




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HIS LIFE AND LABOURS AMONG THE
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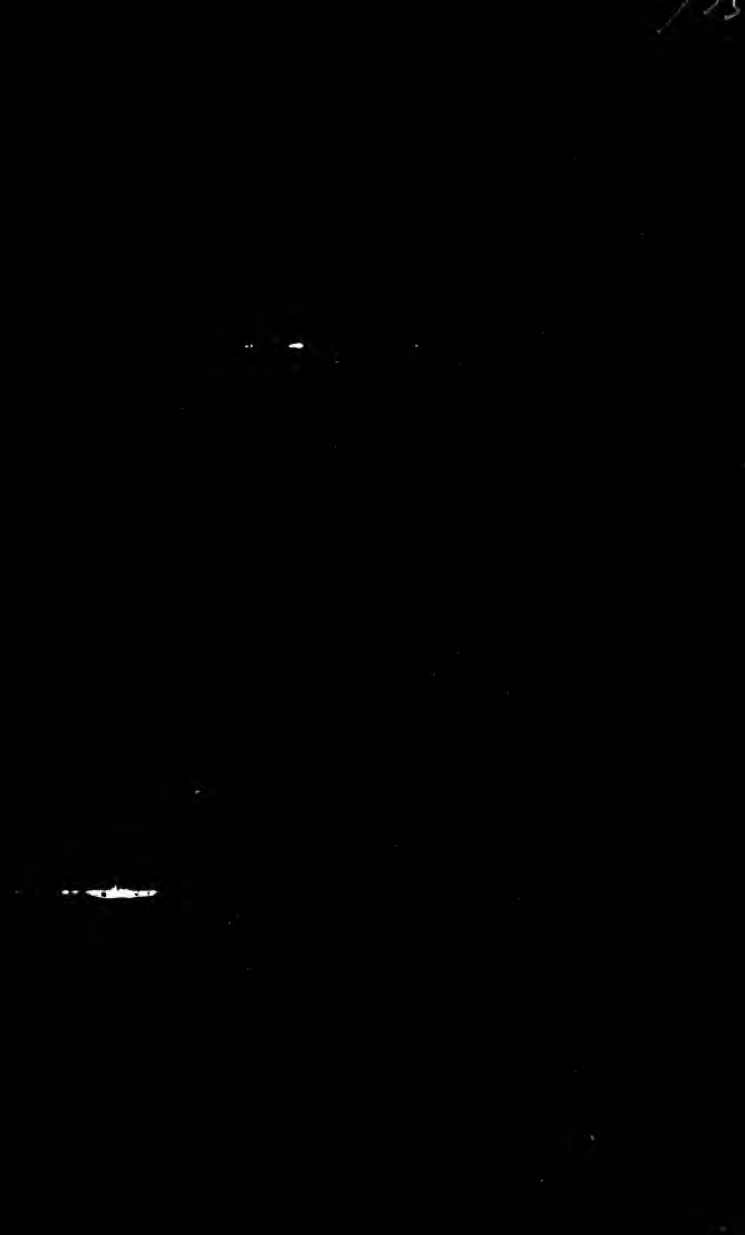


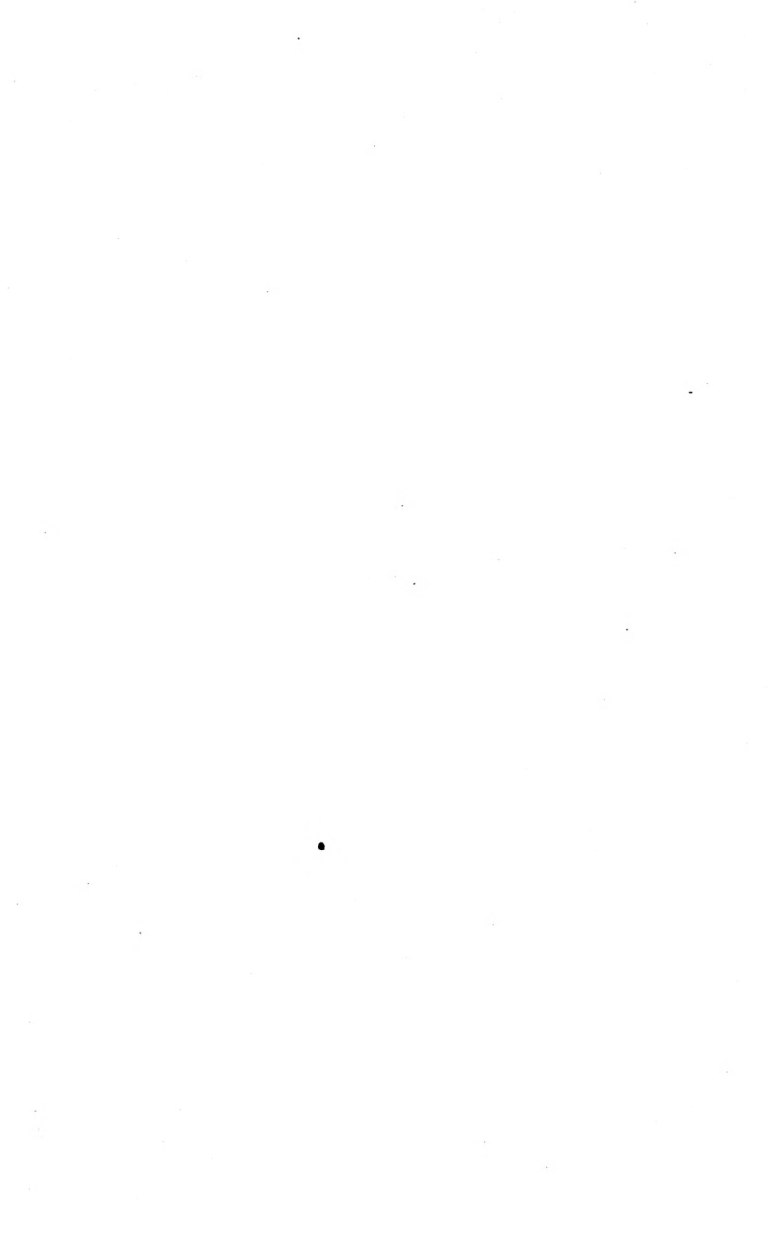
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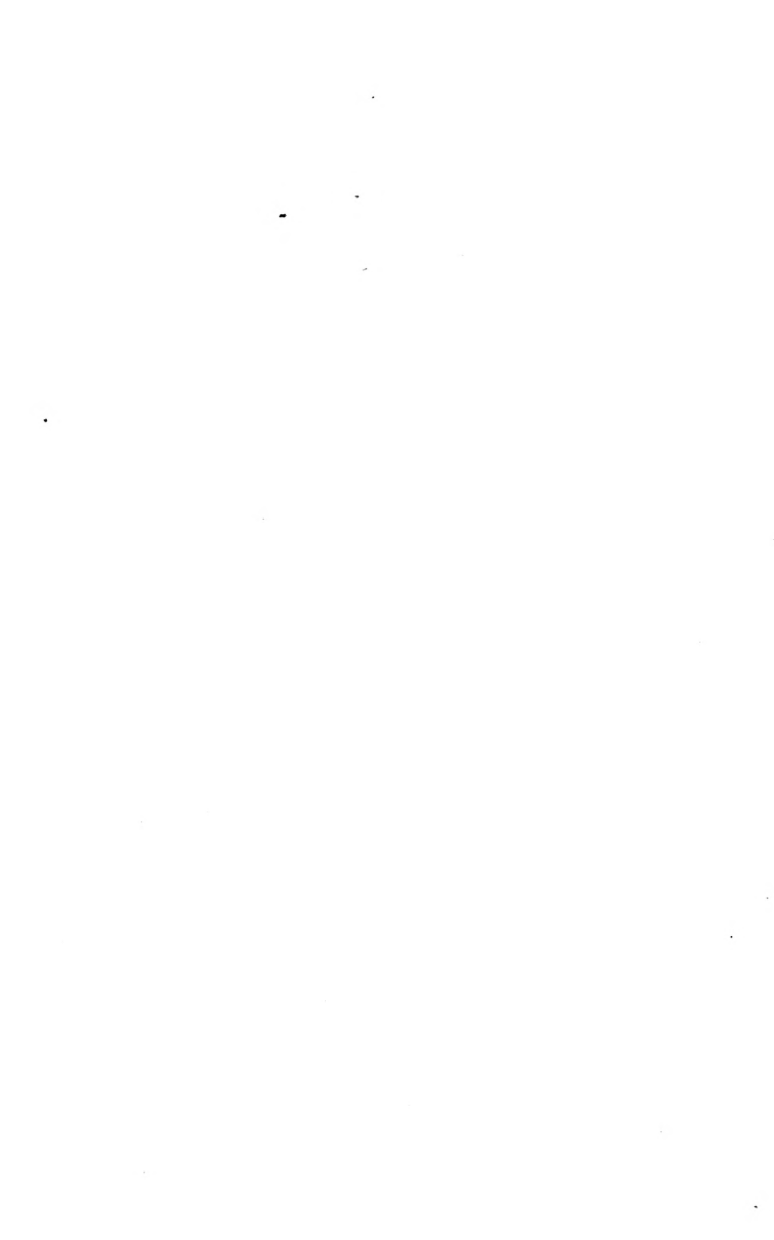
HIS LIFE AND LABOURS
AMONG THE WALDENSES OF PIEDMONT.

BY
J. P. ✓ MEILLE,
PASTOR OF THE WALDENSIAN CHURCH AT TURIN.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTICE BY THE REV. WILLIAM ARNOT.

LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1873.



To Miss Charlotte Beckwith.



ADAM,—At your first entrance into life a great trial awaited you: your illustrious and venerated father, whom your birth would have filled with joy, and who would have made your happiness his constant occupation, was no longer alive.

One of the ends I proposed to myself in composing this volume was, as far as might be, to sweeten this trial, by collecting and rearranging the scattered elements of that noble existence, which I, more fortunate in this than you, was privileged to contemplate so near at hand, and for such a length of time.

Of the success of my efforts I cannot but have painful doubts.

Yet if, notwithstanding the imperfection of the pages which I take the liberty to offer you, you

should one day tell me, when you are old enough to appreciate their contents, that, thanks to them, you know in some measure the eminent man whose daughter you have the honour and the happiness to be ; and if the reading of them inspire you with an affection such as he felt for the Church to which he devoted himself with so much ardour,—then my satisfaction will be complete in this respect, whatever reception the public may think fit to give my work.

Receive, madam, and beg your dear and worthy mother, for whom my affection equals my respect, to receive the assurance of my warmest feelings in Jesus Christ.

J. P. MEILLE, *Pastor.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



VENTURE to recommend earnestly this biography in its English dress to English-speaking readers both in the United States and in the British islands and colonies. It exhibits and illustrates alike the prescient care of Divine providence and the great power that lies in one human life, quickened by the Spirit, and perseveringly devoted to a specific object.

In the early summer of 1815 there were two objects under the sun and on the earth, each interesting indeed in itself, but far apart in place and utterly unconnected in character—two objects whose union either for good or evil no human foresight could have deemed possible;—these were Charles Beckwith, a vigorous young officer of the British army, and the long persecuted and at length almost

crushed group of congregations and pastors in the Valleys of Savoy that inherited the name and the place of the Waldensian Church. Beckwith was a dashing, ambitious soldier : he had passed with honour through several campaigns, and had fought out the terrible day of Waterloo unhurt till the sun was setting and the French army in full retreat. A bullet from the flying foe then received its commission, and the young soldier's leg was irretrievably shattered. During his illness, in an hospital near the battle-field, he found a Bible, and in it found Christ. Incapable of serving any more as a soldier under Wellington, he found employment under another Captain. A field too was provided, and he was led to occupy it through a chain of circumstances that compel the reader to mark in the arrangements the hand of God.

While these preparations were going on with the individual in one place, the Church of the Waldenses in another place had fallen to a very low ebb. They were poor and dispirited. Through a series of calamities they had even lost the use of the Italian language. They neither possessed the power nor the hope of doing evangelistic work for their native

land. The design of Providence, as interpreted by the event, was to prepare and commission Beckwith as the apostle of the Waldensian Church. Through his personal services and wise persevering exertions that singular community was revived, and prepared for their peculiar mission in Italy. Long before the door was opened by the political revolutions of our day, the pastors and people of the Waldensian community were, by a general elevation of their condition and an improved educational apparatus, and especially by the re-acquisition of the Italian tongue, prepared as evangelists to break in upon the southern plains like a flood.

The study of Beckwith's life and work is especially attractive and useful to all who take an interest in Italy, politically emancipated, but as yet, for the most part, spiritually enthralled. It is most appropriate, moreover, that the life of the English general should have been written by an Italian pastor. It is an exact reproduction in modern times of the sentiment recorded in the gospel narrative, "He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." It is well that one of that nation, to whose benefit his life and talents and means were devoted, should tell the

story of his romantic, yet solid, sober, and successful mission, to the great Christian community scattered throughout the world.

The translation of the memoir into English is a labour of love by members of a family in Scotland who knew and appreciated General Beckwith's work while it continued, and who join with others like-minded in carrying it forward now to its results. The whole of this mission and its attendant circumstances, exhibiting a greater than usual measure of personal idiosyncrasy and individual effort, constitute one of the most interesting and instructive episodes of Church history in modern times.

WILLIAM ARNOT.

PREFACE.

SHOULD those who knew Beckwith personally find him faithfully reproduced in these pages; should those who did not know him be enabled to imagine him as he was; and should all who read these pages be filled with a profound admiration for him, and an ardent desire to follow in his footsteps, and to continue the work he has left unfinished,—our ambition will be fully satisfied, and we shall consider our efforts more than rewarded.

Though the life of a man like Beckwith may be said to be written for the whole world, since all have need of the great lesson it teaches, yet we are bound to say that this volume has been penned chiefly with a view to the Vaudois Valleys and their population. This may serve to excuse us for having

entered into many details which can only have interest for the Vaudois,—but, for them, a very great and real interest. It may also serve as an excuse for the number of quotations, which may seem too great, considering the rapidity of the narration.

It seemed to us that no word was better fitted to describe the character of Beckwith than that of *benefactor*. If we have not dwelt sufficiently on his labours in this sense, it has been for want of materials, Beckwith having scrupulously destroyed all manuscripts which could have revealed the secret of his prodigious activity in this department. Of the vast correspondence regarding his work, which, for more than thirty years, he must have kept up with all sorts of persons, and of his journal of expenses, which would have told us much regarding his innumerable bounties, nothing has been found,* everything having been destroyed by him as soon as possible.

For the letters with which we have been able to enrich our narrative, we have to thank the persons in whose hands these letters were found, and who had the kindness to communicate them to us.

* Except the book of charges for the building of the churches at La Tour and Turin.

And now may He, under whose eye, and for whose glory, we have undertaken this work, deign to let His blessing rest upon it, and to use it, however imperfect it may be, as a means of doing some little good in the midst of this Church, our spiritual mother, to whose restoration and prosperity Beckwith dedicated such a remarkable portion of his existence.

PRA, ON THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.

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GENERAL BECKWITH.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN, CHILDHOOD, AND MILITARY CAREER OF BECKWITH,
1789 TO 1827.

HE family of Beckwith—the last male descendant of which is to form the subject of the following pages—is one of the most ancient in England. It was not originally known by this name, however, but by that of Malby, or Malebisse (from the Latin *mala bestia*); borne, most probably, by one of those bold Normans whom the thirst for booty and the love of adventure brought to the British Isles in the train of William the Conqueror. In 1226, under Henry II., Hercules Malby, third son of Sir Simeon Malby, having been united in marriage to Lady Anne Beckwith-Bruce, changed his original name of Malby to that of Beckwith, and

thus became the head of a new family, which seems to have inherited the warlike nature of its ancestors.

Of the five sons of General John Beckwith, grandfather of the subject of these pages, four followed a military career, and attained the rank of general; one only was in business through life, though he also had begun it as a soldier. He had abandoned the military profession on his marriage to Miss Mary Haliburton, sister of the supreme judge at Halifax, in Nova Scotia. He was called John after his father, and was the eldest of the family.

John Beckwith was said by those who knew him intimately to be a man of reserve and good sense. His wife was a woman of remarkable beauty and cultivation of mind, and looked well after the affairs of the household. They had fourteen children, four of whom died in infancy. Of the three boys and seven girls, ten in all, who grew up, and lived to an advanced age, all were married except one.

The eldest of this patriarchal family was born at Halifax on the 2nd October 1789, and received in baptism the name of John Charles. He became the Colonel, and afterwards the *General with the wooden leg*, whose name will last as long as that of the Church to the restoration and welfare of which he devoted so much of his life.

John Charles Beckwith, while still a child, was

quite an oracle among his brothers and sisters, who all swore by him. His fertile brain was ever active in producing songs and marvellous stories for their amusement. He had a great taste for theatrical performances, and composed little plays, which he acted with his brothers and sisters. Their theatre was an old two-stalled stable, for which John Charles painted the scenes.

When, at the age of fourteen, he quitted Halifax to join the army in England, his departure was a severe blow to his young friends. One of them thus describes the leave-taking: "It was a cold winter morning; the ground was covered with snow; every one wept, but most of all the old negro George."

Up to his eighteenth year Beekwith was very short of stature, so much so, that an old soldier of the 95th Regiment, in which he served, relates that when they had to ford any stream he always had to carry him across on his shoulders. He sketched, for the amusement of his family, a portrait of himself, with his head haughtily thrown back, commanding a company of soldiers twice as tall as himself. After this he grew rapidly, and at the age of twenty-five he was "one of the handsomest men to be seen."

His first campaign was in Hanover. In 1807 he took part in the expedition against Denmark; and, in 1808 in that against Sweden. In 1809 he

followed Lord Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, to the Spanish Peninsula; and was present at the disastrous retreat from Corunna, where Sir John Moore, the commander, lost his life. During the five following years there was no action of importance at which he was not present, from Pombal and Fox d'Arona, to Salamanca, Orthez, and Toulouse; at which latter place he received the gold medal* and the rank of Major (March 3rd, 1814).

During all these campaigns he was never wounded, though frequently in danger. One morning, in particular, at the outskirts of a wood in which the enemy lay in ambush, his horse was killed under him by a cannon-ball, and both master and horse fell to the ground. "I thought for a moment my master was gone," said his faithful old servant; "but just then he rose to his feet, exclaiming, 'All right, John;' and, by a prompt retreat, placed himself out of reach of the enemy's fire."

When peace was proclaimed after the abdication and banishment of Napoleon to Elba, Beckwith went to spend some time with his family, who had now left Nova Scotia and come to reside in England.

* This medal bears round the edge the following inscription: *Major Ch. Beckwith, 95 Regt., Asst. Mr.-Gl.*; on one side, Victory seated on her car, with a lion at her feet and a laurel crown in her hand; on the other, the simple inscription *Toulouse*, surrounded by a laurel wreath. Entering the service in 1803, Beckwith was made *sub-lieutenant* in May 1804; *lieutenant*, 8th April 1805; *captain*, 28th June 1808; and *major*, 3rd March 1814.

There, as at Halifax, he was the children's best friend, always ready to join in their sports without fear of hurting his dignity. "Do you remember," writes of him the same friend whom we have already quoted, "how he used to roll on the grass with you and Robert? One day, after breakfast, while he was writing, you were making a dreadful noise. He called out to you, 'Children, do not go away; stay here with me.' 'But, Charles,' said his mother, 'if you wish to read or write, do not keep the children here; they will disturb you.' 'I know that very well,' was his reply; 'and I only told them to stay because I knew that was the best way to make them go away.'"

During his stay in England, wishing to acquire a knowledge of music, he practised on the piano every day for a fixed time with great diligence. He was also anxious to learn the game of whist, "against the time when he should be a general," he laughingly said; but at each new attempt he lost courage, and threw down the cards, exclaiming, "It's of no use! I know I shall never learn it!"

By the return of Napoleon from Elba, and the sudden recommencement of hostilities occasioned by it, the young officer was hastily called away from the amenities of domestic life, to take his place on the field of Waterloo.

The result of that terrible battle is well known, the last of that long series, which, begun in 1793, and lasting till 1815, had physically and morally devastated Europe, and caused the death of millions.

Beckwith's heroic bearing on the memorable day of Waterloo is sufficiently shown by the fact that four horses were killed under him during the engagement. In spite of this he himself remained unhurt, until one of the last shots fired by the retreating enemy broke his left leg. After three months of painful waiting amputation was found necessary. What hidden results, undreamt of by the hand that aimed it, lay hidden in that bullet—the restoration, nay, almost the resurrection, of the Vaudois Church, was, by God's design, enclosed within it!

But for this trial, which put an end, in one sense, to his military career, Beckwith, already a lieutenant-colonel* at the age of twenty-six, would probably have become a renowned general, possibly commander-in-chief of the British army, and might thus most brilliantly have served his country. But then he would never either have sought or found the Vaudois Valleys. He would never have thought of

* He was promoted to this rank on the battle-field itself, and also decorated with the medal struck in remembrance of this memorable victory. The Waterloo medal is silver, and bears, on one side, England holding a palm-branch in one hand and an olive-bough in the other, with the motto *15th June 1815* at the foot of the medal, and at the top the name of *Wellington*. On the other side is the effigy of the Prince Regent, with the inscription *George P. Regent*.

recalling to a sense of its mission under Providence that Church, which now lay so crushed by physical suffering that its spiritual life had grown feeble indeed. And if the small beginning of evangelization by the Vaudois Church be indeed the grain of mustard-seed destined to grow into a great tree, who can tell the connection between that stray cannon-ball and the religious and social regeneration of Italy! Be this as it may, Beckwith's sufferings, which were not small, prepared for him incalculable spiritual blessings, in view of which we cannot doubt the blow had been dealt. His convalescence, though long, was sweetened by many tranquil enjoyments.

In the solitude of the *château* of Mont Saint-Jean, where he had been received, he found, in the little daughter of the owner of the *château*, a child of six years of age, the most attentive and devoted nurse; she rarely left his bed-side, and, by her childish prattle, innocent wiles, and tender sympathy, spread such a charm over the saddened life of the wounded officer, that his separation from her was a real grief to him, and even after many years he never spoke of her without grateful emotion.

There, too, he listened to the voice of God, impressing on his heart and soul things which, till now, had only obtained his passing attention, but which were one day to form the grand interest of

his life. Beckwith himself informs us that he had never been either a sceptic or an infidel; and we may believe him. But his faith had long been of that too common kind, a faith without works, which is dead.

The love of glory, with the sense of duty common to every British soldier, had hitherto been his motive of action; but this heavy, unexpected trial led him to seek more earnestly than he had ever yet done for the true aim of existence. A Bible, which had somehow fallen into his hands while quartered in a village near Courtray in Belgium, was now drawn from his portmanteau; it was carefully studied, and the margin of its pages was covered with notes and references. "I was carried away by the love of glory," he said one day in his expressive way to some friends who were asking about this period of his life; "but a good God said to me, 'Stop, rascal!' and he cut off my leg; and now I think I shall be the happier for it."

