one place, but they kept him going from house to house. The gospel was not rooted out of their hearts. Suppression was not extermination. How it would have rejoiced them to show all the hospitality which they felt; but their visitor must be cautious. He thought, what he afterwards declared, "The kingdom of Christ is strengthened and established more by the blood of martyrs than by the force of arms." Yet we must admit that the "blood of martyrs" is not always "the seed of the church."

Where was the bishop? He did not show him-

self to Calvin. If he was "*Mœcenas*," he had received a letter from Daniel, to which he coldly replied, "I cannot walk with those people. I cannot conform my manners to theirs." Again Daniel wrote to him; it was of no use; he would not touch Calvin. There were persons around him continually saying, "A bishop ought to have no fellowship with persons suspected of innovation."

Calvin's portrait of "Mœcenas" exactly fits the bishop Briçonnet. He had sought the wandering sheep; he had found no access to him, and shaking the dust from his feet, he resolved to return to Paris. Before starting, he wrote to Daniel, and said with just severity of this man, "Since he will not be with us, let him take pleasure in himself, and with a heart full, or rather inflated by his own importance, let him pamper his ambition." Yet Calvin did not completely fail in his mission, for he advanced the gospel among those who hungered for the good word of life.

A wider field was opening for him in Paris. He entered upon it, visiting the lowly people in the loneliest houses and the remotest streets. In another volume, we propose to exhibit *young Calvin in Paris*, as a modest and devout man, performing the work of a city missionary, unhindered by his natural diffidence, and unterrified by the threatening fires of persecution flaming around him. But if he had died in 1530, he would not have lived in

vain. He would have left behind him a brilliant example to the student, and would have gone hence to find before him some sheaves of rejoicing—some souls comforted and saved through his intrumentality.

THE END.