One of Beckwith's brother-officers, who also became a general, thus characterizes him as an officer: "I always thought Beckwith the officer in our division who gave the most brilliant hopes for the future; for he possessed all the qualities requisite for the command of an army, great promptitude of conception, imperturbable coolness on the field of battle,

an admirable power of organization, and undaunted courage. Although a staff-officer, he was always ready to quit his safe position, and throw himself into the thick of the fight; and I remember once seeing him upon the breach at Ciudad-Rodrigo, at the head of the attacking column, though his place ought to have been in the rear of the army.

“A very remarkable trait in him was the care which he took of the soldiers when he held the post of major of brigade. No matter how bad the weather, or how great his own fatigue, he never dismounted until he had seen every one lodged and supplied with every comfort possible in the circumstances. I once heard him advising the soldiers to see that their flannel waistcoats were put on perfectly dry. While not disdaining to attend to such details as these, his fine character, ready wit, and cultivated mind, made him a favourite at the officers' table and among his companions in arms. I always thought that if he had followed out his career, he might have become commander-in-chief, for which few were as well qualified as he.”

Returning to England, Beckwith occupied his time in carrying on the education which had been broken off at an early age, on his entering the army. Theology, history, political economy, and agriculture successively occupied his attention; and the

profound study which he devoted to each of these branches explains the variety of information which lent such a charm to his conversation.

About this time, either with a view to complete his studies by practical observation, or to revisit the haunts of his childhood, he sailed for America, where he spent several years, passing from one part of the United States to another, studying with care the institutions and resources of the country, and penetrating even to the haunts of the wild Indians, whose customs and ideas aroused in his thoughtful mind the deepest interest. On his return from America, he was anxious to aid the work-people at Spittal-fields; but his designs being crossed by narrow-minded, though well-meaning people, had no practical result.


While resident in London, Beckwith was in the habit of meeting with his former mess-mates, and also with his General, the Duke of Wellington. On going to visit the latter at his residence in Hyde Park one day in the summer of 1827, he was shown into the library. Being alone in the room for a few minutes, his eye was attracted by a volume on the table, entitled, "Narrative of an Excursion to the Mountains of Piedmont, and Researches among the Vaudois or Waldenses, Protestant Inhabitants of the Alps." The author of this book

was Dr. Gilly, afterwards Prebendary of Durham Cathedral, who had drawn up with great literary power, and an irresistible vein of sympathy, this account of a tour he had made in the Vaudois Valleys. The few pages of this work which Beckwith read so surprised and touched him, that he ordered a copy for himself on the way home. The more he read, the more he wondered and felt interested in the population who had withstood the cruel persecutions of centuries, and who had evidently been appointed by God to hold aloft on the classic ground of the Papacy the standard of a pure gospel. Having finished the book, he was seized with a desire to behold with his own eyes that which the good Doctor had so attractively described; and accordingly, the following autumn, he left London in a post-chaise, "most anxious," as he himself expressed it, "to see the country which he imagined to be peopled by angels, yet where," he maliciously added, "he had also found some devils."

While he is on his way thither, let us endeavour to form an exact idea of the state of the Vaudois Valleys at this time, towards the end of 1827, in their social, intellectual, and religious aspect. This will be the best means of estimating the importance and the difficulty of the work, in many respects so remarkable, on which Beckwith was about to enter.

CHAPTER II.

THE VAUDOIS VALLEYS IN 1827.

OCIALLY and politically speaking, the state of the Vaudois Valleys in 1827 was as sad as might be, and so different from their present condition, that it is not easy to believe that but little more than forty years have elapsed since that period.

Not only had the general liberties obtained by the Vaudois after the French Revolution been suddenly and violently suppressed, but all the ancient edicts concerning that people, embodying the most vexatious regulations, had been one by one exhumed from their dust, and, under the influence of the Jesuitical spirit then predominant in the councils of Sardinia, put in force with a severity which went on increasing year by year, until it reached a climax, when the force of circumstances rendered it no longer practicable.

The Government of the King (not of his own

accord, be it understood, but under the tyrannical and degrading influence of the clergy *) still insisted on the strict observance of certain of these edicts † as late as 1841—on the eve, as it were, of the proclamation of the liberties we now enjoy. All Vaudois, simply because they were such, were forbidden to possess or even to farm any property, or to practise any industry whatever, beyond the narrow limits of their valleys.‡ The liberal professions also, which, within their own boundaries at least, they ought to have been allowed to exercise freely, were equally prohibited, as soon as they required the degree of doctor for their exercise; and the office of notary itself, for which this degree was not absolutely indispensable, was only accessible to them within the narrowest restrictions. §

According to a series of regulations, remarkable for their intolerance and injustice, the observance of public worship was subjected to the most arbitrary

* A letter of 12th April 1841, from the Procurator-General of His Majesty, Count Stara, communicating to the prefect of Pignerol the order "to suspend at once the execution of the measures ordained by the Government, regarding mixed marriages, and the acquisition of property made on the territory of Lusernette (beyond the limits) and elsewhere," contained this recommendation: to act so that the ecclesiastical authority might not perceive this suspension or revocation of measures determined on." See Bert, "I. Cristiani Valdesi," p. 303.

† Edicts of 1602, 1603, 1610, and 1622.

‡ Edict of 1822. An injunction of the judge of Pignerol of the year 1827, on the occasion of the letting of heritable property to the Vaudois in that town, gave an order to all the Vaudois established there for commerce to take their departure within the next four-and-twenty hours. See A. Bert, "I. Valdesi," pp. 265, 266.

§ Edict of 2nd June 1653: "There may be six heretical notaries within the tolerated limits, for the sole service of the Vaudois."

restraints ; as also the introduction into the kingdom of even the most indispensable religious books, such as Bibles, catechisms, and hymn-books.* Besides this, in districts like those of the Vaudois Valleys, where almost all the property is in the hands of Protestants, and where, at that time in particular, nearly all the resident Roman Catholics were either beggars or servants—it was required by law, that the majority of the common council should be necessarily and constantly composed of Catholics.†

Lastly, there were two other equally barbarous and immoral laws, which were often appealed to by the authorities even long after the period we have to do with ; the one, compelling the young woman whom wrong had made a mother, either to part from her child by casting it out into the street, or to promise before a magistrate that she would bring it up in the Roman Catholic faith ;‡ the other, authorizing any boy of twelve, and any girl of ten years of age, to abandon the parental roof, without the parents or guardians having any right to bring them back, provided the motive of

* At every consignment of Bibles and New Testaments, the Moderator had to sign before the Reviser-in-Chief a declaration, bearing a formal engagement that not one of these books should be sold, or even lent, to a Roman Catholic.

† Edict of 1653 : “ In places where all are not heretics [it would have been a difficult matter in any place where there were no Catholics !] the number of the Protestant magistrates and councillors must always be exceeded by that of the Catholic ones.”

‡ Letter from the Advocate-General of 18th June 1838, quoted by Bert, “ I. Valdesi,” p. 285.

flight were to obtain salvation by joining the Romish Church.* The only advantage which their nationality gave to the Vaudois, was the right (a right which Jews did not then enjoy) of shedding their blood for the defence of their country. In all other respects, their lot would have been infinitely better if, instead of being the subjects of His Sardinian Majesty, they had been those of any other power, whether Catholic or Protestant. †

With regard to education, particularly that which was elementary, although the condition of the Vaudois Valleys at this period was much better than that of most other parts of the kingdom, and though out of a population of 20,000, about 4000 children attended school at least in winter, yet such a state of things was bad enough to require great amelioration.

What, then, were the hamlet or *quarter* schools, which were at this time about a hundred and twenty in number? They were generally taught in small and ill-lighted stables, where, for from four to five months in the winter, fifteen to perhaps forty chil-

* Edict of 1655: "The children of Protestants may be taken away from them if they wish to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, when the boys are upwards of twelve years old, the girls upwards of ten." See on this subject, "I. Valdesi," by M. A. Bert, pp. 286-289, where facts are related which would be incredible if they were not confirmed by the most authentic documents.

† The authorization, among other things, to possess, and consequently to buy, fixed property of all kinds, and in whatever part of the states of His Majesty, whilst strictly denied to the Vaudois, was, from the year 1822, granted to the Prussians, Dutch, Saxons, Wurtembergers, &c. See Bert, "I. Valdesi," p. 209.

dren were huddled together in the small space unoccupied by the cattle, and where the heads of sheep or goats, constantly intruding among the heads of the children, caused an interruption to the lessons which by no means displeased the latter. As for the teacher, what was to be expected from a man whose salary did not always amount to ten francs a month, or rather less than thirty-four centimes a day? His knowledge was too apt to keep pace with his salary; and all his notions of teaching seemed to be concentrated in a huge birch-rod, with which he mercilessly tortured the hands and knees of the unfortunate children whom it was his duty to imbue with sound moral principles. A few winters of such tuition were considered amply sufficient, if the children were thus rendered able to read, write, and reckon indifferently, and to repeat by heart a morning and evening prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed.

The parochial schools, open for ten months of the year, and frequented in winter by the elder children, and in summer, when the other schools were closed, by all who did not work in the fields, were not much more successful than the others. The buildings in which they were taught, though not exactly stables, were dark and ill-ventilated. They were worse provided than even the poorest school at the present

day. No sloping desks, no black board, no slates, no maps. The only reading-books in use were, in French, the Bible; and in Italian, which was but little taught, some manuscript chronicles of business transactions, utterly devoid of any elevated thought or sentiment to brighten the intelligence or move the heart of the child who was compelled to decipher them. The discipline exercised in the parochial as well as the hamlet schools was that of the rod, commonly called the *horse* or the *chestnut*, according to the gravity of the case and the part of the individual on which the strokes of this educating instrument fell. The teachers, among whom were men of surprising merit, considering that there were no normal schools to educate them, could, notwithstanding the zeal and devotion with which many of them applied themselves to their task, prevail little against such a state of things.

Such was the state of primary education; and that of secondary, or classical education, was not more encouraging. The so-called Latin school was a nomadic institution, finding shelter here and there according to circumstances. It generally had from fifteen to twenty pupils, divided into five classes, who learned from one neither competent nor well-paid teacher enough of Latin and Greek to admit them by sufferance, as students of the classics,

into the academies of Lausanne, Strasbourg, or Geneva.

In a religious and ecclesiastical point of view, was the state of the country any better? We would fain answer this question in the affirmative, but we cannot do so with truth. The condition was not one of unmixed evil; it would be unjust to say so. Many traces of the old state of things, which had won for the Vaudois Church its ancient renown, were still visible. A comparatively pure morality, respect for religion, diligent attendance at public worship, a profound attachment to the faith of their fathers, a readiness to suffer anything rather than renounce their profession, affection and respect for their pastors,—all these, at this period, formed distinctive features in the character of the Vaudois. The pastors, with some trifling exceptions, were faithful to the old evangelical orthodoxy. Yet there was one thing which pastors and people alike wanted—namely, a knowledge, on the one hand, of the object and mission of the Church; and, on the other, of the benefits that should result from preaching. A fuller realization of the reign of God upon earth, and of the necessity and inestimable importance of the salvation of souls,—this was far from occupying, as it ought to have done, the attention either of the shepherds of souls or of their flocks,

who yet never failed to attend their ministrations. There was something lurking in the shadow of those religiously-guarded ecclesiastical forms, and in the folds of that irreproachable orthodoxy; and that something was formalism, with all its inevitable and deplorable consequences. Jesus Christ was present in name, but absent in reality; and the fruits of his grace, so easily discerned when present, and causing such an irreparable want when absent, only existed in the hearts of a few.

Church government was equally noted for its defects. The holding of the Synods was rendered a difficult matter: on the one hand by the Government, which regarded with suspicious irritability these wholly representative assemblies; on the other by the boroughs, which, on account of the expense thence resulting to themselves, never failed to retard the meetings of the Synods as much as possible. These bodies thus but imperfectly carried out the object of their institution, and their influence on the life of the Church was small indeed. The Table,* too, forgetting its essentially spiritual character, had insensibly sunk to the rank of an upper office for the transaction of common business. The Consistories showed the same tendency to lose sight

[* The Table is the representative and administrative authority of the Vaudois Church, sits from Synod to Synod, and is composed of five members—three ministers and two laymen.—*Tr.*]

of the spiritual side of their mission, and to attend only to the temporal. The Church existed still, but the symptoms within it of that life from above, which is the first and highest end of its existence, were few and far between. Some dawns of better days began, however, to dissipate the darkness here and there. By the generosity of a widow named Madame Geymet, powerfully encouraged by the then Moderator, Pastor Bert of La Tour, an hospital for the poor Vaudois had been founded.* Several young ministers also, just arrived from foreign universities, especially from Lausanne, brought with them something of that awakening influence with which they had there been surrounded, and endeavoured to rouse their fellow-countrymen to strive for better things. A visit paid to the Valleys in 1826, by one justly named the Apostle of the High Alps, Felix Neff, and his friend, Pastor Blanc of Mens, had cast the seeds of conversion into many a heart, where they had not failed to spring up and bear fruit. But these were only gleams of the early dawn. Many a year had yet to pass, many a struggle to be made, ere the full splendour of the Sun of Righteousness should shine on the wooded slopes and shady dells of our beautiful valleys.

* In the *Echo des Vallées* of 1869 and 1870, very interesting details are to be found of the origin of this institution, which began to act in 1826.

We find, then, a people intimidated by suffering, and suddenly cheated of its fancied liberty—caught in a network of cruel edicts that confined its movements; a people desirous of repose above everything, and looking on freedom from persecution as the height of happiness—no sense of having a mission to work out, or an influence to exert—on the contrary, the feeling of being aliens on their own soil; the inveterate habit, which is not yet quite overcome, of trusting to others instead of to their own energy and exertions; public instruction yet in its infancy; religious and moral life languishing and enervated. Such was the state of things which greeted Beckwith on his arrival in the Valleys—such was the arid soil he had to cultivate—such were the obstacles he had to remove, ere he could accomplish the work which Providence had assigned to him, the performance of which demanded nothing less than a cast of character as rare as his, and that faith of which it is written, that “it can remove mountains!”

CHAPTER III.

BECKWITH'S ARRIVAL AND FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE VALLEYS
—HIS HABITS OF LIFE—GENERAL VIEW OF HIS WORK
FROM 1827 TO 1853.

BEFORE introducing the hero of this history upon the scene of action, a serious difficulty arose in our mind, of which we must here say a few words.

Shall we, we asked ourselves, preserve a strict chronological order in this narration, where striking events are so few, and, on the other hand, activity is as many-sided and complicated as can be imagined? Or, on the other hand, after devoting a chapter to Beckwith's arrival and first appearance in the Valleys, and to some general remarks upon his work, shall we, in as many distinct and, as it were, parallel chapters, take up the several aspects of his unwearying activity?

Such is the question which we have put to ourselves, debated long, and, we fear, but imperfectly solved. The first of these two methods seemed to us

undoubtedly the more natural, and we should have adopted it at once, had it not, after due consideration, seemed to present two difficulties: first, that it would hinder rather than help the progress of the narrative; and second, that it would allow us only a very limited use of what to us seems by far the most interesting and useful part of this work—namely, the correspondence of the General himself. These considerations, particularly the latter, decided us to take the opposite course. Not but that it too has its defects, and, especially in a literary point of view, exposes itself to just criticism. Yet we are nevertheless convinced that our object, in making the Vaudois Church well acquainted with the remarkable man whom God raised up for her restoration, will be more surely attained by the second method than by the first.

It was then, as above stated, in the autumn of 1827 that Beckwith, then only thirty-eight years of age, first set foot on the soil of the Vaudois Valleys.

Unfortunately the weather was very bad when he arrived, so that, as it was his intention to winter in the south of Italy, he only remained three or four days in the Valleys at this time, reserving a longer visit for a future period. During these few days spent at La Tour, he had several conversations

with Pastor Bert, which increased the interest he had felt in the people since reading Dr. Gilly's book. He returned the next and the two following years, until at last his arrival in the October of each year began to be looked forward to as a regular occurrence. He generally remained till the month of May, when the heat began to grow intense.

The fourth or fifth of these visits, during the winter of 1832-33, threatened to be the last. Residing, as usual, in the charming family of the pastor at Sainte-Margu rite, near La Tour, he was seized, towards the spring of 1833, with an illness so severe, that his end seemed near at hand. He was not unconscious of his danger, as is shown by a letter written from his sick-bed to M. J. P. Bonjour, then chaplain to the Protestant Legation at Turin, containing directions "in case anything should happen to him."* Instead of being alarmed at such a prospect, he remained perfectly tranquil. "Do not be afraid," he said one night, when at the worst, to his anxious attendant; "if it be God's will that I recover, he will surely show the doctors how to cure me; if not, he will blind them, and all

* This letter, so touching in its simplicity, and by the solicitude it shows for all sorts of things and persons, was written at two separate times, the 6th and 15th of April 1833; in the latter part, the writing is much more altered than in the former.

will be over. After all, it is no great hardship to go to heaven !”

After his recovery, he said of this illness : “ It has been very useful to me ; it has shown me how precious my faith is, and convinced me that I had not built on the sand.” The remainder of this year and the winter of 1833–34 were spent by Beckwith in England, in order to re-establish his health, which had sustained a severe shock from this illness.

During the interval, Pastor Bert having died,* and the moderatorship having passed from the hands of Pastor Rostaing, of Villesèche, to those of M. J. P. Bonjour, who had become pastor of the parish of Saint-Jean,† Beckwith, on his return to the Valleys in the autumn of 1834, fixed his abode in the house of the latter, and remained there till the spring of 1839, when he left for England, there to spend two years. On his return at the end of that time, he took up his residence in the old counts’ palace at La Tour, where he continued to reside during the rest of his stay in the Valleys, which lasted till 1851.

As it is well known to all who were acquainted with his character, how little his actions were determined by personal considerations, we may conclude that Beckwith’s motive for residing succes-

* In August 1833.

† At the Synod of 1833.

sively under the roofs of two of the most influential of the Vaudois clergy was governed by the highest considerations respecting his work. One of the first conditions of success in the work he was about to undertake, was as accurate a knowledge as possible of the surroundings over which he was to use his influence, and any false step in this respect might have involved the most lamentable consequences. What means, then, could have been more suited to impart to him this knowledge, than daily, almost hourly, intercourse with two men equally endowed with exquisite tact and superior intelligence, and, by their position, more fitted than any others to furnish him with every information regarding both the people and their institutions, that could throw light and security on his path? Another equally important task for Beckwith was to remove from the minds of both people and clergy all suspicion that he was governed by any other motive than the good of the Church. What better security could they have for this, than that he was acting with the co-operation of the leaders and guardians of that Church itself?

Let us now glance at the mode of life which Beckwith adopted at the beginning of his residence in the Valleys, and faithfully continued to the end. He rose about eight in the morning, and invariably

used cold water for his ablutions. At nine he breakfasted, and after breakfast he would stand for a few moments admiring the view from his balcony. It was a magnificent sight on which his eye rested, whether at the house at Sainte-Margu rite or at the parsonage of Saint-Jean, and he loved particularly to gaze on the vast plain, in which he already seemed to discern the future scene and, as it were, the great end of his activity. Returning then to his room, he worked there incessantly till nearly two o'clock. The objects of his in-door labours were as manifold as those of his outward activity. At first it was the continuation of the studies begun in London; then his correspondence, the circle of which was ever widening. Lastly, when the time arrived, it was the preparation of plans and estimates of all kinds—schools, churches, parsonages; or sketches of various writings more or less directly connected with his work, which he composed with the greatest care, and to which, in his own mind, he attached great importance.

At two o'clock, he came down to the dining-room, took a morsel of bread and a little wine, exchanging a few words with any one who happened to be present; then, with a walking-stick in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, he invariably set out to walk, whatever the weather might be, not returning

till five or six o'clock. In this way he travelled over great distances, and not always without difficulty, owing to his infirmity and the quantity of snow or mud which often covered the roads. He frequently stopped to converse with acquaintances, or to listen to the complaints of the poor, who were always sure of obtaining relief from him.

On returning from his walk, he dressed for dinner, of which he generally partook at seven; then went into the drawing-room, where he read the newspapers while tea was being prepared. He then read till near midnight when alone—a circumstance which rarely happened; or conversed on many subjects with persons of various ages and conditions, whom he invariably possessed the power of attracting and putting at their ease. With the farmer, he talked of turnips and hay; with the young girl, of knitting and sewing; with the schoolmaster or mistress, of education; with the theologian, of election and free-will;—expressing striking and often original views on all these subjects, and regarding all that he thus learned as so much gained for his work.

It was impossible for this work to present itself to his mind from the first in the exact form in which he afterwards undertook and carried it out. The nature, and in great measure the extent, of his work, depended on the observations which he might make.

These soon revealed to him, on the one hand, the extremely uneasy state in which, in some districts in particular, many of the population existed; and, on the other, such a general and complete moral prostration, that there seemed no longer to exist among the Vaudois either a sense of duty to be done or of influence to be exerted. As for the most urgent temporal necessities, Beckwith endeavoured to supply them as well as he could by abundant bounties. The purely spiritual needs he could not better satisfy than by instruction based on gospel truth. Hence the reason that, besides his visits to the different parishes, of which he soon knew the temporal and spiritual state better than many of the Vaudois themselves; besides these, and some publications in the Vaudois *patois*, his activity during the first five or six years of his residence in the Valleys was almost exclusively directed towards the schools, particularly those of the *hamlet* or *quarter*.

But as the Italian proverb says,—*Da cosa nasce cosa*, one want supplied creates another, and this a third, and so you go on much further than you at first intended, until at last you are, as it were, bound hand and foot in an arena, with no chance of escape until you have fought long and valiantly. And this is exactly what happened to Beckwith. From a visit of a few days to the Valleys, he was

led on to spend the better half of his active life in their service. Thus it was that the very partial and circumscribed work which he probably had in view on his arrival gradually became transformed into the multitude of varied and important works which are to be described in these pages—works executed in the midst of obstacles and difficulties of which we can now form no idea, and which, besides a great part of his wealth, demanded all his time and strength, and the constant and energetic exercise of his noble faculties.

And while his sphere of action was widening, time was hastening on; a breeze of liberty had passed over the peninsula from end to end, and under the influence of its reviving breath the old despotism in some degree melted away, and made room for other constitutions more or less liberal. The kingdom of Sardinia, which, of all the Italian States, was thought to be the one most irrevocably bound to the past, had also begun, led by its monarch, to tread the path which was to conduct it to such glorious destinies. Beckwith was one of the first to discern the close connection between these events and the future of the Vaudois Church. What had hitherto only dawned upon him at moments now became clear to his mind,—that this Church had been spared by Providence that it might be the means of evan-

gelizing Italy. The rest of his active life, from 1848 to 1853, was almost exclusively devoted to this object.

During the interval of more than twenty-six years between 1827 and 1853, the following few events beyond his usual life of self-denial deserve particular mention:—

In 1836 a subscription opened by the Table among the Vaudois population, to have an oil-painting of their venerated benefactor executed on canvas, and lithographic copies of it made for distribution.

In 1837,* his promotion from the rank of lieutenant-colonel to that of colonel.

In 1844, the presentation by the Synod of a cup of honour to Beckwith and to the two men who, each in his own way, had most ably seconded him in his work,—Dr. Gilly and the Count Waldburg-Truchsess, plenipotentiary of the King of Prussia at the court of Turin.

In 1846,† his promotion from the rank of colonel to that of major-general.

In 1848, his nomination by King Charles Albert to the rank of knight of the order of *Saints Maurice and Lazarus*.‡

* January 10th.

† November 9th.

‡ The royal diploma conferring this title bears the date of 15th December 1848 and is conceived in the most flattering terms. See Appendix, letter B.

In 1850,* his marriage to Miss Caroline Volle, of the Vaudois Valleys, whom Beckwith, in his correspondence with his friends, frequently described by a word that expresses everything—*My blessing of a wife*.

Lastly, in 1851, his establishment at Turin, with a view to his following more closely the progress of the important work on which, chiefly at his instigation, the Vaudois Church had entered,—the evangelization of Italy.

And now, according to the plan we have laid down, we will take up one by one, in detail, the various aspects of that prodigious activity with which this chapter has made us slightly acquainted.

* On the 20th June.

CHAPTER IV.

BECKWITH AND PRIMARY EDUCATION.



THE profound and general feeling of the Vaudois population towards Beckwith has led us to give to primary education the place of honour in this biography. This feeling leads them to look on Beckwith as, above all, the ardent and devoted champion of education among the masses, and as entitled, for this reason in particular, to their veneration and gratitude.

Two reasons, in particular, led him to fix his attention in this quarter. First, Beckwith was a layman, and as such, in accordance with the feeling prevalent in the English Church, he did not consider himself entitled to encroach on what to him seemed the exclusive domain of the clergy,—that of curing the spiritual maladies of a community. Secondly, Beckwith knew very well that ignorance is one of the chief causes of human misery, whether moral or physical; and that, consequently, the surest

method of remedying this misery with success is to attack ignorance. It is, consequently, no matter of surprise that Beckwith began with the quarter schools rather than with the parochial ones, although the latter may seem to be of greater importance. For Beckwith's mind was an eminently practical one, and to begin thus was to do so in the most economical way, and yet in a way amply sufficient for an experiment. Was not this also the most fitting and reasonable means of arriving at the wished-for result?

Before he had resided long in the Valleys, he had found out two things:—1st, That the so-called hamlet or quarter school is the true school of the Vaudois population, to which they owe most of the instruction they acquire; 2nd, That the stimulus once given here, it would be comparatively easy to extend it, as far as should be necessary, in other directions. It was for these reasons that the humblest of the elementary schools first became the objects of his attention and solicitude. But in order to obtain good results from these schools, and raise them from the sad condition to which we have seen that they were reduced, what course was to be pursued? To begin by asking assistance from persons who were perfectly contented with the present state of things, would have been

lost labour. Beckwith felt this, and the first new schools were erected entirely at his own expense, without other help from the inhabitants than the giving up of the old *locale*, where there was one, and the grant of a site for the new edifice. But when these first efforts had attracted some attention, and the people of the Valleys began to see what a great improvement there was in the health and progress of their children, since they had met in well-aired, well-lighted rooms, instead of the dingy, unwholesome stables in which they had before been huddled together, they began to wish for new schools in every part of the country, and numerous requests to this effect were addressed to the generous philanthropist.

“I agree to your request,” was his invariable answer to the petitioners, “on one condition ; namely, that we work together, each doing what is in his power. You, my friends, will provide the site and the building materials, and I the money to pay the workmen.” This arrangement was too easy not to be accepted at once, which it generally was. Thus, within a very few years, the hundred or hundred and twenty dismal dens, which had hitherto served as quarter schools, were replaced by as many neat buildings, well situated at a short distance from the dwellings of the people. Each of these had a well-

aired, well-lighted ground floor ; and some had an upper story to accommodate the teacher. The country people never call them anything but *the Colonel's schools* ; and with truth, for not only was it he who led to their being built, and bore a great part of the expense, but he also provided them with all the indispensable material, and, on more than one occasion, supplemented from his own purse the scanty salary of the schoolmaster. There are, perhaps, not ten of these hundred or hundred and twenty schools of which he did not himself mark out the site, visiting the spot for this purpose, and deterred neither by the inaccessibility of the situation nor by his lameness, which limited him to the use of one leg.

Had Beckwith done nothing for us but this, this alone, which we have just mentioned, would have been such a blessed remembrance of him, as to cause his name to be pronounced among us only with the deepest veneration and gratitude. But what for many others would have been the limit of their charities, was for him only a starting-point, whence to enter on a long course of charitable action, which unfolded itself, year by year, in the most varied directions.

The improvement in the state of the quarter schools had for one of its results the discovery of the sad state, both as to the school houses and the teach-

ing, into which the parish schools had fallen. The need of improvement in this direction began to be generally felt.

Here, too, as in the case of the other schools, recourse was had to the beneficent generosity of the *English Colonel*; and Beckwith, far from drawing back from overtures such as these, encouraged and often even provoked them.

“ You need a new school, and a good lodging for your schoolmaster,” he would say, now to one, now to another of the magistrates.

“ True, Colonel,” the answer would be; “ but how procure them? This would be far too great an expense for us!”

“ Of course you cannot bear the expense alone,” replied the generous benefactor; “ but by a united effort the thing may not be impossible. Procure me so many thousand francs [sometimes it was four, sometimes five thousand], and I, for my part, will give you the school complete.”

When the authorities were wise enough, and sufficiently desirous of the public good, to accept such a proposal, the money was voted, and the rest of the sum required—in some cases the half, in others two-thirds, or even more—was supplied by the Colonel himself. He also generally himself drew up the agreement with the builder, and super-

intended the progress of the building until it was finished.

And thus by degrees, year by year, there arose in almost all the parishes in the Vaudois Valleys handsome edifices, resembling the new quarter schools, only on a larger scale. They consisted of a sunk flat; a ground floor, in which was a large hall entered by a vestibule; and an upper flat, containing a commodious dwelling for the teacher and his family. The hall was well lighted, and had a good stove, a black board, printed sheets for reading, and frequently geographical maps. There were enough of tables and forms to accommodate from sixty to eighty children. Here, too, the difference was great between the old buildings—narrow, dark, and ill ventilated—and the new ones which had taken their place. And how great the influence which these buildings, so well adapted to their purpose, might, in future years, exert over the whole population!

Yet the construction of these new schools would have been of small advantage indeed without good teachers. And how were such to be procured at such a low rate of salary as had hitherto been given, ranging from 300 to 400 francs a year? The first reform, then, urgently demanded a second—the augmentation of these salaries. But how was this to be effected? Voluntary subscription, even in the

present improved state of things, produces little, and it would have been vain to resort to it then. The only other means then available was taxation. But how could Beckwith, as a stranger, induce the municipal authorities, who were neither of the best disposed nor of the most intelligent, to impose considerable taxes on themselves and those under their jurisdiction, and all for an object which they could not possibly learn to understand correctly?

Fortunately, Beckwith did not stand alone in this difficult undertaking. The post of Moderator of the Vaudois Church had, in 1833, passed into the hands of a man of great merit, able, more than any other in the Valleys, to understand Beckwith, and to enter into and aid intelligently and vigorously the prosecution of his plans. This was Pastor Bonjour, who, along with his colleagues, members of the Table, addressed a circular, dated 18th November 1835, to all the Consistories in the Vaudois Valleys, urgently requesting them to use all the influence they possessed over their subordinates, to induce them to meet the demands of the Colonel with the favour they deserved. The circular closed with an invitation to send one of their number as a representative to a meeting fixed for the 3rd December at Saint-Jean, to confer on this important matter.

Beckwith, on his part, addressed a circular, some

days later, on the 24th November, not to the consistories, but to the municipal corporations, inviting them also to send representatives to the meeting. In this circular, after showing that, at the present rate of salary, it would become increasingly difficult to obtain good teachers, and proving by calculations that each Vaudois contributed, on an average, not more than one franc yearly to public education, the Colonel added :—

“It is because of the difficult position of the population in this country, and the obstacles against which education has had to struggle, that foreigners have combined to assist the country in this matter. But the most benevolent and philanthropic charity would soon lose courage and fail in its efforts, unless seconded by good-will and readiness to contribute something, on the part of the inhabitants. If parents make no sacrifices for their children, they cannot expect to be beloved by them, and cannot look for either their gratitude or their aid ; of both of which, in course of time, they are sure to stand in need. Besides, in bringing children into the world, parents are bound, before God and men, to give them a religious education, and the means of gaining their livelihood in any position where Providence may place them. It is well known how families increase, how lands are divided and

re-divided, and how it yearly becomes a greater necessity either to emigrate or to resort to commerce and the occupations of large towns. But how succeed in these without education? The fortune of some consists of their hands and their time; others have only their intelligence and industry; but, for all, good conduct is requisite, and this is only to be learned from the Christian religion.

“He who addresses these lines to you is your sincere friend. His only aim is your good and that of your children. He beseeches you to listen to his voice. He has already thought and laboured much in your service; he knows your wants, and has well considered what things will contribute most to your temporal and spiritual interests. He demands only a slight sacrifice from you; or rather, points out a means by which, every ten years, the profit will greatly exceed the outlay.”

The meeting took place on the appointed day. The augmentation of schoolmasters' salaries, warmly advocated first by Beckwith, and then by the Moderator and other members of the Table, gained a complete triumph. Before the meeting separated, the delegates of the corporations and consistories, in the name of their respective colleagues, undertook to raise to 600 francs a year the salaries of the schoolmasters of Saint-Jean, La Tour, Angrogna, Villar,

Boby, and Prarustin ; those of the schoolmasters at Pomaret, Ville-Sèche, Pramol, Saint-Germain, and Rora, to 500 francs ; those of the schoolmasters of Massel and Praly to 400 francs ; and those of the schoolmasters of Rodoret and Maneille to 300 francs. The Table having hastened to obtain from the provincial authorities the necessary sanction of the proposed tax, the new measures regarding the emoluments of schoolmasters were put in force on the 1st January 1837.

But good salaries alone are not sufficient to procure good teachers. The position of a teacher cannot be properly filled without special training, conducted by special men well versed in all that regards education. There was at Lausanne, at this time, near the academy frequented by most of the theological students from the Valleys, a normal school, justly renowned. It was conducted by the aged pastor, Gauthey, a man famed for his piety and zeal, afterwards director of the normal school at Courbevoie, near Paris. From the scholastic authorities of the canton of Vaud, the Moderator obtained permission for several of our best teachers to follow the course of instruction in this school during a period of some months.* The first group sent thither was soon succeeded by a second, and this by a third ; so that,

* The first group set out for Lausanne in May 1838.

before long, nearly all the parochial teachers had been to Lausanne. They returned to the Valleys, if not so fitted for their noble profession as might have been wished, yet made aware of their deficiencies, and put in the way of supplying them speedily. The cost of all these successive journeys was defrayed by Beckwith. To complete this measure, and insure its result, another measure was adopted, provisionally, at first, by the Table, and afterwards definitively by the Synod of 1839,—namely, that henceforward no one might exercise the functions of parochial schoolmaster in the service of the Vaudois Church, unless provided with a certificate of ability delivered to him by the Table, declaring him to be possessed of all the intellectual and moral qualities requisite for the discharge of this office. Beckwith set a seal, as it were, to this portion of his work, by founding, at his own expense, a certain number of girls' schools—in addition to those which, since the visit of Gilly to the Valleys, had been founded there by the *London Committee*.

As for the spirit in which these changes were undertaken and effected, and the lofty aim which floated before the eyes of their ardent promoter, we shall find them best expressed by himself in an extract from his all too rare correspondence:—

“I have sent you,” he writes on the 24th March

1834, to Pastor Muston of Boby, “besides the rent and the salary of the schoolmistress, the sum of twenty francs, to be laid out in procuring working materials for the use of the girls in school. I beg you to make use of it for this purpose. I hope you will see that a tenth part at least, of these ninety young girls, turns out well. I shall thus be sure of nine wise and sensible young women; from these will come nine more, and from those yet other nine. Thus we shall have twenty-seven virtuous women, as in the Book of Proverbs; then thirty-six, and so on; so that, before the end of the century, God willing, I shall have peopled all the parish with wise and prudent women. The money I have devoted to this work will then be well-spent money indeed.”

“It is certain,” he writes to the same, so early as 1831, “that, sooner or later, your population will be more widely spread through Piedmont than it is at present. Girls brought up in the true religion, able to read, write, sew, &c., will be looked upon as a sort of miracle in the plain, and, whether as domestic servants or as the wives of Vaudois husbands, they will exert, whenever circumstances admit of it, a very great influence over the progress of the truth.”

“As for me,” he writes from London, 6th January 1840, “if in the other world I find among the

Bubiarels (inhabitants of Boby) an old woman and two little children who shall have profited by the seed I have sown, and the *patois* I have written, I shall consider myself rewarded for all the sacrifices I have made on behalf of these *universities of goats*, where the little that is taught is perfectly true and good, being founded on repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.”

He then adds the following reflection, which is striking and true, though somewhat paradoxical in form :—

“ If you reflect for an instant on all the heap of follies and absurdities which have perplexed the brains of so many unfortunates, even under the clear sky of Italy, you will, perhaps, think with me that if one had to choose between Padua* and La Ferrière,† there would be much to say in favour of the latter.”

Several years later, on the 28th August 1848, he wrote thus to the Moderator of the Vaudois Church :—

“ Turn your attention more particularly to your *quarter schools*; for on them, in great measure, depends the welfare of your children. Into these nursery-gardens are cast the first seeds of great

* One of the most celebrated universities of Italy.

† One of the most solitary and miserable hamlets in the parish of Boby, where Beckwith had founded a school.

truths, unknown to either Socrates or Plato. It is there that on these tender shoots is grafted the immutable word which declares 'Jesus Christ crucified to be the sole Mediator between God and men'—the word of Him who is 'the way, the truth, and the life'—of Him without whom 'no man cometh to the Father'—'whose blood cleanseth from all sin,' and who has declared that 'he that confesseth with his mouth and believeth in his heart that Jesus is the Son of God, shall be saved'—theology capable of saving a world!"

But, in order to understand more thoroughly what the General thought of those schools, the amelioration of which had become the chief interest of his life, we must read the following letters, in which the wounded veteran of Waterloo, the brilliant officer, of whom it had been said that he might have become generalissimo of the British Army, replied, in a style as simple and as child-like as he could make it, to the humble epistles addressed to him, either by the young girls of the school at Boby, or, on two occasions, by the children of the parish school at Angrogna, in which they strove to express their gratitude to him:—

"My dear children," he wrote to the former from Saint-Jean, on the 7th April 1835, "I thank you

sincerely for all the good feeling you have shown towards me. Gratitude to men is not only praiseworthy but useful, as it naturally leads us to feelings of gratitude and love to the good God who loads us with His benefits. All the good that we receive, and 'every good and perfect gift, cometh from above, from the Father of lights' (James i. 17); and the desire to do good, the means of doing it, and gratitude in those who are the objects of it, all flow equally from the Author of all good. Among the many gifts which our heavenly Father showers unceasingly upon our heads, a good education is one from which we may derive the greatest advantages, when it is properly directed, so as to lead us to love God and our neighbour. You are still too young to know the full value of it, but you may form some idea of this by looking at those who have been, unfortunately, deprived of this blessing. The true value of education does not consist entirely in the things that are learned; for there are persons who, though uneducated, have a true and intelligent religious character, and by fulfilling the humblest duties with diligence and perseverance, are useful to men and accepted by God. We must be on our guard against being puffed up with pride on account of our superior knowledge, for we are all ignorant; 'now we see through a glass darkly.' But the true

use of education consists in the happy effect of wise discipline, habits of order and regularity ; in the exercise of the mind, the judgment, and the memory ; in patience and perseverance ;—all of which are qualities absolutely necessary in the conduct of the affairs of this world as well as of those of religion.

“ The discipline of school trains us to bear the trials and crosses which we shall meet with in life, and which are absolutely necessary to form our characters and to prepare us for a future state. It is in childhood that this restraint is least felt, for at this period impressions are quickly received ; and if we wish to command, we must first learn to obey. It is true that ‘ no chastisement for the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous ; ’ but we cannot deny its salutary effects, since our merciful Father himself says to us,—‘ My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.’ So our parents and teachers are quite right in punishing us when we deserve it.

“ A habit of order in the mind, and in the regulation of all the affairs of life, is of great importance : the constitution of our minds, the wants of our nature, the flight of time, and the succession of the seasons, all impose it as a necessity, and point out

its good effects. Regular attendance at school, and constant attention while there, will be a wonderful means of facilitating all our studies, and will tend greatly to the success of all that we undertake. In submitting patiently to discipline, in following day by day the instructions of those to whom Providence has assigned the difficult task of instructing us, we attain, step by step, the excellent virtue of patience, which religion makes perfect ; and such perseverance assures us of the reward of our efforts. When education has done all that it can do to form the good habits which are so essential to our well-being, we are then called upon to put in practice what we have learned ; and, first of all, to apply to the ordinary affairs of life the qualities which have been developed and exercised in us, and the knowledge which we have acquired. It is by the religion of Jesus Christ alone that we can restrain our passions, and give to our existence its true aim ; but it is by reason—that great gift of Him who has created us, and given us the torch of the gospel to enlighten it—by education and experience, that we succeed in regulating our conduct in temporal affairs. A Christian woman is gentle, humble, patient ; she loves her husband and children, manages the house well, helps her husband to the best of her ability in all that he does for the good of the family ; and,

above all, she uses all her influence to attract those around her to true religion, and takes care to bring up her children in the fear of the Lord. Cleanliness in her person, in her own and her children's clothes, in her house, furniture, linen, kitchen utensils; order and regularity in the household, where everything is in its place—these are the outward signs whereby we recognize the woman of whom the wisest man on earth has said: 'Her price is far above rubies; the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her; she layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates. Strength and honour are her clothing. She eateth not the bread of idleness. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.'" (Prov. xxxi.)

His first letter to the children at the school of Angrogna, written some months before the preceding (8th January 1835), is as follows:—

"MY DEAR CHILDREN,—Your letter of the 6th instant gave me great pleasure, as a mark of your kind feelings towards me, and as proving the regard

you entertain for those whose only desire or purpose regarding you is to make you good children and good Christians. It is true, my children, that we have built you a school where you have every advantage for your education; but the principal thing, as you have the good sense to acknowledge, is that we have taken care to give you a teacher capable of imparting to you all the ordinary elements of instruction, and also of leading you in the paths of both temporal well-being and eternal wisdom. Listen to his voice; be attentive to his admonitions; submit patiently when he is obliged to reprove you, for your own good, with the rod of authority; be diligent and persevering; learn to fix your attention, without distraction, on what is being taught. You know, my children, that the ground is tilled to prepare it for the corn; and then the husbandman waits with patience for the harvest. So it is with youth: you are the ground; the master is the husbandman; but God alone gives the increase. Pray then to God to give you grace to submit to His will in all things; address your prayers to Him through Jesus Christ, (without whom you can do nothing,) that He would deign to bless your feeble efforts to obey your fathers and mothers; to be attentive to your pastor and teacher; to be diligent, honest, humble, and in all respects good children.

Attend carefully to the teaching of your pastor ; for he can impart to you the most solid instruction. When he tells you of the fall of man, read the third chapter of Genesis ; when he speaks of the death of Abel, read the fourth ; when he relates the story of the deluge, read the sixth, seventh, and eighth. Follow with him the history of Abraham in Genesis, and of Joseph and Moses in Genesis and Exodus. You will thus be enabled to comprehend your pastor, and to answer his questions. When you reach that part of the catechism which treats of the truths of the Christian religion, fix your attention on the Apostles' Creed, and you will there find the summary of your faith. If you act thus, you will daily become wiser unto salvation ; your good name will be everywhere well known ; you will become obedient, wise, sober, prudent, discreet, hard-working, and religious. Your fields being well cultivated by intelligence, temperance, and perseverance, will yield abundant fruits : your souls, well imbued with the truths of the gospel, will do the same : and, honoured by men, and blessed by your God and Saviour, you will live contented in this world, and receive the reward of your faith in the world to come. Yet, my children, do not forget, that even after you have learned all that can be taught to you, your knowledge is but very small. Whether rich

or poor, great or small, we are all of us poor, ignorant creatures. Yet God has graciously revealed to us those things which it is good for us to know;—that we are born in sin; children of wrath; dead in trespasses and sins; but redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. For this we offer fervent thanks to our Redeemer, and strive to please Him and keep His commandments. And if our Lord Himself learned obedience, how much more are we called upon to submit to all those who are in authority over us? and if we cannot love God without loving our neighbour, be assured that we cannot obey God without having learned to obey a fellow-creature. Be resolute, but not implacable; firm, but not severe; hospitable, but without excess; just, yet merciful; bear one with another, and do all that is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. The God of peace be with you all.—Your sincere friend,

“CH. BECKWITH.

“TO THE PUPILS OF THE PARISH SCHOOL,
ANGROGNA.”

The second letter, written seven years later, January 10, 1842, from La Tour, is no less interesting than the preceding one; and those who know the particular circumstances of this locality, will admire with us the tact with which Beckwith,

without appearing to touch upon it, endeavoured to forewarn the children against what then was, and still is, one of the most to be regretted caprices of many even among their parents :—

“LA TOUR, *10th January 1842.*

“MY DEAR CHILDREN,—I thank you heartily for the kind letter you addressed to me on New Year’s Day. He who loves his neighbour loves his God ; he who obeys man is capable of obeying God ; he who is thankful to men, is capable of feeling gratitude towards God. In all things, show your faith by your works. What can it profit you, my children, to say ‘Lord, Lord,’ if you do not the will of your heavenly Father ? Do you believe that you can honour God with your lips, if you honour not your fathers and mothers upon earth ? Do you believe that you can be justified and made fit to live with Jesus Christ, if you are unjust to each other ? How can you be forgiven, if you do not forgive those who do you wrong ; if, every time that a difference arises about a foot of ground, a path, or a drop of water, you run to a court of justice to avenge yourselves, and thus strive to ruin your adversaries, your families, and yourselves ? Is this what Jesus Christ has commanded us in his gospel ? Hear what he says to us in the fifth

chapter of Matthew at the thirty-eighth verse : ‘ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth : but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil : whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.’ You are not forbidden to make use of the laws to protect your persons and property from the hands of wicked men, but you are instructed how, and in what spirit, you are to act towards all men;—never to be guided by malice; never to be governed by passion or by vengeance : for if ye do these things, ye are not the children of God, but of the wicked one. I need not, at your age, warn you against avarice ; but if, in course of time, you are led astray by gambling, avarice will soon step in, and make you take the property of others, and dissipate your own fortune. You will then begin to frequent public-houses ; and, in the effort to stifle the voice of religion and conscience, you will soon become drunkards, and thus unfit to enter into the kingdom of God. Having then become quarrelsome, avaricious, drunken, your soul and body ruined, your honour, reputation, money all gone, you will spend the rest of your miserable lives despised and hated by God and men. And as you very well know, that all of us, rich and poor,

great and small, must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the reward of the things done in the body, you may well look forward to being condemned by this terrible Judge to the punishment which you shall have so justly deserved by your wickedness and folly. Yet this good God, though terrible in His judgments, has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, and has sent His own well-beloved Son to save you. He has given you pastors to instruct you in His Word. He has given you the Bible, and teachers to show you how to read and understand it. He has given you friends to build schools for you, and to send you books. He has provided you with every means of knowing His holy will. Do this will; be obedient, good, diligent, attentive, patient, persevering. Pay attention to the instructions of your pastor. Be regular in your attendance at school and at church. Read your Bibles; and do not neglect morning and evening prayer. The house where all this is done is blessed by God, and is sure to prosper. Do not forget that it is not enough to pray, to sing, and to go to religious meetings, if you do not carry religion into the daily business of life. If you are not honest in money matters, and in all your dealings with men, then you are not honest towards God. He is a God of justice; and if you are unjust upon earth, you

will be incapable of living with Him in heaven ; He will banish you from His presence. But if, on the contrary, you are good children here below, if you ask God for Jesus Christ's sake to give you His Holy Spirit, He will come with His Son to dwell with you, and make your bodies temples of the true God ; and you will be filled with good thoughts, good words and works, and you will be loved by God and by His Son. And when you shall have finished your work on earth, He will grant you eternal happiness in heaven, and you will hear the voice which has been already heard on earth, saying to you, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'—Believe me, my dear children, your sincere friend,

“ CHARLES BECKWITH, *Colonel*.

“ TO THE SCHOLARS OF THE SCHOOL OF ST. LAURENT,
ANGROGNA.”

The letter to the children was accompanied by a short note to the master himself, which we here transcribe, chiefly on account of the request with which it terminates, which shows us what importance Beckwith attached to the interchange of sentiments, and what a different thing this was to him from a mere exchange of polite phrases :—

“MY DEAR CHAMBEAUD,—I thank you for your letter, and for those which you enclosed to me from the teacher of the auxiliary school, and from your own scholars of the parish school. All these have given me great pleasure. They have shown me that my labour has not been in vain, and opened up an encouraging prospect for the future. My answer to the letter from your scholars accompanies this missive. I beg you to read it aloud to the school, and to give a copy of it to any who may wish for one.—Yours sincerely,

“J. CHARLES BECKWITH, *Colonel.*”

How precious is the piety which pervades these letters, and how noble was the idea cherished by their author of what the education of the masses ought to be, and the end which it has principally in view!

Such vigorous efforts, made with such elevation of aim, could not pass unfelt by the people on whose behalf they were made. They soon saw the desirability of giving Beckwith some special mark of gratitude; and a list of subscriptions was set on foot by the Table in 1836, with the view of having portrayed on canvas by a distinguished artist the venerated features of their benefactor. A large number of signatures was soon obtained. These

marks of esteem, which could not but be grateful to him who was the object of them, were soon followed by several others from another quarter. One of those which Beckwith felt most deeply, was a joint-letter addressed to him by the Vaudois students at Lausanne and Berlin in the spring of 1837, in which the ingenuous and enthusiastic expression of their admiration and gratitude terminated in a promise which must have been particularly precious to the Colonel's heart: "Let us, above all, assure you," they wrote, "that the seeds which you have placed in the earth, and which are to bear fruit for others besides the inhabitants of the Valleys, shall not perish by our fault; but that, encouraged by your example, we too, when called to it, will carry on with all our might the work which you have so nobly begun." Beckwith's answer is so beautiful, and completes so thoroughly the idea of his views, both on the important subject of the education of the masses and on the whole of his work, that, in spite of the length which this chapter has already reached, we cannot resist the temptation to transcribe it word for word:—

" SAINT-JEAN, *28th June 1837.*

" MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,—The expression of your kindly feelings towards me has given me much

pleasure ; for it is easy to see that, at your age, they come straight from the heart.

“It is true that I have, for some years, been striving to improve public instruction in your country, and that we have succeeded in finding some means which may, in time, be more or less successful. But the work is as yet only begun ; many steps have still to be taken ere we arrive at the moment of victory. The greatest obstacle to the success of our efforts, is the feeble and languishing state of religious and moral feeling. The difficulty consists in this, that we have to struggle against an inert mass of ignorance and indifference.

“Several persons, actuated by the best feelings, instead of frankly joining those who have no other means of showing their good intentions than by their actions, have separated themselves from them, and thrown discredit upon efforts which are manifestly calculated to produce a better state of things. It is to you then, my young friends, students at Lausanne, that I look with hope, and in you that I expect to find able champions. Out of your midst, God willing, we shall receive pious pastors, good teachers, good fathers of families, who will wisely and conscientiously train children in the fear of God ; true citizens and honest men ; and, lastly, Christians well grounded in the faith—sober, liberal,

charitable, peaceable, seeking the salvation of others, and building their Christian life upon the Rock of Ages. Now is the time when your characters must be formed and fitted to engage in the combat that awaits you in life. A good education does not consist in variety of information, but in the development of solid qualities of the heart and mind; in patience, perseverance, in clearness and precision of ideas, and, above all, in sustained attention to the subjects before you. These are the things that make one man different from another; and without these, nothing great has ever been done. An education conducted on these principles is sure to have good results, and to form men fit for everything; but it is to religion alone that we must trust to give the right direction to qualities which, without it, will fall far short of the real object of our present existence.

“To lay hold upon truth as a whole, make it our own in all its details, and in all its forms, and to identify it in our own persons,—this is the great business which demands all our attention. Power of mind, knowledge, art and science, must all be in connection with this great object. A divine philosophy, based on the foundation-stone of Christian principles, and enlightened by sound reason; exact and rational knowledge of the history of man; a just application of all the great known truths,

physical and moral, will serve powerfully to develop in you that character which will make you men indeed, fitted to honour your religion, your families, and your country. Go forward, then, with a firm and sure step. Be patient and persevering. Learn to obey; for, without this, you will never be able to rule. Do not forget that you are called to take the lead in the regeneration of your country; that, for this purpose, it is imperatively requisite that you should have sufficient light, integrity, prudence, good-nature, disinterestedness, and all the qualities for which a good man and a minister of the gospel are distinguished. Be simple and true in your language, in your conversation, and in all your communications with men. Lastly, 'if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.'


“Pardon me, my friends, if I have written to you somewhat in the strain of a Mentor; but you are my Telemachi, and I cannot conceal from you the ardent wish of my heart, that you may rise to the height of your mission, and uphold worthily the name of Vaudois.—Your sincere and affectionate friend,

“CHARLES BECKWITH, *Colonel.*”

CHAPTER V.

BECKWITH AND SECONDARY INSTRUCTION.

THE COLLEGE.

T the beginning of this chapter on secondary instruction, and all that Beckwith did for its advancement in the midst of us, another name naturally rises before us—that of the Rev. Dr. William Stephen Gilly, Prebendary of the Cathedral of Durham in England.

This man, no less remarkable in his own way than Beckwith was in his—endowed with eminent talent as a writer, brilliant imagination, exquisite tact, but, above all, with warm and deep-felt piety—possessed of unbounded benevolence, and of a constancy of affection that nothing could destroy,—is so closely connected with the work of Beckwith, that it may justly be said of these two men, that God made them for each other. To separate them would be a violation of truth, as well as an injury to that friendship and confidence which they mutu-

ally reposed in each other from the first day of their meeting.

Gilly's first visit to the Valleys took place in 1823, and his account of that visit was published, in a thick octavo volume, in 1824-25. This book, in which, thanks to the fine imagination and charitable judgment of the author, the Valleys and the Vaudois Church appear in the most favourable light, was, to many of his fellow-countrymen, nothing less than a revelation. It excited, amid all ranks of society in England, the most lively interest in the little band of Bible Christians, whom the most atrocious persecutions, lasting through centuries, had not availed to annihilate, and who, dwelling on the ground of the Papacy itself, raised the most eloquent protest against its doctrines.

We have already remarked that the reading of this book, humanly speaking, gave to the Vaudois Church, in Beckwith, its most illustrious benefactor. Others, too, were induced by it to show their interest in a practical way. Gilly watched over, and strove to fan and increase, the fire he himself had kindled. Gifts for this sorely tried Church poured in on all sides, and among them was a legacy of £4000 sterling (100,000 francs), which was intrusted to his disposal. Gilly, as he afterwards wrote, had returned from the Valleys more than ever convinced

that one of the principal causes of the decay of religious life in our Church was to be traced to the "system which condemned the students of theology to an expatriation of eight, ten, or even twelve years, to the great peril of their morals and religious principles; a system," he adds, "which at the same time is insufficient for the instruction of the Vaudois youth who are destined for various professions."*

Moved by this twofold idea, he did not long hesitate as to the disposal of the 100,000 francs which had been intrusted to him; but decided that the sum should be devoted to the foundation of a superior educational institution. This institution, while giving wider scope and a more definite object to the Latin school (the only then existing institution for secondary instruction), was to serve at the same time for the training of pastors, professors, schoolmasters, &c.† That is to say, it was to include all that is now understood by the term preparatory college or gymnasium, upper college or lyceum, normal school for teachers, and theological school for ministers of the gospel.

The special advantage which he thus proposed to gain was, that the young men intended for the pastoral office should either not study abroad at all,

* Extract from *Plan for the Foundation of a College*, proposed by Dr. Gilly to the Table and Body of Pastors, August 18th, 1829.

† Extract from the same.

or, if they must do so, only for a very short period; and this not till after they should be so confirmed in the faith as to have nothing to fear from the hurtful influences of Socinianism and Rationalism, or, to speak plainly, from that latitudinarianism with which more than one of the theological faculties of both France and Switzerland were unfortunately tinctured.

The foundation of what was afterwards termed the *College* was of such importance in the eyes of Gilly, and to such an extent his chief interest, that the Vaudois having stated, in the introduction to the regulations for this institution, prepared in 1839, that "the object of the college was to carry on young men up to the point when they should be admitted into the academies, there to continue their studies in philosophy," Gilly exclaimed in the most indignant way against what seemed to him a departure from his original aim.

"I desire," he wrote, "to repeat once more what I have already said several times: the object of the college is not merely to carry young men on to a certain point, and to stop there; but the final and chief end of the institution is to provide such means of instruction in the Valleys, that it may not be absolutely necessary for the young Vaudois to repair to foreign academies for the completion of

their education. It is to prevent this expatriation, so dangerous to the morals and religious principles of the Vaudois, that I have sought to give such an extent and direction to the institution, that it may suffice for the entire education of pastors and teachers of schools. If the Vaudois continue to send their sons to Switzerland.....the college will become comparatively useless, and the hopes of its founders will be frustrated." *

The branches of instruction—besides writing, arithmetic, geography, and sacred music—were to be : history (that of the Vaudois in particular) ; the French, Italian, Latin, and Greek languages ; elementary geometry and algebra, philosophy and theology. Three professors were to suffice for the teaching of all these branches. The first was to preside over the higher section of Latin and Greek, the classics, geometry, algebra, philosophy, and theology. The elements of Greek, continuation of Latin, the French and Italian languages, geography, and history, were to be the province of the second. The third was to teach writing, arithmetic, sacred music, and the elements of Latin.

How such an extensive plan could be carried out by so few people ; how, in particular, a single professor could be competent to teach the literatures of

* Letter to the Table, 23rd December, 1839.

the French, Latin, and Italian languages, besides mathematics, philosophy, and theology in all its branches,—these are not questions to be answered here. Facts can prove much more clearly than words can do, how much self-deception was concealed in those hopes, which the good Doctor considered quite capable of realization.

It seems to us now that all might have been most easily arranged without giving rise to dispute or hesitation of any kind, if, on the one hand, it had been decided to amalgamate the new institution with the already existing Latin school, and, on the other, to fix on La Tour as the place best suited for the new institution. These two things, however, which now seem so natural to us, since the force of circumstances has ended in bringing them about, appeared then in a very different light, though not to all, yet to a large number of the most influential men of the period.

As for the first point—the combination of the old *Latin school* with the new *college*—it was not till 1838, if we remember rightly, that the venerable Walloon Committee, which had the Latin school under its jurisdiction, would consent to hear it mentioned in the remotest way. The honourable members of this committee wrote to Dr. Gilly, who had tried to propitiate them by asking their advice, in the following terms:—

“ We wish our *Latin school* to remain on its present footing, quite independent of your seminary, with which we, on our part, have no intention of intermeddling. As we cannot, therefore, co-operate with you in the execution of your project, it would ill become us to communicate to you our opinion of the scheme itself. We have not, nevertheless, thought it right to withhold this from the officers of the Table, who have done us the honour of asking our advice.”*

And as to the site to be occupied by the future institution, it were hard to believe, if we had no palpable proof of it in the records of the Table, how many rivalries were roused by the discussion of this question, what struggles and contentions arose, first between valley and valley, and then between parish and parish; and what perseverance, long-suffering, and imperturbable good-nature the excellent Doctor was obliged to exercise, lest he should be diverted from his project by the petty antagonism of those who ought to have been the first to facilitate its execution. The opposition of the valley of Saint-Martin yielded, however, to the generous offer of Dr. Gilly to found at Pomaret, at the entrance of this valley, a *Latin school*, which was to be the counter-

* Letter from the Walloon Committee to Dr. Gilly, dated Rotterdam, December 8th, 1829.

part of the one which (after leading a migratory existence between one valley and another) had finally been fixed at La Tour, in the valley of Luzerne.* But the rivalry between Saint-Jean and La Tour, the two parishes which disputed the honour of becoming the seat of the new institution, lasted much longer, and did not entirely cease till May 1834, when, after hesitations and changes of fortune which it would take too long to relate, it was definitely fixed to erect the new college at La Tour.†

The foundation was laid on the 10th August of the following year, in presence of a large assemblage. ‡ The new institution received on this occasion, at the request of Dr. Gilly, the name of *College of the Holy Trinity*. "This title," said the Doctor in a letter to the Table, "will mark the character of the institution, make it more to be respected in the eyes of your neighbours of the Romish Church and of foreign Christians, and, at the same time, it will serve to show the adhesion of the Vaudois of to-day

* This school, opened on the 1st of May 1830, had for its first rector M. Rod. Peyran; who, at his death in 1837, was succeeded by M. Combe of Pramol; and he, in his turn, was succeeded by M. P. Lantaret, who afterwards became pastor of Pomaret and Moderator of the Vaudois Church.

† Resolution of the Table, May 27th, 1834.

‡ A resolution of the Table of this date bears that "This very day—in presence of Messieurs Pierre Monastier, secretary, and Parise, lay officer of the Table, Arnaud, geometer, member of the commission of the Upper School, and a good many notable persons—M. Bonjour, Moderator and President of the Commission, assisted by his son Auguste, laid the foundation-stone at the north-west angle of the building; the plan for which was furnished by the geometer Roland, and the oversight intrusted to M. E. Gastaldi of Biella."

to the faith of their ancestors.”* Up to this time it had hardly been expected that the college would be inaugurated at all. Since the 1st March 1831 nine from among the elder pupils of the Latin school, having at their head Pastor Jean Revel, the first, and for some time the only, professor of the new institution, had been solemnly installed in the house of Brezzi, at La Tour, there to form what, in the meantime, bore the modest title of the *Upper Latin School*.

But the studies had hardly commenced before a double opposition, coming from two opposite directions, from the Walloon Committee in Holland on the one hand, and from the Government on the other, threatened to put a stop to them altogether. The first of these, maintaining either that its rights had been usurped, or itself treated with neglect, by the procedure of the administration, in promoting, without its previous sanction, the more advanced pupils of the old Latin school into the new, had bitterly complained of this to the Table,

* Of the 31,890 francs, 10 centimes, the estimated cost of the projected building, 15,398 francs, 10 centimes were to be furnished by the parishes, in proportion to their population and their greater or less distance from the institution, which, according to a rate of division fixed upon as early as 1832 by the Table, Colonel Beckwith, and Pastor Bonjour of Turin, amounted to a share of 3793 francs for La Tour; 4498 for Saint-Jean; 1826 for Villar; 1762 for Angrogna; 1073 for Prarustin, &c. Five thousand francs had been offered by Dr. Gilly in addition to the £4000, the interest of which additional gift was to serve for the maintenance of the professors. To raise the 11,500 francs still required, collections were to be made.

demanding in the most formal and peremptory manner that everything should be replaced on the old footing. The Government, declaring the opening of the new school (it was not yet called college) to be a manifest infringement of the existing laws, and an act of rebellion against the political authorities, ordered it to be closed immediately.* This twofold opposition fortunately did not last long. That of the Walloon Committee fell before explanations freely asked and as freely given. That of the Government, owing principally to the mediation of Count Waldburg-Truchsess, plenipotentiary of His Majesty the King of Prussia at Turin, was not long in disappearing; and by the 1st of May of the same year the Moderator of the Vaudois Church was informed by Government that the prohibition of little more than two months before had been withdrawn. The general satisfaction resulting from this measure was, however, modified by certain restrictions. The studies were to be confined to classical subjects, and the number of the students was not to exceed twelve, or fifteen at the most; no book was to be placed in the hands of the students without having first been submitted for revision to the intendant of the province, who was also to be appealed

* The letter from the Table announcing to Dr. Gilly what had taken place, bears the date of 16th March 1831. The new school had thus not been open for even a fortnight.

to for his final approval of the professor chosen by the Table. This magistrate was also entitled to visit the college as often as he thought fit, to make sure that the conditions imposed on it at its foundation were strictly observed.*

However plainly these restrictions may show the meanness of the Government which was not ashamed to impose them, they could not prevent an institution which was to have such great influence over the future of the Vaudois Church, from being definitively and legally founded. The seed had been placed in the earth; the greater or smaller sphere to be occupied by the tree that should grow from it, was a thing to be left to the future, to circumstances, and to Him who rules over all things.

In the events just related, what part are we to assign to the subject of this biography? Seemingly a very small one; but, in reality, and when we go a little below the surface of things, a very great one, —so great that it is very doubtful whether, without the presence of Beckwith in the Valleys during this long phase of infancy which we have recorded, the plan of the good and pious Doctor would ever have reached its full and complete realization. And how, indeed, can we doubt that a man of a character like Beckwith's, placing his chief interest in all that

* Letter from the Intendant Novellis to the Moderator Rostaing, 31st May 1551.

could contribute to the progress of education in the Valleys, and spending the greater part of the year under the same roof as the Moderator, could have listened every day to debates of such grave interest as those which were going on around him, without taking the most active part in them, and bringing to the solution of these questions, not only the aid of his purse, but also of his high intelligence, his quick, sure glance, and his indomitable energy? Even although the official documents of the period showed no trace whatever of his co-operation in this important work, we might take such a thing for granted. Yet the means of transforming this supposition into certainty are by no means wanting. As early as the year 1832, Beckwith, writing to the Table, says among other things:—

“ I am already in correspondence with Dr. Gilly with regard to the college ; and as soon as I have anything new to communicate on this subject, I will not fail to inform you of it.”*

In the month of March of the same year we find him a member of the commission charged with the regulation of the taxes to be imposed on the different communes for the building of the college. The same year, or the following, he caused to be constructed, at his own expense, at the western extre-

* Letter of 27th January 1832.

mity of La Tour, a hall destined to serve as a fixed abode for the Latin school, which had hitherto met here and there, according to circumstances.* From a deliberation of the Table, dated March 15, 1835, it appears that the plan of the new building had been made by the geometer Roland, *according to the instructions of Colonel Beckwith*; and that the same Colonel Beckwith, to prevent further delays occurring in the beginning of the work, had offered to advance from his own purse the sum of 10,000 francs, while the dues imposed on the communes were as yet unpaid: a double circumstance, which caused Dr. Gilly to write thus to the Moderator:—

“We cannot value too highly the wise counsels and indefatigable zeal of Colonel Beckwith. How, indeed, can we sufficiently thank him for this last proof of his generosity and devotion to the good cause?” †

Some weeks later, in the course of July, Beckwith being in England, the good Doctor wrote again:—

“I have seen Colonel Beckwith, and we have had a very interesting conversation. I recognize

* The Table, in informing the Walloon Committee of this, in a letter of May 23, 1833, fearing, perhaps, lest the news should not be agreeable, take care to say that they “have learned indirectly that the English Colonel Beckwith has had built, at his own expense, a hall for their *Latin school*.”

† Letter from Dr. Gilly of 20th April 1835.

the hand of God working for His Church, by disposing in its favour such upright and generous hearts as that of the worthy benefactor of the Vaudois.”*

In the early autumn of this year, when the new edifice had already begun to rise from the ground, Beckwith returned to the Valleys, and from this moment till the time when the whole building was completed, he never quitted his post for an instant, inspecting and controlling everything, correcting and altering what required it, and in spite of the extreme summer heat, which he felt so trying, traversing daily the distance of nearly three miles between Saint-Jean and La Tour, to see with his own eyes that all was being done at the right time and in the best manner. And when the edifice was quite completed, and the pupils for whose good it had been erected were installed there with their professors,† he still continued to watch with the most touching solicitude over its welfare. It was he who, from the beginning, provided it with a library, and all the necessary furnishings; he it was who, foreseeing what importance the teaching of Italian would shortly acquire, caused, at his own expense, one of the professors to be sent to Florence to qualify him-

* Letter of 27th July 1835.

† M. B. Malan had, by deliberation of the Table of 10th September, been associated with M. J. Revel.

self for the teaching of that language ;* and he too it was who was frequently seen passing through the different halls in the college, encouraging by his very presence as much as by his words both professors and pupils, and attending at the examinations with a perseverance and interest hardly to be met with in an official inspector. And when, the examinations over, the happy pupils, with the professors at their head, repaired, before dispersing for the holidays, to the flowery summit of La Vachère, there to spend one of those days which can never be forgotten, the good Colonel did not disdain to join the party himself, enhancing by his presence the pleasure of the holiday.

All that Beckwith did for the college at La Tour did not prevent his watching, at the same time, over another educational establishment, the Latin school in the valley of Saint-Martin. The foundation of this school has been mentioned above, as a means devised by Dr. Gilly to overcome the opposition of this valley to the establishment of the college at La Tour. But the salary of its only professor was small and uncertain ; and, like its elder sister in the Luzerne valley in former times, it had no shelter under which to abide permanently, thus forming a double subject of anxiety to him who seemed

* Professor Malan, in the course of 1836.

to have set himself the task of supplying all wants.

“We are also occupied,” he writes from London, August 21, 1839, speaking of Dr. Gilly and himself, “in trying to induce the Propaganda* to increase the salary of the rector of Pomaret to £60 sterling; but with the view of placing an ecclesiastic there. If we succeed in obtaining a building also, we shall have laid the foundation-stone of education in the valley of Saint-Martin.” The efforts here alluded to were crowned with complete success: the salary of the professor was augmented to the sum required: as for the building, he had hardly returned to the Valleys when it was begun under his own superintendence; and before the year 1842 was over,† a most suitable building, reproducing on a small scale what the college at La Tour exhibited on a much larger one, was placed at the disposal of the Table, to serve as an abode for the school.‡ The “foundation-stone of the education of the valley of St. Martin,” to quote the words written by Beckwith three years before, was thus duly laid; and

* An English society for the propagation of the evangelical faith.

† September 1, 1842.

‡ The building raised by Beckwith having become insufficient, Dr. Stewart, minister of the Free Church of Scotland at Leghorn—another indefatigable benefactor of the Vaudois Church, and its principal supporter in the work of evangelization—caused another to be built, much more elegant than the first, about a stone-cast distant from it, leaving the former building to be appropriated to classes and to the library.

the number of young people in this valley who, by means of this school, have been gained over to a studious career, and to the Christian ministry in particular, is the most striking proof of the prophetic truth of these words.

But the college at La Tour had begun, by the force of circumstances, to be in want of additional help, and Beckwith's other interests did not render him insensible to this. During the first years of its existence, this college, it may be remembered, had possessed only two professors, one of whom was also the rector of the Latin school. Afterwards there had been three; but even this number had not pushed the studies beyond the *belles lettres*. In 1849 a generous individual, a Vaudois, offered anonymously to the Table to charge himself for three years, by way of experiment, with the payment of the salaries of two professors of Philosophy, if it were thought desirable to extend the range of the studies so far. The Table, after obtaining the royal* sanction, eagerly accepted the offer; and on the expiry of the three years, suggested a means of rendering permanent what had at first been merely temporary.

The consolidation of the new institution had thus

* The letter containing the offer bears the date of 25th November 1849, and the resolution of the Table, declaring the two chairs open to competition, is dated the 4th February 1850. See Records of the Table.

exceeded the fairest hopes. One thing, however, was yet wanting to it—and this, in the eyes of Beckwith, who in all his plans laid great stress on the material and tangible, was most important—namely, a suitable dwelling for each of the professors. It was a difficult matter to obtain this, for the expense could not possibly be under 100,000 francs. Beckwith made it a subject of reflection and consultation. More and more convinced that of all the means for giving solid durability to the college this was one of the most efficacious, he set to work, and in the spring of 1847, on a piece of ground nearly opposite the college, laid the foundations of those six delightful dwellings which have become one of the ornaments of La Tour, and, as it were, the beginning of a new and more picturesque town on the mountain-side.

As for the school of theology, which the Synod of 1854 declared to be a necessity imposed on our Church by its work of evangelization, and which was opened provisionally in 1855, and permanently in 1856, if it was not, like the college and the Latin schools, the object of the direct pecuniary co-operation of the General, it was not because he did not take a lively interest in this crowning part of the building. The way in which he expresses himself, in two letters, written at an in-

terval of some years, may be taken as a proof of this.

“I propose,” we read in one of the letters addressed in 1855 from Turin to the then Moderator, Professor J. P. Revel, “to discuss with you the subject of the theological school lately established at La Tour, in order to be enlightened on a subject the very elements of which are unknown to me..... An inconvenience which, I should suppose, will be difficult to remedy.....is the absence of books written in Italian ; for I suppose that books treating of theology in the Protestant sense are for the most part written either in French, German, or English. The library of La Tour contains a good many such.I believe there are a good many works on ecclesiastical history. The Fathers also are there represented, though I do not think the collection of them is complete. There are also some dogmatical and polemical writings, and exegesis is not quite wanting.”

After this exordium, which reveals much less ignorance of the matter than he chooses to profess, Beckwith adds, entering into the spirit of the question :—

“It is evident, Moderator, that if our only concern were to form a ministry for a French Church, the best course would be to leave things as they are ;

and nothing but the present position of your Church can justify the creation of a theological faculty on this side of the Alps. The weak side of your clergy at present is their exclusively French culture, which fails to fit them for the task which the events of late years have devolved upon them. Their education, their views, habits, ideas, language, nay, their very prejudices, are all suited to a Church formed upon models which are not adapted to the work to be done. Their total separation from Piedmontese* society can ill prepare them to act their part in Piedmont; and every effort which does not aim at re-establishing the natural relations between your people and their fellow-countrymen is sure to fail. The first necessary condition for realizing the object you have in view is to form men who can be presented to the different classes of Piedmontese society, and who will feel at home in the towns of their native country. To men thus formed, it will be easy to impart the knowledge necessary to a theologian; but with men placed under the existing influences, you will never have anything but workmen who will reap little advantage from their knowledge, who will think of nothing but how they are to settle

* Beckwith used the word "Piedmontese," because ancient Piedmont was the only part of Italy then accessible to the preaching of the gospel. Later, in 1860, but still more surely in 1866, he would have said, instead of "Piedmontese," *Italian*.

in the Valleys, and only do their work by halves.”*

Later still (14th July 1857), he writes from Paris to the Moderator of the day, Pastor Malan of La Tour :—

“ I had already perused the article in the *Buona Novella* on theological studies, and I certainly think that if these courses of lectures are assisted by serious and connected reading, they cannot fail to form men fitted for the ministry ; and, surely, men who have undergone such intellectual discipline can never be found unequal to the task to which they are called.....I hope that in giving them facilities for embracing the whole history of the Church and of ecclesiastical life properly so called—which is so necessary to enable them to form sound judgments on the systems of all kinds which have been at work during the past and present centuries, and thus to preserve them from those extreme views which have troubled the best understandings and the most sincere piety—you will not cease to remind them constantly of the extreme simplicity of the principle laid down, and the true way of applying it; and to tell them that these studies are rather a necessity imposed by the perversity of men, and would have worn an entirely

* Letter to the Moderator, J. P. Revel, Turin, 11th October 1855.

different aspect, had the majority of those who have furnished the elements of them, animated by a spirit of wisdom and obedience, been able to render their words and actions instructive and edifying, rather than to make us waste our precious time in unraveling their errors, their folly, and obstinacy."

The style apart (of which we must not take account with regard to one who wrote in a foreign language), what clear-sightedness and justness of appreciation are shown in the words which we have just transcribed! And how happy for the Vaudois Church that an influence which, with regard to the number and importance of the services rendered by Beckwith, was to be very great, was also most beneficial, and marked, even to the smallest details, with the seal of perfect conformity to the Word of God!

To return to the college properly so called, and to terminate what we have to say of this establishment, in the erection of which Beckwith took such an active part. It was in the following affectionate and touching words that, only a few months before his death (on the 18th February 1862), he addressed the students, who on the preceding evening, on the occasion of the anniversary of the emancipation of the Vaudois, had come as a deputation to express to him their respect and gratitude. These words were written after having been present,

sword in hand, at the procession of hundreds of children who were that day assembled in the new church at La Tour.

“Thirty years ago,” he said, “several friends of the Vaudois busied themselves in founding the College of the Holy Trinity. You were not born then. Most of the founders have passed away. Yesterday, however, I received, in the testimony which you were pleased to offer me, a proof of the respect and gratitude in which you hold the memory of those good and benevolent men, who planted in your country a vine bearing good fruit, and destined, I am sure, to yield more and more goodly branches. I was yesterday present at a sight which might well have raised from their peaceful tombs the heads of those excellent men who planted this vine at the foot of the Alps, those mountains which have served as a bulwark to the always militant faith of your forefathers. You have taken up arms for the defence of your country, and yesterday you made use of them to honour the little children. The fatherland, with its women and children, is the true war-cry of every good soldier. Strength is sanctified when it protects weakness. Persevere in the honourable career of knowledge and of duty which is marked out for you by the institution of which you are the soul and the stay. Be assured of an honourable life on

earth, and a most blessed eternity, beyond the trials and sufferings of our condition here below. Your fate is in your own hands. Put your hands boldly to the plough, without looking back.—Your sincere friend,

“CH. BECKWITH.”

CHAPTER VI.

BECKWITH AND SECONDARY INSTRUCTION.

THE BOARDING-SCHOOL.

BECKWITH had now amply provided for the education of the masses in elementary schools, whether parochial or belonging to a district. The college and the Latin school at Pomaret were sufficient for the wants of young men destined for commerce or for study at the universities. But, up to the year 1837, no means had been provided for giving anything more than a merely elementary education to young girls who might be desirous of something more. This was certainly a great blank, and could not escape the sagacity of such a man as Beckwith ; who, as soon as the want was perceived, would not fail to make the strongest efforts, even at the expense of great sacrifices, to supply it. The most suitable means of doing this seemed to him to be the establishment of a girls' school at La Tour. This school was to be under the

charge of a capable person from Switzerland, and young girls of the middle class were to receive in it, for as moderate a price as possible, along with the instruction suited to their future position, a careful and strictly Christian education. The first step was to secure the approval of the Government, which, though uncertain, was a necessary condition to the taking of any other step whatever. With the assistance of Count Waldburg-Truchsess the Table made the attempt to obtain this, and with much greater success than could have been expected. The petition containing this request bore the date of 19th August 1837, and so early as the 2nd September of the same year the Moderator received an answer entirely favourable. The next task to be achieved was equally difficult—namely, the choice of a teacher, in all respects such as the nature and end of the institution imperatively demanded. To whom should this duty be intrusted? Beckwith, remembering that “to go is better than to send,” and that “two eyes are better than one,” decided to go himself to Switzerland, accompanied by his faithful and intelligent fellow-labourer in this as in other works, the Moderator, J. P. Bonjour. They resolved not to return until they had found the right person.

This errand accomplished, they had still to choose a suitable building, and to buy the necessary furni-

ture. But these preparations did not occupy much time. A perfectly suitable place was found by Beckwith in the ancient palace of the Counts of La Tour, now the property of a widow named Vertu. Before the furniture and other requisites for the wants of twenty young girls, not to mention the superintendent and the servants, could be procured and arranged, a few weeks only had elapsed. Not later than the beginning of November 1837, the governess and pupils were in their places, and the school was solemnly inaugurated by the Moderator, in presence of Beckwith and the parents of the pupils.

The institution, in its early stages, was by no means exempt from trials. The superintendent, particularly in the department of teaching, soon gave signs that she was incompetent for the task confided to her. A change was therefore necessary after a very short time. But as a change of persons is often only a change of faults, so it was in this instance. The second superintendent was no better than the first, and, for want of a third, the first was tried again. But this was not for long; the old faults seem to have increased rather than diminished during the interval, and a second separation was necessary. The annoyance and vexation which all this caused to the old officer, who had turned philan-

thropist, may easily be imagined. Yet he does not give it up, and it is he who, far from being down-cast, encourages those who are beginning to despond. Writing from London in August 1838 to the *Moderator*, he says, with regard to the boarding-school,—"We must try to carry it on, at least until the expiry of our lease. By what has been done, our end has evidently been attained; for most of these young girls would have been without religion had they not been at this school, where the good seed has been sown in their hearts. Even though we should be obliged to give it up at the end of three years, rest assured that the money which I have dedicated to this object has been well spent..... and that I shall in this way have done much to spread abroad the religion of Jesus Christ."*

A year later, in 1839, he was still so entirely of the same opinion, that he insisted that the college should be placed on the same footing as the boarding-school.† Later still, he announces to the *Moderator* that, in case he should fail, he had left in the hands of Dr. Gilly £200 sterling for the purpose of carrying on this work for at least three years longer, and adds:—

“Continue the same course of action with regard

* Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour, 1st August 1838.

† Letter to the same, dated 1st October 1839.

to the girls' school ; it is the only firm ground we possess ; all the rest is uncertain."

Not content with corresponding on this subject with the ecclesiastical authorities, he does so with the superintendent herself, sparing neither advice nor directions.

" Mlle. V—— will have explained to you in detail," he says, " my intentions with regard to the boarding-school. My object is not so much to have the young girls taught what is customary, as to subject them to discipline, and teach them habits in which they are deficient. Order and cleanliness in the house and in their persons will do much to give them the qualities they want. You have no doubt acquainted yourself with the rules of the institution. I am most desirous that they should all be minutely observed, and that the young girls should understand perfectly the management of the house in all its details, even with regard to expenses. The great difficulty with the Vaudois is to fix their attention, and to teach them to follow anything that is connected and well arranged. Great regularity in the ways of the household and in their studies will have this effect. I need not direct your attention to religion as the foundation-stone of the establishment. For inculcating the truths of the Bible, you should use the liturgy and books of devotion. I cannot

abide dissent, and I beg you not to form any meetings, or do anything beyond the regular order of the National Church. It is not the post of teacher which you are principally called to fill; your chief task is to prepare the foundation-stones of a religious nation, to spread abroad religion, good manners, the gospel, and eternal life.”*

When, in the autumn of 1841, after two years' absence, Beckwith again took up his abode in the Valleys, he fixed his dwelling in the same palace of the Counts of La Tour in which, three years before, he had established the boarding-school. During four years of close neighbourhood, his kindness, solicitude, and paternal interest in all the young girls, can only be imagined by those who witnessed or were the objects of these cares. Every day, without fail, he went the round of the classes, where his presence alone was almost as great an encouragement as the words, seldom severe, and almost always lively and playful, which he addressed to the pupils. Once or twice a week, a certain number of them were invited by turns to his table; which he did chiefly with the object of curing them of the awkwardness which was natural to most of them, and accustoming them to the ways of the world in all that is good and praiseworthy. On Sunday even-

* Letter to Mlle. D——, London, 4th October 1838.

ing, they were invariably invited into his sitting-room, with the superintendent, and the ladies and gentlemen who chose to visit him on such occasions ; and he never dismissed them until worship had been held, either preceded or followed by the singing of some beautiful hymns. He thus became thoroughly acquainted with each one of these young girls. He soon read their nature to its depths ; and, in the conversations he often had with them, he was able to direct their attention to the weak or defective points in the character of each.

What he did by his conversation with these young girls while at school, he continued by means of correspondence after they had left it. What a touching spectacle it was to see this former aide-de-camp of the Duke of Wellington, this man of vast and profound conceptions, long accustomed only to correspond with his equals, all at once making himself not only a child, but almost a young girl, in order to address to such the language which they could best understand, and to say to each what was best adapted to her circumstances !

“ Every period of our career,” he wrote to all the pupils so early as 1839, “ has its special duties ; and yours are obedience, diligence, and respect towards those to whom Providence has intrusted the task of guiding you in the path of religion and virtue. We

may thank God, who, since the commencement of our institution, has inclined your hearts to work with us towards the attainment of our object and the advancement of His kingdom. And I have full confidence that we shall always have reason to express our thankfulness to our kind Heavenly Father, for the help which He will not fail to grant us, if we use our feeble efforts to do His will, and conform ourselves to His easy and just commandments, submitting ourselves, at the same time, to the easy yoke He has imposed on us for our good alone. But remember, my dear children, that we can do nothing of ourselves. It is through Jesus Christ alone that we can approach the throne of grace. Through Him alone we are pardoned; by Him we can understand the will of God, and find the needed strength to do the things which are required of us. By faith you can do all things. Work, persevere; love your parents, your brothers, your sisters; love your teacher; love each other; and some years hence, when I hear of a young Vaudois maiden who is good, amiable, prudent, discreet, and religious, I shall have for reward the inexpressible pleasure of saying to myself that it is a young girl brought up at the boarding-school of La Tour.”*

Three years later, he wrote to a young girl placed

* Letter to the pupils of the establishment, dated Saint-Jean, 3rd January 1839.

amid surroundings peculiarly unfavourable to religion :—

“Go on in the same way, my dear E——. Occupy yourself usefully. Repress by religion all the movements of your heart and mind which are contrary to it. Be moderate in your pleasures. Be true and simple, frank and loving. You have nothing to conceal. Seek the society of the good ; avoid the ungodly, but be kind to them, and try to make them better when you are placed in contact with them. When you have once bestowed your confidence and friendship, continue to do so ; be slow to give them, and slow to withdraw them again. Unfortunately many circumstances in your native land tend at present to make society what it ought not to be ; but women have nothing to do with this. The Englishwomen who are now prisoners in Afghanistan have been able to conciliate, by their dignified conduct, the esteem and consideration of the savages around them. It is equally in your power to make the men of this country feel the superiority of your character, of your ideas, your religion, your education, and of all that tends to ennoble and elevate the human character.”

“Let us live in honesty and liberality of heart, my dear E——,” he wrote again to the same young person ; “and let us direct our attention constantly

towards all that is noble and generous. Let us be nobly religious, without pride; let us think nobly and act nobly towards every one, in all humility. Let us nobly sacrifice our interests, our inclinations, and, above all, our caprices, to the good of others; let us forget ourselves, and nobly direct our efforts towards the good of all with whom Providence has placed us in contact. There is no need to mount on horseback to do all this; common life will offer us a field wide enough for the exercise of all the virtues. The career of a man demands more energy and activity than that of a woman; but that of the latter is wide enough to enable her to enter upon the finest and most useful enterprises. A well-ordered household is a centre of religion, civilization, and good manners. All this depends on the character of the woman. If she be sensible, gentle, loving, active, the house will soon become a paradise, and all sorts of good will issue from it, as from a fountain of living waters spreading fertility over the most arid plains. The means toward this end are very simple. On rising in the morning, we should, first of all, pray to Him who is the Author of all that is good, noble, and useful; and then accept each occupation, as it offers itself to us, in its turn—doing all with attention, precision, and order. Men differ from each other chiefly in this, that some fix their atten-

tion on what occupies them at the time, and others do not. To learn obedience is the great end of existence. Will you disobey God? it is madness; your parents? it is ingratitude; your superiors and teachers? it is folly. Guard against much speaking, for in the multitude of words there is sin. Preserve always that quiet and sedate manner which so well befits a young lady, and which is the outward sign of that firmness and sobriety of mind which is the best preservative of all virtue. I do not wish to weary you; but the confidence that I have in your docility induces me to present to you these subjects of reflection, which you may make use of when you feel inclined. There is a time for all things, even for pleasures, particularly that of friendly intercourse with society. The work of every day, domestic details religiously treated, constitute a part of our religion, and have each their relative importance. Uprightness, meekness, affection, are three cardinal virtues for women. Charity sets a seal on all the others, and diffuses that inexplicable charm which shows you to be angels of peace, and true blessings. The great Friend of women upon earth was One who was born of a woman. Repair to Him in all your trials. Do all with the aim and firm intention of submitting to Him in all things; and be persuaded that He will love you always, and cause you to be

loved by all those who shall have the good fortune to be placed under your happy influence."

But to return to the boarding-school. Two circumstances regarding it deserve particular mention. The first was the construction of a building exclusively appropriated to this institution. This Beckwith undertook in 1844, at the western extremity of the town of La Tour, and incorporated with it the hall previously built for the Latin school, and become useless since the amalgamation of that school with the college. The second was the daily increasing predominance of day-scholars over boarders, until, at last, the *boarding-school* disappeared altogether, to make way for an *upper girls' school*. This transformation, far from injuring the prosperity of the establishment, only increased it. Many young girls to whom a boarding-school had been a thing unattainable, and who, notwithstanding, whether from a desire to learn, or from the prospect of a career they wished to enter upon, felt the want of more advanced studies than those of a mere elementary school, were able to profit by the institution in its altered form. The number of the pupils, from fifteen or sixteen, as it was at first, went on daily increasing, until it now exceeds that of the pupils in the college, in spite of the absence of the numerous and important bursaries which the latter enjoy.


The former, on the contrary, are, by a wise arrangement of the directors, obliged to pay a yearly sum of sixty francs.* A considerable number of young girls, whether from the Valleys, the Plain of Piedmont, or elsewhere, have, after enjoying the advantages of this institution, left it to become schoolmistresses in the country itself, or governesses abroad. And if the generous founder of this institution showed himself to be something of a pessimist when he called it "the only sure footing on which he could stand in the Valleys," it was, on the other hand, with much greater truth than he himself believed, that he declared the sums dedicated to this work to be most usefully spent, and that it would one day be found that he had by this means, much more efficaciously than by many others advanced the interests of the gospel and the cause of Christ in our beautiful native land.†

* Another regulation, equally just, exempts from this tax the daughters of poor parents, who, from the distance of their homes from La Tour, are obliged to board them from home.

† The following is a list of the superintendents, nearly all natives of the Canton of Vaud, who have successively been at the head of this institution:—Miles. Vuilliamoz, Dégallier, Vuilliamoz (recalled), Genand, Bornand (died in the work), Bégré, Appia, Ducloux, Herminjard, Dalgas.

CHAPTER VII.

BECKWITH AND ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS : CHURCHES AND PARSONAGES.

 F, before the arrival of Beckwith in the Valleys, scholastic buildings had either been wanting or had only existed in the most miserable state, almost as much may be said of ecclesiastical buildings in general, and more particularly of the churches. Not that they did not exist, for there was one at least in each parish ; but what churches ! With one or two exceptions, they were more like sheds or barns than churches ; if by this word we are to understand a building combining with order and decency (which are nowhere so completely in their place as in the house of God), a style of architecture indicative of its purpose. The principal causes of such a state of things are to be found partly in the total absence of security, which has for centuries been, as it were, the normal condition of the Vaudois Church, and partly in the

misery and poverty which inevitably resulted from this state. When an entire population is hourly liable to see its villages steeped in blood, its fields devastated, and its houses reduced to ashes; and when, under the weight of these calamities, which might be called periodical, misery, excessive misery, has become the condition of all, we are not to expect that they will be tempted to erect at great cost, and at the price of sacrifices beyond their strength, buildings which to-morrow may be only a mass of ruins.

Such are the principal causes, but they are not the only ones. In strict adherence to truth, we must mention two others, which, equally with, and perhaps more than the first, have contributed, and still contribute, to the result which we deplore. These are, on the one hand, the habits of carelessness and disorder which have set their stamp on most of the dwelling-houses in the Vaudois Valleys, and which we are therefore not surprised to see reflected even in the places of worship; and, on the other hand, that lamentable disregard of form which is one of the peculiarities of much of our Continental Protestantism, and which, when found in public worship, cannot fail to impress painfully those who have not been accustomed to it from childhood. The churches have a gloomy and dilapidated air;

the approaches to them are overgrown with weeds ; the interior is scarcely more decent than the exterior ; the singing is discordant ; the Word of God is read in such a way as to cause weariness and impatience, instead of edification : and all this produces in our places of worship such an oppressive atmosphere, that even the most animated preaching cannot always counterbalance its somnolent effects. We do not mean to affirm that elegant buildings, constructed according to the best principles of art, are absolutely indispensable to that adoration in spirit and in truth which is the only real worship. Far from it. We, too, are aware that in one sense the place of worship is nothing ; and that, when circumstances demand it, God may be as well and better served in the meanest temple, nay, even in an upper room or in a barn, than in the most splendid cathedral. We agree equally that art, when not joined with the utmost simplicity, instead of being an aid to devotion and spirituality, runs a great risk of leading to something entirely opposite. But is this to say that spirituality should be estimated in the inverse ratio of order and decency, and that the state of affairs with regard to these, in many evangelical churches, is not extremely deplorable ?

At the time when the Colonel arrived in the Valleys, the greater part of our churches, but more

especially those of Rodoret, at the extremity of the Valley of Saint-Martin, and of Rora, in the Valley of Luzerne, were in the most miserable state that could be imagined. Such being the case, how could such a sight fail to impress painfully a man like Beckwith, accustomed to a very different state of things in his own country ; where, if there be anything to blame in this respect, it is perhaps a tendency to the opposite extreme. It was therefore almost before his principal work, the furthering of public education, appeared to him so far advanced as no longer to claim all his efforts, that he began to fix his attention on the churches, and, first of all, on that of Rodoret. In a letter, dated March 8th, 1843, Beckwith offers to charge himself with the entire construction of this building—on condition, however, that the plan being once fixed upon in concert with the Table, he shall have nothing more to do with any one, whether engineer or inspector, but solely with the pastor of the locality and his colleague of the neighbouring parish of Massel. This condition having been accepted,* Beckwith immediately began the work ; and although, in these high regions, the season suited to the work of building is very short, it was only two years after he had communicated his resolution to the Table (9th March

* See the deliberation of the Table on this subject, 28th March 1843.

1845) that a most gracefully constructed church was solemnly inaugurated by all the pastors of the Valley of Saint-Martin, part of those of the Valley of Luzerne, and a numerous assemblage of their flocks.

But the poor parish of Rodoret had no parsonage. The one which it formerly possessed had, about seven weeks before, become a heap of ruins. On the night of the 15th January 1845, towards morning, while the snow had been falling much more heavily than usual, a horrible crash had suddenly been heard. It was the poor little parsonage, which, shaken by the breath of an avalanche, had sunk under the weight of the snow which covered its roof, burying amidst its *debris* the young pastor, his wife and child, and their servant.* Now, if a healthy and commodious dwelling is one of the first necessities of existence, how much more so is it in these rocky Valleys, with their winter of six months and their immense heaps of snow, compelling you to remain almost all the time captive in your dwelling, and allowing an exit only when absolutely necessary? Beckwith did not fail to meet this new want, and in less than two years a charming little parsonage, which he strove

* The names of the victims of this calamity are as follows:—*M. Daniel Buffa*, of Angrogna, aged twenty-nine years; his wife, *Mlle. Nancy Caffarel*, of Turin, aged twenty-three years; their son, *Auguste*, aged five months; and their servant, *Jeanne Benech*, of Angrogna, aged thirty years. The only living creature that escaped was the pastor's dog.

to make as comfortable as possible, was erected close to the church.*

The second church which the General set his hand to was that of Rora. The building of it was already occupying his attention during a stay in England in 1843. Being one day on a visit to some friends, he led the conversation to this subject. One of the children of the house, a little boy of six or seven years of age, had paid more attention to the conversation than would have been expected of one so young. Suddenly he disappeared, but returned immediately, and timidly approaching the General,—

“Sir,” he said to him, “do you think this could help you to build your church?”

And so saying, he held out to him a penny, which was all his little fortune. Beckwith received it with delight, and taking on his knee the child who had made him this offering, said to him,—

“Yes, my little friend, I will build my church with what you have given me; and your penny, en-

* Although the initiative was here taken by Beckwith himself (as is shown by his letter to the Table, of the 14th May 1845), yet it was not only, nor even principally, at his cost that the building was erected. Rodoret contributed as a *parish*, 1568 francs, and as a *consistory*—devoting to it a trust of its property, and the products of gifts formerly received—5805 francs, 24 centimes. Dr. Stewart of Leghorn contributed 1149 francs, 90 centimes; the Rev. Mr. Sillery of Dublin, 1904 francs, 50 centimes; and some American friends, 1000 francs. The total cost seems to have amounted to about 13,000 francs. (See in the *Archives of the Table the account of expenditure regarding this building, May 19th, 1868.*)

chased with your name, set in the corner-stone, shall tell every one that you were the founder of it.”

Scarcely returned to the Valleys, and before the church at Rodoret was finished, Beckwith hastened to lay the foundation of a church similar to it in architecture, but of larger proportions, and the building of which, thanks to the intelligent inspection of the pastor, M. H. Rollier, made such rapid progress, that so early as the 6th January 1846, the new edifice was solemnly dedicated to public worship.

Beckwith had thus accomplished, within three or four years, the construction of two churches and a parsonage, without counting, during the same period, the building of four parish schools and the boarding-school. And this is not all: even before the buildings just mentioned were finished, we find him already preparing the plans for three others; namely, that for the houses of the professors, of which we have spoken above; that of the parsonage of Praly; and lastly, that of a parish church for La Tour, to be placed at the western extremity of this important borough. The parish of Praly, which much resembles in climate that of Rodoret, was, like the latter, in urgent need of a parsonage. The avalanche had not, indeed, destroyed the present one; it was still standing; but how poor and miserable it looked! Beckwith, who invariably felt the suf-

ferings of others more than his own, could not bear the idea of this privation being added to all the others which are inseparable from the work of the ministry in this mountainous country. He began, therefore, to rebuild the old parsonage from its very foundations, and succeeded in less than two summers (1849 and 1850) in transforming a cold, unhealthy, and dark dwelling into one which, if not elegant and comfortable, was at least sufficient for the necessities of life in this rude climate.

The borough of La Tour, which, by its college, normal and boarding schools, its important industrial establishments, its easy access, charming environs, and situation in the centre of the principal Valley, is naturally considered as the capital, presented, until the year 1852, the singular anomaly of being almost entirely inhabited by Vaudois, and yet possessing no church for their worship. A small church of still very modest appearance—even after, thanks to the generosity of a compatriot of Beckwith, the wife of General Molyneux-Williams, it had been restored—was all the town as well as the neighbouring country could boast.* It was situated at about a mile from La Tour, at a place called Les Coppiers, at the foot of

* This worthy and generous friend of the Vaudois, who took a special interest in the institution at Les Coppiers, then conducted by Mad. D'Espines, and to which the *Artigianelli Valdesi* owe their foundation, restored not only the church at Les Coppiers, but also that at Angrogna, and devoted to these repairs the sum of more than £240.

the hill. Every attempt to hold regular evangelical worship, even in the least obtrusive way, within the limits of the town itself, had been, until 1847, repressed by edicts which ought long before to have fallen into disuse. As early as 1847, the reforms, which were the following year to modify to such a great degree the political conditions of the ancient kingdom of Sardinia, were already beginning to cast their shadows before. Beckwith, always attentive to the signs of the times, immediately occupied himself in putting a stop to a state of things as unfavourable to piety as it was humiliating and vexing to the population. He therefore formed the project of building, a few yards from the town, almost opposite the college, and close to the houses which he was about to build for the professors, a church proportioned in size and architecture to the growing importance of the place.* A year or two more had elapsed, however, before the plan was definitely fixed upon and the work begun, under the care and direction of Beckwith himself.† This charming edifice is semi-Roman in style, of a most pleasing exterior, measuring inside 92 feet, 8 inches in length, by 50

* The deliberation of the Table, by which it accepts the offer of the General to build the church at La Tour, is of the 28th August 1847.

† This church, in common with almost all the other buildings undertaken by Beckwith, including the church at Turin, was built by the master-builder Gastaldi, a man in whose intelligence and honesty the General had always great confidence.

feet, 9 inches in breadth. It has a triple nave, formed by a double row of pillars in stucco, of mixed order. The middle nave, slightly raised, terminates in an open chancel, in which the pulpit stands; and in the aisles are double galleries. This church was entirely finished towards the spring of 1852, and solemnly consecrated for public worship on the 17th June of the same year.

At the time when the dedication took place, Beckwith had, for more than a year, ceased to reside in the Vaudois Valleys. The great events of this period, and the profound changes which, in a legislative point of view, had resulted from it, had discovered to him the possibility of the Vaudois Church at last devoting itself to the work of Italian evangelization; for which end he, with many others, believed it to have been providentially preserved. He had also decided to fix his residence at Turin, where, some months before, a Vaudois preacher had settled, and was working with fewer obstacles and greater success than could have been expected in a place where, not more than three years before, the celebration of evangelical worship had been absolutely forbidden, except within the walls of an Embassy.* Beckwith had scarcely established himself

* See below Chapter XI., entitled, "Beckwith and the Work of Evangelization in Italy."

here when great schemes began to present themselves to his mind, and to occupy him completely. The construction of a Vaudois church, beyond the limits of the Vaudois Valleys, not in the provinces even, but in the capital of the kingdom itself, seemed to him a daring stroke of policy, whether in order to feel in some sort the pulse of the Government upon the important and hitherto ill-explained points of liberty of conscience and of worship, or as a more efficacious means than many others of overcoming the innumerable prejudices which ignorance and bad faith entertained in Italy against evangelical doctrines and their adherents. And precisely because, by means of this temple, the Vaudois Church, exiled till now amidst its mountains, and little known in Italy, was in some sort about to make its appearance on the classic ground of fashion and of art, Beckwith felt it to be indispensable that, besides the essential conditions of sufficient dimensions, salubrity, solidity, and good acoustics, the building he dreamed of raising should possess such an architecture as to make it an ornament to the town within which it was to stand.

With this idea duly matured in his mind, Beckwith was now wholly absorbed in devising the means for preparing and securing its realization. This demanded four things—namely, the sanction of the

Government ; a convenient site ; a plan answering in all respects the end proposed ; and, lastly, the necessary funds for its execution. The plan for the work, though it bears the name of the late architect, Louis Formento, was in reality the work of the General himself, aided, in the technical part, by the advice and directions of that architect. In the other part of his undertaking, he was powerfully seconded by two men, to whom, though on vastly different grounds, the Vaudois Church is infinitely indebted ; M. J. Malan, banker, and for a long time Deputy ; and Dr. J. P. Revel, then Moderator, and pastor of the parish of Boby.* Thanks to the position of the former, to his influence as Deputy, and to his intimate connection with Count Cavour, who cherished the greatest esteem for him ; thanks, also, to his long experience in business, and to his unbounded generosity, not only was the indispensable authorization obtained, the site found and acquired, but a third of the purchase-money, stipulated at more than £4000, was immediately covered.† A journey undertaken by Dr. Revel, to collect for

* How little we thought, while writing these lines, that before they were printed, the eminent man to whom they allude would have been taken from us, and that our school of theology in Florence would have lost in him her most justly esteemed professor, and the work of evangelization her most devoted and indefatigable champion. It was on Sunday the 11th June 1871, three weeks after his return from the Synod, and only a few days after having given his last lecture, that M. Revel gave up his soul to the Lord, leaving behind him, in the midst of the Vaudois Church, a blank which can only with difficulty be supplied.

† Another third of this sum was furnished by Beckwith himself.

this object in Germany, Scotland, and Holland, where his name had already attained great popularity, was attended with such an amount of success as to allow, without imprudence, the immediate commencement of the work.

The most difficult point to gain had been the authorization of the Government, and that is not hard to understand. Liberty of conscience and of worship being not yet formally inscribed in the Constitution (which, on the contrary, maintains on these points restrictions of more kinds than one), the Government might very well, by keeping to the letter of the law, have refused the demand made upon it without being liable to the accusation of illegality. Happily for the Vaudois and the country in general, the liberties of which would have received a severe blow from such a decision, the contrary view of the question carried the day. Under the influence of that eminently and frankly liberal man, Count Cavour, then President of the Council of Ministers, the authorization was granted. This was obtained, nevertheless, not without great struggles; and the attempts to have it revoked, even after it had obtained the royal sanction, were so numerous, and the means employed for this end so powerful and so irresistible, that it required nothing short of the proverbial loyalty of the Sovereign and the immov-

able firmness of his Ministry to prevent their success. The last and supreme effort towards this end was made by a man whose name remains among us as an incarnation of the old school of administration, Count Solaro della Margherita, who, under the reign of King Charles Albert, had for many years held the helm of the State with a hand entirely devoted to the Jesuits. Unable to walk, he was carried into the very presence of the successor of his old master, and falling on his knees before him—"Sire," he said, "do not refuse to one of the most faithful servants of your dynasty the last favour which he will have the power to ask of you before leaving this world, — do not permit your good and loyal city of Turin to have the sorrow and shame of seeing arise within her walls an edifice consecrated to the preaching of heresy."

It was only by sheltering himself behind his character as a constitutional monarch, and referring the suppliant to his Ministers, that the King was able to resist this violent demand. The Ministers having no idea of retracting their decision, the work was immediately begun, and the first stone was solemnly laid on the 29th of October 1851, in presence of delegates from the Vaudois Table, of the Consistory of Turin, of all the Protestant members

of the diplomatic body,* and of a numerous concourse of the curious and the faithful. If this ceremony was performed with a certain pomp and an unaccustomed solemnity, it was because, in the laying of the first stone of this church, was seen the dawn of a new era,—that of religious liberty in Italy. The work of building, which lasted a little more than two years, was, from beginning to end, directed and inspected by Beckwith himself; who, that he might not lose sight of it for an instant, never left Turin even during the hot season, however hurtful this might be to his health, already somewhat shaken.

But it was not only his time and his solicitude that Beckwith devoted to the erection of this building. The sums collected in England, Scotland, Holland, and elsewhere, along with that which the country itself had furnished, were far from reaching the amount of the estimate; and besides, additions were constantly being made to the original plan, with the view of perfecting it. It was only by drawing on his own purse, or by having recourse to other private means, that Beckwith was able to meet this surplus.† In spite of this, it may be said

* Messrs. Abercromby, for England; De Roedern, for Prussia; Baron de Pirch, for Holland; Kinney and Magoun, for the United States of America; and Charles Murset, for Switzerland. (See the Register of the Deliberations of the Consistory of Turin, which contains the minutes of this ceremony.)

† England and Scotland together contributed the sum of 124,809 francs; Holland, 46,731 francs; the Vaudois Valleys and Turin, 46,495 francs; Germany, 3000 francs; Switzerland, 220 francs; America, 8262 francs;—total, including 2403

that he neglected nothing to make this first church built beyond the precincts of the Valleys a monument of Christian and Protestant art, able to bear comparison with the most beautiful ecclesiastical buildings in the capital.

The church was dedicated on the 15th December 1853 with great solemnity, in presence of a large concourse of people of all ranks, among whom were most of the members of the diplomatic corps residing at Turin, the senators, the deputies, and a delegation of the national guard of the town, with the officers at the head of it. The chancel, in the centre of which stood the pulpit, was occupied by most of the Vaudois pastors in their pastoral robes. The dedication prayer* was composed by Beckwith himself, who was desirous of the honour of giving the formula of the first prayer to be addressed to God within this church, which had been the object of so much solicitude and so many sacrifices on his part. This was one of the brightest days in the General's life; and those who had the happiness of being present at this ceremony will remember his radiant countenance, and the firm hope which it expressed that

francs of interest paid by the treasurer, M. J. Malan, 231,598 francs. The total cost of the building, including the site, had been more than 345,000 francs; so that the sum furnished or procured by the General himself would be more than 113,000 francs. (Notes furnished to the author by M. J. Malan, or extracted from the book of charges for the building of the church.)

* See the prayer in the Appendix, letter C.

the work, to accomplish which he had laboured and struggled so long, had at last become independent of his efforts, and was about to bear, for the good of Italy, those fruits which, for many years, he alone had seen in the distant future. But the course of affairs in this world is a strange one. This church, the most important of all that Beckwith had undertaken to build, was likewise the last. And not only this, but by a course of circumstances which we shall afterwards relate, at the very moment when he seemed about to press forward with more ardour than ever in his career, he suddenly stopped short; and henceforward from that time the work which he had constantly indicated to the Vaudois Church as his principal work received from him no assistance beyond that sympathy which he would on no account have withdrawn from it.

CHAPTER VIII.

BECKWITH AND WORKS OF CHARITY.

SNOUGH has already been said of the extraordinary man whose history we are relating, to prepare us for the contents of this chapter. To conceive, undertake, and execute, in the spirit in which he did it, such a series of various good works as we have enumerated, required more than high-mindedness and generosity of character; it required a heart open to every impulse of charity. And how could Beckwith, with such a heart, have remained insensible to the sufferings of such a large portion of the Vaudois population? The people of the Valleys thought at one time that it was in order to relieve their temporal wants that he had come to live among them, so numerous and abundant were the alms which he distributed on all sides, not only to the Vaudois, but also to Catholics. The time very soon came when he could no longer take his daily walks without being constantly

stopped by suppliants for his bounty. At other times it was he himself who constrained the sufferer to reveal his distress and accept relief. One day, on the way from Sainte-Marguerite to Villar, he met a man, well known in the district, who earned a scanty livelihood by carrying small coal and wood from the hill, by means of an ass. The poor man, who was that day without the animal, was weeping like some one under the weight of a great misfortune.

“What is the matter, my friend?” said Beckwith, approaching him.

“Ah! sir,” replied the good man, in a mixture of French and Piedmontese (he was a Catholic), “they are going to take away my ass, and without it my family and I must die of hunger.”

And here he related to the Colonel, with many details, how one of his creditors, whom he had been unable to satisfy, had seized his ass, intending to put it in his own stable. Beckwith was touched by the story, and inquired as to the amount of the debt. When told, he said,—

“Well, my friend, would you object to sell me your ass, and pay your creditor with the money I give you for it?”

The man was perfectly pleased with this arrangement.

“In that case,” said Beckwith, “bring the animal to me to-morrow at Sainte-Marguerite, and you shall receive your money.”

The owner of the ass came punctually to the rendezvous ; the money was counted out to him ; and when, with a heavy heart, he was preparing to go and leave his ass behind,—

“Oh,” said Beckwith, “you may take the ass with you for the present, and make use of it until I claim it ; only, you must understand that the ass is mine, and that I can allow no one to seize it under any pretext whatever.”

The surprise and joy of the good old man, when he heard these words, can be better imagined than described. As for the animal itself, this incident made it quite famous in the neighbourhood ; and henceforward, instead of being called *Bontalon's ass* (the owner's name), it went by the name of *the Colonel's ass*.

His commerce with God,* as he used to call his alms, was often carried on upon a much larger scale. In the spring of 1833, for instance, wishing to show his gratitude for a recovery from illness,† he distributed among the poor of the different parishes (Protestants and Catholics alike) an abundant supply of provisions.‡

* Allusion to Matthew x. 42.

† See Chapter III., p. 36.

‡ Notice of Beckwith, published by Pastor A. Bert in the journal *Piété et Charité* for 15th February 1863.

In 1840, also, he sent from London, where he was then residing, the sum of 1000 francs, to be converted into maize for the inhabitants of Rodoret, whose harvest had been destroyed by the frost. But his largesses were not confined to material things; he gave also, in more than one instance, food for the soul. Having ascertained that in each of the parishes there was a large number of families who had either no Bible or only fragments of it, he distributed, on two separate occasions, in 1841 and 1842, five hundred to six hundred Bibles at a time, having first received from the Table permission to do so.

But amid all the objects of charity with which he was surrounded, none roused his sympathy or called forth his liberality to such an extent as the hospitals of the Vaudois Valleys, and particularly that of La Tour. This charitable institution, the founding of which has been mentioned previously,* was most humble in its beginning; which fact, instead of being an evil, might have proved a blessing, had it continued to improve with years. But it was exactly the contrary that happened, and in the beginning of 1846, twenty years after its foundation, it was as far from realizing the true idea of an hospital as it could well be. A doctor held the double

* See Chapter II., p. 32.

office of physician and manager; the managing committee, composed of five members dispersed throughout the country, did not think it necessary to meet oftener than once in three months; a male and female attendant, both inexperienced, and as much in the service of the doctor's family as of the sick; an extreme scarcity of linen, bedding, and household utensils; carelessness, dirt, disorder everywhere;—such was the picture presented at this period by the hospital at La Tour. Beckwith frequently took his daily walk thither. “Such a state of things cannot last,” he said; “it must be remedied.” But how?

The institution of the deaconesses of Echallens (now Saint-Loup), in the canton of Vaud, founded by Pastor Germond, was then beginning to attract favourable attention. Beckwith thought of confiding the internal management of the hospital to one of these women; and having deliberated and fixed on the project in his own mind, he tried to gain the consent of the managing committee. This was a hard matter. The correction of abuses, always difficult, is particularly so in a narrow sphere like that of the Vaudois Valleys. In a small sphere, questions of principle easily become personal questions. An abuse is no sooner vigorously attacked, than clamours and recriminations arise from some one directly interested in perpet-

uating it; and to these are added those of an immense troop of relations, friends, acquaintances, who would fancy themselves wanting in the duties of relationship and friendship, if they did not oppose the reforms as effectually as possible.

The opposition aroused by the mere mention of Beckwith's plan became truly terrible when, by an express resolution of the committee, the Colonel's plan became a reality, and a deaconess from Echallens had been installed in the hospital at La Tour, in place of the manager.* All that a mean and intriguing spirit could do, was done to make the position of this person as irksome as possible. But, fortunately, it was all in vain. The Colonel watched with redoubled activity against the machinations of the opposing party. The deaconess charged with the accomplishment of this revolution was in every respect equal to her task, but particularly so by her firmness and courage. Mlle. Henriette Helm† (for

* This deliberation, dated November 6th, 1845, bears that "The committee, feeling the need in the establishment of a person specially devoted to the care of the sick, resolves, on the proposal of Colonel Beckwith, a constant friend of the Vaudois, to call to the Valleys such a person, and to attach her to the service of the hospital at La Tour; and to request the Joint-Moderator, M. Revel, to take the necessary steps for carrying out this resolution."

† Arrived at La Tour, January 3rd, 1845. She was replaced, after some months, by Sister Elise Lochar, who, after about four years' residence in the Valleys, devoted herself to a missionary career in the East Indies. The names of the deaconesses of Saint-Loup who succeeded these two are the following:—Sister *Fauchette-Pasteur*, 1851-52; Sister *Rosalie Mathey*, 1852-56, died in office; Sister *Louise Fatio*, 1856-59; Sister *Julie Ruchonnet* and Sister *Rosine Albrecht*, 1859-61; Sister *Louise Reymond* and Sister *Jenny Delessert*, 1862-64; Sister *Jenny Delessert* and Sister *Eugenie Gaillard*, 1864-68; Sister *Jenny Delessert* and Sister *Julie Delessert*, 1868-70.

that was her name) was determined that, even though she sank under the effort, she would do what was expected of her. And she did so most thoroughly. After a most vigorous resistance, the abuses were obliged to give way.

But the other alternative was also unfortunately accomplished. Her health having broken down under the excessive effort, Sister Henriette was obliged to return to Echallens, where, some months later, she calmly resigned her soul to Him in whose service she had lived. Her departure was a great grief to Beckwith, who was more capable than any one of appreciating her noble qualities, and in whom a character of such a stamp naturally called forth the deepest sympathy. Moved by gratitude for what she had been, as well as by interest for the work itself, he kept constantly and unswervingly at the side of each of the deaconesses who successively took the place of their departed sister, advising and encouraging them, and defending them, when necessary, against the more or less calumnious accusations to which they were exposed. This formed one of his occupations from the latter part of 1846. Some time before, he had devoted a considerable sum of money to reprovding the hospital with linen, bedding, and kitchen utensils, including an economical stove, which was procured from Switzerland on purpose.

It seemed to him, and justly, that so many sacrifices, if they had not quite disarmed malevolence, might at least have put a little oil on the wheels. Not at all, however; the slanderous stories maintained their ground, and facts most innocent in themselves were, the day after, transformed into real enormities committed by the deaconesses. One of these accusations, believed in by one of the clerks of the administration, a respectable man, and reported by him to the Colonel, was the drop of water which caused the cup to overflow. Twenty-four hours had not elapsed ere he received from Beckwith the following letter:—

“ LA TOUR, 7th August 1846.

“ MY DEAR N—— N——,—The affair of which you spoke to me yesterday proceeds from the irregularity and general disorder which characterize your people. The wife of the sick man came to ask leave to see her husband, and, as a question arose between her and the deaconess, on the subject of bringing food to the sick man, the woman made as if she were going away, but in reality went up by another stair to see her husband. It is not known what passed, but finally the patient asked for his clothes, and wished to leave. I think that it would be better not to give refractory patients their clothes

in such circumstances. But the means of coercion are so weak, and the person in charge is so little disposed to maintain the necessary order and discipline, that any institution in this country becomes next to impossible. The people expect to have liberty to go out and come in from five o'clock in the morning till eight in the evening; to bring to the sick what they choose; to remain with them as long as they think fit; and if you try to restore order, you are met by resistance, and sometimes by violent and scandalous conduct. Every one has been crying out against the bad management of the hospital, and none more than you; and now that an attempt at order is being made, every one rises against it.

“The daily visits, of a few minutes each, made by doctors occupied with their own practice, can have but little influence on the management of an hospital. All that these doctors can reasonably expect, is that their orders shall be obeyed, and their prescriptions followed. They have no influence over the internal management of the house, and can take no part in it. It is the same with the committee; they make quarterly resolutions, and then they go away. Who, then, is expected to attend to the details of the management during twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four? Formerly there

was nothing to do. The patients, abandoned to the care of two ignorant, brutal servants, were without linen, without proper food, without remedies;—such was the hospital in those days. And how have they tried to remedy all that? With good-for-nothing words and fault-finding. And, supposing the same state of things to exist still, will you do me the favour of pointing out the means and the persons most fitted to amend it? To make an hospital what it ought to be, the following things are needed:—

“ 1. Conscientious and scientific medical skill.

“ 2. The assiduous services of domestics, intelligently directed by a superior.

“ 3. Abundance of good and well-kept linen.

“ 4. Clean beds.

“ 5. Good and carefully prepared victuals and drink.

“ 6. Careful attention to the doctors' prescriptions.

“ 7. Cleanliness throughout the whole house.

“ 8. Order and honesty in money matters.

“ 9. The control of the provision merchants.

“ If you wish to do us a real service, ascertain the facts regarding these different heads; point out to us wherein the hospital is still deficient, and we will try to remedy the deficiencies. But do not

join in the clamours of a careless public, who will not even take the trouble to learn the facts, and who would leave the hospital to go to ruin without so much as holding out their little finger to save it. You, as one of the principal witnesses of it, cannot deny the bad state in which the establishment was formerly. Now that we are trying to place it on a good footing, it is your duty to help us. If you have complaints to make, you must also have justice and patience to prove their truth. A spirit of hostility towards a woman is useless; nothing can be done against such an enemy. We, as men, are called upon to act with coolness, and upon a knowledge of facts. Our mode of action is very simple: we have to take the facts one by one; to weigh them in a balance; to arrange them; to maintain good order; and to second the efforts of those who are called upon to struggle against the want of good sense and uprightness in those individuals who, if left to themselves, would keep up perpetual disorder in every possible way.

“At present the service and furnishings of the house are considerably improved; neither money nor trouble is being spared to supply all the still existing wants; and this is the moment chosen for crying out against those engaged in the work! But I have had too much experience of men and business in

this country to be discouraged; and I will face it all, and persevere in spite of all the world.—Believe me always, my dear N—— N——, yours very sincerely, &c.,

“CHARLES BECKWITH, *Colonel.*”

Three days later, Beckwith addressed to the Moderator of the Vaudois Church a no less determined and energetic letter than the preceding one, which concluded in the following words, with which we will also conclude the chapter:—

“I am by no means frightened or discouraged by all this opposition. It is entirely by the success of these efforts, made in the interest of the poor, the Church, and the nation, that I shall henceforward regulate my conduct. The proper application of public money, and the care of the sick poor, are among the first duties of a community; and if a Christian community has not physical and moral energy enough to fulfil this duty to its own country, it is not worthy of the name. I have no doubt that I shall receive from the Table all the assistance necessary. I am sure that that body will understand all that passes, and will weigh in a just balance all questions as they arise from time to time. The present deaconess is active, intelligent,

economical, and unfailing in the performance of duty. She is necessarily often brought into contact with a spirit which delights in disorder; but it is eminently for the interest of the establishment to have a person capable of combating dispositions equally hurtful to the sick themselves and to those who nurse them.—Believe me, Mr. Moderator, always your sincerely affectionate


“CHARLES BECKWITH, *Colonel.*”

Twenty-four years have passed since these lines were penned, and if any one who had seen the institution in its former state were to visit it now, the sight of the perfect order and prosperity now visible in every part of the establishment, could not fail to make him bless, from the bottom of his heart, the man who, by his patient continuance in well-doing, was the principal agent in this transformation.

CHAPTER IX.

BECKWITH AND ECCLESIASTICAL QUESTIONS.

THE MODERATOR FOR LIFE.

HE ecclesiastical questions which occupied the attention of Beckwith, during the period of his beneficent activity in the midst of the Vaudois Church, were two in number,—viz., that of Moderator for life, and that of the Liturgy. In the first place—chiefly for the sake of those of our readers who are not acquainted with the constitution of the Vaudois Church—let us give some explanation of the nature of the office of Moderator. In the various Presbyterian Churches of France, Scotland, Ireland, and we believe also, of America, this title is given to the President of the General Assembly, or Synod, of each of these Churches. The name is taken from the office, which is to direct, or, more literally, to moderate, the debates. In the Vaudois Church, on the contrary, the functionary designated by this title is the Presi-

dent of the executive power, or Table,* which is charged, from one Synod to another, with the general administration of church affairs.

Another detail which it is essential to mention, with regard to this office, is, that the Moderator in the Vaudois Church was only nominated, and still is, for the time which elapsed between one Synod and another, which, up to 1848, was a term of five years. At the expiration of this term, the retiring Moderator might be re-elected, and sometimes was; but if, as generally happened, the Assembly decided on a new nomination, they might—according to a system of equilibrium, which plays a great part in the administrative history of the Vaudois Church—take the new Moderator from another valley than that to which his predecessor belonged; from the Valley of Saint-Martin, for instance, supposing the last in office to have been chosen from the Valley of Luzerne, or *vice versâ*. How little such a system was likely to be to the taste of an Episcopalian and a soldier like Beckwith, it is not hard to understand. Add to this, the way in which this system unfortunately worked for years under his eyes was by no means

* Composed of five members, three of whom are ecclesiastics, and two lay members.

Very probably the title of Moderator was given to the President of the Table because, for many years, and up to the Synod of 1848, which modified this state of things, this functionary held both the office of President of the Administration and that of President of the Synod.

calculated to render him friendly to it. And besides, the satisfaction which he felt, when the man at the head of affairs was found to be capable of understanding and taking part in his projects, and in all respects worthy of his confidence, must have made him look with distrust on every prospect of seeing such a one replaced by a man possessed, perhaps, of none of the qualities which he so valued in the actual holder of the office.*

Thus it was that, in 1837, while his reforming activity was at its height, and while M. J. P. Bonjour was Moderator, there arose in the mind of Beckwith the idea of a Moderator for life, no longer chosen because he lived in one valley rather than another, but chosen from any locality, no matter where, provided he were the best man to be found. He must have no cure of souls, so as to be able to devote himself entirely to the general interests of the Church; a Moderator combining, it must be owned, under thoroughly Presbyterian and democratic externals, the principal attributes of a genuine bishop. Other considerations still, of a more essentially religious nature, had their share in urging Beckwith

* "There is no one here who understands business; and I have a particular interest in wishing the management to remain in the present hands. This is of the greatest importance to me, as all that has yet been done is merely sketch-work, and requires for its completion the same intellectual means, used in the same way, by the same will."—*Letter from Beckwith to Pastor J. P. Bonjour, Moderator, dated 12th September 1838.*

on in the way just indicated. Fully agreed on this point with the venerable Dr. Gilly, his fellow-labourer and fellow-countryman, Beckwith could not but view with extreme apprehension the influence which the theological faculties of France and Switzerland threatened to exercise over the future of the Vaudois Church, as it was to these countries that the students of the Valleys went to prosecute their studies. Ecclesiastically speaking, this influence was, in his eyes, that of disorder and anarchy; dogmatically, it was that of Socinianism and Rationalism. For want of making a great enough distinction, in this last respect particularly, between Geneva and Lausanne, and between Strasburg and Montauban, his judgments on these different faculties did not sufficiently bear the impress of that justice and impartiality, which were, notwithstanding, distinctive traits in his character.* To combat this influence

* The following fragment of a letter from Beckwith to the Moderator will leave no doubt of the truth of our assertion. Although dated July 14th, 1857, it expresses none the less clearly the sentiments which, even at that time, he cherished on this subject:—

“It has never been possible to make you accept your true mission. Dr. Gilly and I were the only Vaudois; all the others were French Calvinists. Seven centuries of well-confirmed traditions have not had the smallest effect on your minds. Geneva was written in large letters on the moral standard which you unfurled in Piedmont, and you must bear the consequences. You have evaded and mistaken your descent. Legitimate children of apostolic times, you have abjured your descent and your rights as children of the soil, to attach yourselves to strangers and innovators. Your war-cry is ‘Calvin,’ while the name of Claude would have overthrown your adversaries, and gained for your cause the intelligence, the respect, and affection of Piedmont.”

As for Gilly, the notes which follow prove that we have been equally far from deceiving ourselves with regard to him.

by every lawful means, in order to substitute for it another which he deemed much more beneficial to the Vaudois Church, was the constant effort of Beckwith, from the day on which the raising up of the Vaudois Church became the object of his life.

Various measures of considerable importance, adopted between the years 1833 and 1839, such as the foundation at La Tour of a college, where the Vaudois students for the holy ministry might complete their studies, without the need of repairing to foreign universities;* the composition of a Liturgy, for the exclusive use of the Church in the Valleys;† the revived use, at the Synod of 1839, of the Confession of Faith of 1655, which had more or less fallen into disuse;‡ the consecration of candidates

* The last and most important object of the "foundation of the college is to furnish such means of instruction in the Valleys, that it may no longer be absolutely necessary for the young Vaudois to go to foreign academies to finish their education. It is, in a great measure, to prevent this expatriation, so dangerous to the manners and religious principles of the Vaudois, that I have extended the institution so far in this direction," &c.—*Letter from Dr. Gilly to the Table, dated December 23rd, 1839.*

In another he insists that "the religious instruction given at the college shall be perfectly conformable to the old Catechism or formulary of the Vaudois doctrine, dated the year 1100, and to the Confession of Faith of 1655."

The title of College of the Holy Trinity is given by him (as we have seen) to the establishment which he has just founded, in the hope that "this title will mark the character of the institution, and make it more to be respected in the eyes of your neighbours, of the Romish Church, and of foreign Christians; at the same time that it will serve to attest the adhesion of the Vaudois churches of to-day to the faith of their ancestors."—*Letter to the Table of February 23rd, 1835.*

† The funds for the printing of a double edition of this Liturgy (one for churches, printed at Edinburgh in 1837, the other for families, printed at Lausanne in 1842) were, for the most part, procured by Dr. Gilly. With the exception of a ritual for the burial of the dead, somewhat like that of the Anglican Liturgy, this Liturgy scarcely differs from that of the Reformed Churches of Switzerland.

‡ Regarding the resolutions of this Synod, the following was written by Dr.

for the holy ministry (which had long been left to the academies where they studied) restored to the body of pastors of the Church, who might only proceed to it with the greatest circumspection, and at the close of a profound examination upon the religious and ecclesiastical views of the candidate; and lastly, the choice of three of the most highly gifted young Vaudois, to be sent to study theology in an English university; *—all these resolutions, and others besides, in the adoption of which Beckwith and Dr. Gilly both took a considerable part, were only successive steps in the direction and towards the goal which we have already pointed

Gilly, 12th September 1839: "When I compare the grave deliberations of your Synodal assembly, on subjects of such vast importance, with those of other ecclesiastical conferences, held by certain Reformed Churches, I am proud of my relations with the Waldensian Church of Piedmont. By your Synodal acts you have raised yourselves to a more respectable position than ever."

"I hope," (Gilly wrote on this subject, August 13th, 1840), "that I am not presumptuous in attributing this act in a certain measure to the influence of those friends of the Vaudois, who have tried to make your churches independent of those of Switzerland."

Beckwith wrote in his turn, July 20th, 1840: "I have seen with pleasure that your proposal concerning the consecration has had effect, and I firmly believe that our long conversations by the fireside have borne fruit."

* These young men were Messrs. Henri Muston of La Tour, Charles Vinçon of Pramol, and Joseph Monastier of Angrogna. In the letter, dated from Saint-Jean, April 25th, 1839, which Beckwith addressed to the Table, to ask that Dr. Gilly might be authorized to cause these young men to study at the University of Durham, offering to conduct them thither himself, he adds the following: "As I have no share of the responsibility, and only take charge of the young people for the sake of the friendship I feel for them and their families, I desire that the authorization may be granted to Dr. Gilly." It was granted by a resolution of the 30th April. Another letter from Beckwith, dated London, 14th June, 1838, on the subject of these young men, says, that "they have aroused a general interest;" and expresses the hope that "this undertaking will have a result most favourable to the interests of the Valleys." It is well known that this hope was not realized, and that not one of these young men ever took his place among the Vaudois clergy.

out. Moreover, it must be acknowledged that Beckwith was Anglican, not only by birth and education, but from the deepest convictions of his heart. The Episcopal constitution was, in his eyes, if not the only truly Biblical one (he probably did not go so far as to maintain this),* at least the one which, better than any other, impressed on the action of the Church the double character of authority on one side, and union on the other, which are the indispensable conditions of its influence. And is it to be wondered at, that he wished to endow the Vaudois Church—for which he had such an affection—with an organization realizing in his eyes such precious advantages? Yet, large-hearted and large-minded as he otherwise was, and as he showed himself to be by living for nearly thirty years in the communion of a Church so different from his own, it is more than probable that he would not have attempted this, if other considerations had not been added to those which we have just mentioned.

And, in the first place, who are the Vaudois, and whence do they come? † Beckwith, like many of

* “Episcopal consecration is not a *sine quâ non* for the valid exercise of the duties of the presidential or episcopal office. Saint Jerome is of the opinion, grounded on several passages of Scripture, that a presbyter and a bishop are on the same footing as to their sacerdotal character.”—*Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour*, 28th August 1844.

† See the numerous articles on this question published in the *Buona Novella* of 1851, the materials for which had been furnished by Beckwith.

those who have directed their attention to this difficult historical problem, saw in them the remains of the primitive Church of Christ in Piedmont—members of the great Latin Church, abandoned by their bishops, when, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the influence of the Papacy, long held in check in the diocese of the North of Italy, had begun to preponderate there, as in the rest of Christendom. He regarded them, in consequence, as the spiritual children of that illustrious Claude, Bishop of Turin, who, in those times of profound religious ignorance, was like a lamp, dissipating, to a great distance, the thick darkness in which the whole world was then plunged. To return to a more or less Episcopal organization, was not this, then, for the Vaudois, simply to return to their origin?

In the second place, although it was then only 1836 or 1837, and the great events which have since disturbed and so completely transformed the Peninsula were then but very vaguely foreseen by a small number, Beckwith's mind and heart were already preoccupied by great designs and undertakings in connection with the Vaudois Church—designs and undertakings for which great pecuniary resources were indispensable. And from whom were these resources to be obtained, but from his compatriots and those who professed the same religion?

And this being so, would not his task be greatly facilitated, if, in appealing to them for help, he could show them, in the Vaudois Church—his client—not an anarchical Church (as Presbyterian Churches are in the eyes of many Anglicans), but a Church, if not frankly Episcopal, yet possessing at least a good many of the advantages of this system?

Lastly, in an ecclesiastical organization a little less removed from that of the Romish Church than the present organization of the Vaudois Church, Beckwith saw a point of contact with Italy, upon which that Church would be called, sooner or later, to exercise her influence.

Such, then, were the circumstances and preconceptions under the influence of which the subject placed at the head of this chapter was deposited, as it were, in the mind of Beckwith; and after a time of reflection, more or less prolonged, produced itself, in the autumn of 1837, under the form of a manifesto to the body of pastors, intended to gain them over to the same way of thinking. In this undeniably able document—as remarkable for the piety it breathes as for the elevation of the sentiments and thoughts contained in it—Beckwith hardly puts forward any of the motives we have enumerated, except those connected with the administration of the Church itself.

“I present myself before you,” he says in the beginning of it to the pastors, “with the entire confidence of a man who knows that he enjoys your esteem and friendship, to discuss with you subjects of great interest to the churches and the population of the Vaudois. When I shall have shown you the present state of public affairs, I would fain believe that there will no longer be any difference of opinion on the necessity of introducing some modifications in the way of administering them; and my task will be to reconcile differences of opinion, whether among yourselves, or between you and those who are called to make the sacrifices necessary for bringing about the changes which shall be thought expedient. What I am about to say to you comes from myself. No one has influenced me. I am a free agent, and I present myself before free men, freely to discuss measures which are conceived entirely for the public interest, without mental reservation, and without any other object than the welfare of all.”

To these introductory remarks, well fitted to gain the hearts and minds of those to whom they are addressed, Beckwith adds an enumeration, as complete as possible, of the duties of all kinds which even then belonged to the office of Moderator, and which were very soon to become more numerous

and more important. The inference which he draws from this is, that it is absolutely impossible for a Moderator, having a cure of souls, to perform adequately the duties of his charge. Beckwith therefore proposes "the nomination of a Moderator exempt from the duties attaching to the care of a parish."

But here a difficulty presents itself to block up the way. It may be objected, that, when a pastor has been removed from his flock, and had the general care of the whole Church confided to him for a period of years, it will be next to impossible, when he resigns the charge, to restore him to his former functions, when, in the interval, another pastor shall have taken his place. Not only is Beckwith undeterred by this difficulty, but he avails himself of it to reach with one bound his wished-for conclusion—namely, the nomination of a Moderator, not *for a time*, as hitherto, but *for life*.

The considerations by which he supports his proposition are as follows:—1. It will be infinitely more easy—among the fifteen pastors who compose the Vaudois clergy*—to find *one* really capable man every *twenty* years (supposing this to be the average term of duration of one Moderator's charge), than *four* during the same space of time, as the present

* The number of pastors properly so called, which was then only fifteen, was increased after 1848 to sixteen, in consequence of the constitution of the Protestant community of Turin into the sixteenth parish of the Vaudois Church.

organization would require. 2. If the system which it is proposed to abandon offers—thanks to the frequent elections which result from it—a larger number of opportunities for making a good choice, it increases, at the same time, the opportunities for doing the contrary, and (aided by the passion which is so natural to the heart of man) for committing errors of judgment, against which one is the less fortified the more one trusts to the frequency of the elections to repair their hurtful consequences. 3. A Moderator for life would acquire, by the mere fact of his permanency, experience, tact, and consequently authority, such as could never fall to the lot of a pastor just called away from his parish, and obliged to return to it in a short time, at the very moment when he is beginning to be equal to his charge. 4. Lastly, this system would strengthen considerably, instead of weakening, the sentiment of *personal responsibility*, which is for every functionary, no matter of what order, the most powerful motive for, as well as the surest guarantee of, a conscientious and efficient performance of duty.

“Besides,” he adds, as if to anticipate the objection which he feels will be the strongest of all, “as your constitution assures you of the means of retracing your steps, you have only to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the present state of

things, compared with those of the change proposed to you."

Then, returning to the principal reason why, in the present state of the Vaudois Church, this change seems to him absolutely necessary, he adds :—

"For some years past, the attention of your fellow-Protestants has been drawn towards you, and means have been placed at your disposal, which it depends on you to apply suitably. We think that the development and application of these means will be very difficult, if not impossible, unless we have at hand a person thoroughly acquainted with business, and well known to all those with whom he will frequently come in contact. We are of opinion that a Moderator domiciled in his own parish—in the Valley of Saint-Martin, for instance (which will not fail to happen)—will be very much isolated; that our communications with him can be but rare; and that he will not be able properly to oversee and develop the institutions which will arise from our efforts. The time seems favourable for advancing the interests of your churches. You understand perfectly your political and religious stand-point; you have some idea that possibly, nay, probably, a time may come when you shall no longer be aided and supported as you are to-day. I beg you, therefore, to act with that manly intelligence and those ex-

panded views which, laying aside all lesser considerations, look to the result alone. If, then, the Vaudois accept the proposal we make to them, to appoint a Moderator for life, we, in our turn, will undertake to furnish him with a proper salary, and to build him a house at La Tour.

“Such, gentlemen, are our views and opinions ; it is for you to judge of them. We are not in the least disposed to be conceited about them, nor to press you to accept them. If we see that they are not generally approved of, we are perfectly willing to withdraw them, and to wait patiently for better days. Yet we would remind you that these ideas have sprung up in our minds while watching, step by step, the progress of your affairs for the last ten years ; and that we believe them to be eminently adapted to your present position, and fitted to consolidate your churches, and thus to spread the principles and the doctrines of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In spite of the incontestable logic of the document we have just analyzed ; in spite of the truth of its complaints against the vacillating and uncertain progress of affairs in the midst of the Vaudois Church ; in spite even of the kind of threat with which it closes,—its almost universal effect was to stir up opposition. As for the Table, its opinions

were divided ; but those of the people were generally and thoroughly adverse.

That the organization of the Vaudois Church had long ago been more or less Episcopal was no reason, it was said, why now, when times and the needs of men had altered so much, the Church should return to what she had abandoned centuries before. Besides, it was added, if our Church, as it is at present organized, has unmistakable defects, yet it is with this organization that we have traversed, without sinking, the most stormy periods of our history ; and who will answer for it that the one which it is proposed to substitute for it will be able to do as much for us, and that it, too, may not have its defective points, which, though less seen outwardly, will be neither less numerous nor less to be regretted ? It is true, it was also said, that, in the present system, the men intrusted with the administration of the Church are, in general, only for a short time in office. And yet there is nothing in this system to prevent their charge being prolonged indefinitely, so often as this shall be thought beneficial for the interests of the Church ; and at the same time there is this great advantage, which the opposite system would forcibly exclude, that an appointment, of which there might be just cause to repent, cannot be made irrevocable. Lastly, not to omit any of the

elements which constituted this opposition, the idea of a Moderator for life, with special functions, a residence, and a salary* of his own, superior to those of any of the pastors, his colleagues, could not fail to meet with the most active opposition in a centre so thoroughly democratic as the Vaudois Valleys, where authority in every shape is irksome, and where personal and family interests, the more powerful the narrower the sphere in which they move, act a most important part.

The most marked protests against the project in question were thus not wanting. They came from far and near. The theological students at Lausanne and Berlin thought it necessary, for the sake of their Church, to enter their protest also.

“Touched with admiration and gratitude,” they wrote to the Colonel,† “for the benefits which you pour unceasingly upon our people, we felt ourselves impelled, last year, to testify to you our feelings for your person and your work; and you deigned to receive the expression of our gratitude with kindness and condescension. To-day we come, inspired by the same sentiments, to express to you, with all

* The increase of salary was only to come later, as the following fragment of a letter from Beckwith will show:—“You may tell Poetti that I hold myself responsible for the house, and for £60 sterling a year. It is better to begin with an income equal to that of the pastors, so as not to excite jealousy.”—*Letter from Beckwith to M. Bonjour, from Saint-Jean, 12th September 1838.*

† Among the number were M., afterwards Dr., Revel, M. Lantaret, the present Moderator of the Vaudois Church, and the author of these lines.

humility and frankness, the ideas aroused in us by the proposal you have made to the Valleys, suggesting a change in our ecclesiastical organization ; and we are fully persuaded that this expression of our sentiments will meet with as kind a reception from you as the preceding one."

After having admired the kindness of intention which had led Beckwith to bring forward this plan, and agreed with him as to the faultiness and need of improvement in the present organization of the Vaudois Church ; after reservations with regard to their competence (considering their age) to pronounce an opinion on questions of such importance,—they come, "in their quality of Vaudois," exposed, like all who profess the same religion, to the lamentable consequences which the scheme in question might entail, to protest, with all the others, against its adoption.

"First," they said, "because we do not think it can be proved that the proposed organization is more in harmony with the Bible than that for which it would be substituted ; secondly, because it does not appear to us more useful, but, on the contrary, much more dangerous in its possible consequences ; lastly, because we trust to the integrity of a state of things which has been transmitted to us by our ancestors, and which, by its existence for more than six cen-

turies in the midst of the most adverse circumstances, has become to each one of us the object of unbounded respect." In conclusion, they adjured Beckwith at least to postpone this scheme, if he could not resolve to abandon it; declaring, with the bold petulance of youth, "that, as for them, they would hold themselves in conscience bound to oppose it, even after it should have been adopted."

The Colonel's answer, dated 30th April 1838, exhibits more clearly than ever the idea which had presided at the birth and development of his project. Beckwith reminds them that the college was founded and endowed* with a sum of money bequeathed with the view of advancing the interests of Protestantism on the Continent, and destined by the testamentary executors for the Vaudois Church. But the sacrifices hitherto made were far from sufficient; others must be made.

"As experience," says Beckwith, "had clearly shown us the insufficiency of the present administration, to inspect establishments which require daily attention, we proposed to have a Moderator for life. Our aim in this was, first of all, to have a man who would have time to improve himself, and to benefit those under his charge by the fruits of his experience; a man protected from the caprices

* See the chapter concerning the college, p. 75.

of the public ; a man well known to all with whom he might have to do—a thing absolutely indispensable for those who, not residing in the country, are notwithstanding annually called upon to make great sacrifices : in short, a man having authority. We also wished to be better assured of the conscientious outlay of the sums confided to us. The Vaudois have not thought fit to agree to our proposal, and they have, in duty and in conscience, rejected it. We, too, have our duty and our conscience, which are, unfortunately, not in harmony with yours. We cannot, then, proceed further for the present.”

After having thus justified himself, Beckwith, in his turn, makes a vigorous attack. Setting out from the declaration of the students, that even after the project should have been adopted, they would hold themselves in conscience bound to oppose it,—

“I believe,” he says to them, “that you have not well weighed such a declaration, which would render society based on such principles impossible. But, unfortunately, this is the moral plague of your community. You cannot distinguish between men and principles. You lose sight of the latter, and of the advantages that you might derive from them, for the sake of purely personal considerations ; and thus you are totally misguided. A principle once laid down, men must be left to act according to the laws

which govern its application, and to submit to it religiously. At present you are young, full of hope, good intentions, and high aspirations; but if you do not learn to obey the law and those who have to enforce its application, you will prepare for yourselves a future of regrets and inconsistencies, with shame for its result. Your ripe reflections are vain. Fruit does not ripen in spring. A time will come when you will understand that the governed too may have their errors, as well as those who govern; and that no one can form a just judgment of their mutual obligations who has not had experience of their respective duties. You will soon find yourselves in presence of men, and of the system which guides the operations of society in your country; and, some years hence, I shall have the pleasure, or rather the pain, of comparing our opinions. You will then be pastors, fathers of families, administrators—you will have had time to realize your intentions; but I much fear, that, instead of facts, you will give me reasons which it is not hard to imagine beforehand. You will tell me that the good are in the minority; that the indifferent are many; that the wicked are bold, active, and enterprising; that you have not succeeded because you have not been helped; that means have failed you; that you have been put aside because, wishing to do what is right

and necessary, you came in contact with a majority which overthrew you, as it had overthrown your predecessors, and as it will overthrow all who come after you ; that you have not even undertaken that which appeared necessary, because you felt that it would be useless, seeing that you had neither the time requisite for carrying out your projects, nor the means of justifying your failure before the public. Thus I shall find you crushed beneath the weight of your own system, and reduced to that impotence, inactivity, and want of energy, which are the faults of your country.....No one among you to inspect, no one to lead, no one who dares reprove the wicked and encourage the good ; not a soul that will brook the shadow of authority, unless brute force go with it. Kissing the hand which strikes them on the part of others, your people proudly lift their head against the authority of their own choice ; that authority which they ought rather to be led to respect and love, by honour, by devotion, by religion, and by the close bond that unites those who suffer under a common misfortune. You yourselves will be the victims of such a state of things. You will be called upon to remedy it, and you will sink beneath the task, as so many have done. You will then see, with sorrow, that (in the question of which we treat) you have been satisfied with words, that

you were incapable of judging of facts, that you had not understood your position, that the conclusions you drew were not just, and that you formed your decision without knowing the reason for it."

Allowing even the greatest latitude to the exaggeration contained in these reproaches, they must be admitted to contain still greater truth; and we are convinced that not one of those to whom this letter was addressed, when he reached manhood, and was called in his turn to the management of public affairs, did not acknowledge that Beckwith had been right in many things which he had said twenty years before; and that, in particular, obedience to rule and authority is no more now than it was then the dominant and characteristic virtue of the members of the Vaudois Church. This same question of the Moderator for life forms the main point of Beckwith's correspondence with the then acting Moderator, M. J. P. Bonjour, during the autumn and winter of 1838, which he spent in England. Even in the presence of the almost unanimous opposition raised by his scheme, Beckwith is not discouraged; and is so convinced of its perfect suitability to the present needs of the Vaudois Church, that he never wearies of the subject, and goes on recommending its acceptance in the most pressing way.

“P—— is right,” he writes on September 12th, “in taking advantage of this assembly (the Synod which was shortly about to meet) to place this matter before the eyes of the public. For the present, humanly speaking, its success is not probable; but the principle is so solid, that I am persuaded God will give the scheme success if He judges it to be a suitable one.”

“Our children,” he writes, some days later (20th September) of the three young Vaudois taken by him to Durham for the purpose of studying for the ministry, “are in very good health, and making much progress. They are good specimens of the Vaudois, and will be of great use in enabling them to obtain a footing in the University of Durham, and afterwards, I hope, in others also. Is it not of unspeakable importance to strengthen and develop views so useful and profitable to your clergy and your people? If the Vaudois are sensible enough to walk frankly with their true friends, they will reap much advantage from it, without being compromised or called to make great sacrifices. You have a deserved reputation; but it is time to show yourselves worthy of your fathers. You have, for many years, done nothing to maintain and advance the interests of the Protestant religion. Those of your true friends who, favoured by circumstances,

have broader views and means, which they will place at your disposal, are now showing you the right way, and you ought to listen to them. They are not seeking either to domineer or to encroach on your rights. All that they ask is an administration so organized as to make the application of the sums they are disposed to furnish much more efficacious than it is at present. If the Vaudois refuse, I can foresee a long time of inaction, weakness, and material losses for the clergy and the young men. It is to secure your own interests, as well as theirs, that the English demand a change in your opinion. That is all! We are ready, as far as we are concerned; and you have only to decide."

"We understand," he says in the same letter, "your interests better than you do yourselves..... Our horizon is wider, our experience greater, our knowledge more practical, our energy more exercised, our progress less interrupted. Standing, as we do, outside the sphere of personal influences, we look on things with coolness, and have thus every facility for forming a sound judgment. I repeat once more: if the Vaudois decide on yielding to our arguments, they will open a new career to their children, and will end by taking their true position among the Catholic Churches of Christ. But if they do not, they will continue to walk, as they

have long done, with a feeble and halting step, tormented by the meanness and cavillings of their enemies.....Follow, then, the good advice which is given you, and the time will come when you will walk with your heads erect; when you will be independent, and call no one your master but Christ. That is what we seek after."

Such were the sentiments with which, a month later, he returned from London. The Synod, which he hoped would be the means, if not of causing his views to be adopted, yet of diffusing them among the people, met on the 23rd or 25th April of the following year (1839.) Among the subjects which came up for consideration by this assembly, were the co-ordination and union into one whole of the various elements composing what it had been agreed to call *The Discipline of the Vaudois Church*. No better opportunity could have offered for introducing the change regarding the Moderatorship, had there been any inclination in the assembly to do so. There was none, however. When the meeting closed, many important resolutions had been passed; but on the question of the Moderator for life, not a word had been said. This clearly showed that the opposition to this project had rather increased than otherwise. Beckwith understood this, and set out for London with a bleeding heart, not intending, as

hitherto, to re-appear in winter, but (though of this we can scarcely be certain) probably with the resolution never to return. He had often said that the final rejection of his project would be to him a proof that his work among the Vaudois could no longer be carried on. However, though in body he be in London, Beckwith's mind and heart are in the Valleys still. Nothing can be more touching than the solicitude shown in his correspondence, during more than two years spent in England (from May 1839 to October 1841), regarding all, whether far or near, that might affect the welfare of that population, which, notwithstanding, had caused him so much pain. His faithful fellow-labourer, Pastor Bonjour of Saint-Jean, having been dangerously ill, Beckwith wrote him a letter, in which his first care is to thank God with all his heart for having had "the goodness to spare your life, which is so necessary to us for many reasons."*

Another letter, in which the question of the Latin school at Pomaret and the college is debated at length, concludes with these touchingly simple and cordial words: "My friendly regards to N—— and N——; indeed to all, rich and poor, great and small, not forgetting either Ghitouna or Madeleine, or even Azor."†

* Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour, June 29th, 1839.

† The servants and the dog at the parsonage, the latter having been his inseparable companion in his walks.

It was during this stay in England that he sent to the parish of Rodoret a sum of money, as before mentioned, to be converted into provisions.* The supply of Bibles was also sent at this time; † and having discovered that there was a want of catechisms, he got an edition of four thousand copies printed in London. ‡ Yet, in the midst of all these charities, the long debated question is not lost sight of.

“ My dear B——,” he writes, on the 1st October 1839, to his habitual correspondent on this subject, “ I abide by our long discussions, our way of turning the question, and facing it on every side. I can see no omission—nothing to regret. If I had to go over the whole of our course of action again, I should alter nothing that has been done. That was the seal of our work; but we have not succeeded in setting the seal to it, and I am much troubled.”

The trouble he speaks of was considerably augmented by the feelings of animosity and irritation with which—in consequence of the religious struggles which had taken place in his country—a great part of the members of the Anglican Church regarded all dissenting Churches, and consequently the Vaudois Church, as belonging to this category.

* Letter to the Table, from Wyndham Club, St. James' Square, December 1840.

† Letter to the Table, August 5th, 1841.

‡ Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour, April 9th, 1840.

“The Presbyterian Churches of all kinds,” he writes, on July 20th, 1840, “have latterly manifested such marked opposition, and such a furious determination to overthrow our Church, that your cause, and those who are attached to it, meet with but little favour here. The principles and prejudices of our Church lead us to regard all that happens in the Protestant world, at present, as an immense rebellion; and perhaps you are the only Church whom we except from this condemnation.”

“Here is our present position,” he writes on the same subject in another letter (December 1839). “We wished to give your churches a character of homogeneity and nationality such as they do not possess; and, instead of being regarded as *Waldenses* of the parent root, you are merely looked upon as Swiss Presbyterian Churches. When we would speak of you to those of your own communion, they will not listen; if we address those of the Anglican Church, they draw back. At first, every request on behalf of the children of the ancient Vaudois was anticipated; now, men turn their backs on you. All who remain to you are Dr. Gilly and myself. Think what a burden we have to bear!”

But his anxiety does not proceed entirely from outward circumstances such as these; it proceeds also occasionally from himself, and from the im-

possibility of harmonizing principles which, sometimes at least, appear perfectly irreconcilable.

“My mind,” he writes in a remarkable letter of the 22nd August 1840, which we would fain quote word for word, “becomes clearer every day as to the nature of the relations between us, as members of two Churches with views and systems so opposed; and I see the necessity of explaining to the best thinkers among you our true mutual position. Having attentively reviewed my motives, words, and actions with regard to you, I have found nothing either to regret or to change; and (setting aside human weakness) I think I have acted with prudence and energy in the right direction. My opinions and convictions of to-day are those of the year 1828. I regard the subject from the same point of view. I have laid down my principles; I have acted upon them, and I do not repent of it. If then we do not understand each other,” he asks, “whence does this arise?” And to this question he replies, “From the simple nature of things, without bad faith or bad intention on either side.”

“In short,” he continues, becoming animated, “who are we, and who are you? We are members of a monarchical Church, based on the principle of authority, and with an organization which you repudiate. You, on the contrary, belong to a repub-

lican Church, founded on the will of the people, with an ecclesiastical organization which we should call illegal. How can two such societies enter into mutual relations, without producing dissension, distrust, hatred, animosity, &c. ? We are, in your eyes, tyrants and abettors of despotism ; you are, in our eyes, anarchists and children of rebellion and schism. We wish to attain obedience by obedience ; you, by disobedience. To you our system appears only tyranny and slavery ; yours appears to us obstinacy and licence. Either our principles are ill laid down, and have taken a wrong direction, or it is yours that have done so.”

Beckwith draws from all this the inference, that people acting on different principles cannot possibly act together ; and, applying this reasoning to himself, he concludes that it is impossible for him to resume his interrupted work among the Vaudois. But Beckwith wrote and thought in vain, for the conclusions of his essentially logical mind were more than once contradicted by his noble, generous heart, which was far larger than his ideas ; and all that was truly and thoroughly Christian in his character could not fail, sooner or later, to silence what was too narrow and exclusive in his ecclesiastical theories. Beckwith had only pursued this project from the wish to do good ; the guardians of the Vaudois

Church had only resisted it because they feared to compromise their principles. They were thus equally ruled by conscience ; and, where this is the case, dissension can never last long, and causes for union are soon found to be much stronger than any that could exist for separation. And thus it happened in this instance : the motives which induced Beckwith to resume his work in the Valleys were stronger than those which advised another line of conduct ; and so, one fine day in October 1841, the well-known post-chaise—which, however, had not been seen for two years—again rolled over the pavement of La Tour, bringing Beckwith back to his work, and to the Church which, in spite of all that had happened, had never ceased to regard him as her most constant and devoted benefactor.

And now, as for the question which has occupied this long chapter, here, without evasion or reserve, is our view of the matter :—The slightest doubt with regard to the perfect purity and integrity of the motives which led Beckwith to bring forward his plan of appointing a *Moderator for life*, would be so great a wrong to the memory of such an estimable man, that we hope that no Vaudois, worthy of the name, has ever for a moment harboured such a doubt in his bosom. The accusation of having wished, by this project, to make the Vaudois Church

in some sort a vassal of the Anglican Church, is equally unfounded. Beckwith merely wished, by giving the Vaudois Church a form somewhat akin, it is true, to Episcopacy, to impart to it more cohesion and unity, and thus to make it capable of acting more energetically than it had hitherto done; but he never had the least idea of making that Church Anglican.*

Now, as to the end proposed, was Beckwith wrong? No one can venture to say so. The method he adopted to attain his end was what, in our view, he went wrong in. A change in an ecclesiastical system, the passing of a Church from a Presbyterian and democratic constitution (especially when this has lasted for centuries) to a constitution more or less Episcopal and monarchical, is a thing too formidable—even supposing it to be possible—not to bring with it the most painful consequences. Habits formed with regard to religion are doubly powerful and tenacious. Whether good or bad, it is extremely difficult to give them up; and this is an idea which ought to be ever present to the minds of those who preside among us over the work of evangelization, and over the organization of the communities which arise from

* He himself thus characterized the object in view: "To have an Episcopal Church with a Presbyterian constitution."—*Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour*, 28th August 1844.

that work. Besides, was not the evil which Beckwith justly deplored due rather to the defective working of the existing system than to that system itself?

According to us, every ecclesiastical system is legitimate, and capable of bearing good fruits, if it guarantee to society two elements essential to existence, stability, and prosperity—viz, *order* and *liberty*. Where these exist, and the system is unsuccessful, the fault is in the manner of its application; in the want of skill, energy, uprightness, disinterestedness, and perseverance, on the part of those who have the practical charge of it, and who are chiefly accountable for its failure. Such was the work to be done, if Beckwith had but known it. If, leaving the system as it was in itself, and as time and circumstances had made it, he had confined his efforts to amending it as far as possible, and above all, to improving its practical side, what sufferings would have been spared, how many seeds of vexation, which afterwards bore but too much fruit, would have been nipped in the bud!

CHAPTER X.

BECKWITH AND ECCLESIASTICAL QUESTIONS.

THE LITURGY.



THE Vaudois Church, in Beckwith's eyes, had other defects besides its ecclesiastical constitution, to prevent its undertaking with success the great and noble mission appointed to it by Providence—namely, the evangelization of Italy. This long-cherished conviction grew stronger within him, as the moment approached for the beginning of this great undertaking. If, by her means, many souls were to be brought from the darkness of Romanism into the marvellous light of the gospel, the Vaudois Church, organized as she was, and with the Liturgy she used, could but very imperfectly, thought Beckwith, offer them the shelter and nourishment they required. Under the power of this conviction, which we will not comment upon, the first attempts at evangelization had scarcely been made, when the question of the Liturgy seized on Beck-

with's mind with peculiar force, and became for many years the constant subject of his thoughts, and the object of the most active steps to render it popular and acceptable.

The first of these steps, in the order of time, as well as by its own importance, was the publication by him, in 1850, of a volume in 16mo, of 438 pages, entitled: *Saggio di Liturgia, secondo le Dottrine della Santa-Scrittura, ad uso de' semplici.** "The object of this Liturgy," it is said in the preface, "is to teach what are the dogmas and doctrines of the Christian religion. It begins by proclaiming the commandments of God, exhorting men to acknowledge and confess that they have violated them; it shows them how they can escape the terrible consequences of their disobedience, and incites them to sing, in the words of the Psalmist, the praises of God for such a great deliverance. The minister then reads passages of Holy Scripture for the instruction, encouragement, and consolation of the people—to make them understand and experience the Word of God to be the true bread of life. Prayers are then offered for their own wants temporal and spiritual, and for those of all men, of whatever condition. Lastly, the minister is invited to preach, in order to teach men the moral and religious duties which proceed from

* Printed at Pignerol by Chiantore.

the doctrine of Christ. Ritual observances, in as far as they are conformable to the spirit of Scripture, are a great help to sanctification, on condition that they are engaged in with a pious heart and an enlightened mind. They may, in this way, be combined in such a manner as to form an abridgment of doctrine by means of the Scriptures, and to direct men, from their infancy, towards all things 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.' "

This Liturgy is much the same in substance as that of the English Church, but considerably abridged and modified in certain details: all that could have the slightest resemblance to Romanism has been banished from it with the greatest care. It does not pretend to be a complete Liturgy, but, as the title indicates, an experiment, intended by Beckwith to embody his thoughts on this important subject. It was also meant, in some degree, to open the way in which he would desire to see the Vaudois Church walking, if not for her own sake, as the Church of the Valleys, yet at least for the sake of the congregations whom her evangelists, with a blessing from on high, hoped to raise from the midst of the Italian people.*

* This *Saggio* contains, besides the preface, a portion of which we have transcribed, the calendar, with the morning and evening lessons for every day in the year; the psalms, so arranged as to be read through once a month; the order of

This publication having failed to produce the desired effect, and having called forth neither praise nor blame on the part of the official representatives of the Vaudois Church, Beckwith, extremely vexed by this apathy and silence with regard to a question which he held to be so important, tried to draw attention to the subject by another publication the year after. This was a pamphlet, in the form of a letter to the Moderator of the Vaudois Church, in which the reform which he had so much at heart was still more clearly and vigorously advocated.

“Among the number of questions,” we here read, “which will engage the attention of the Synod about to meet, that of an Italian ritual and a Liturgy adapted, with regard to form, to the times and circumstances in which we are placed, is certainly not one of the least important.” “With regard to form,” Beckwith says on purpose; “for,” he continues, “the question of a written Liturgy being resolved by the fact of the adoption of the formulary now in use in the Vaudois Church, and its being guaranteed, in letter as well as in spirit, by the Confession of Faith, the only thing to be ascertained is, whether the present

morning and evening prayer for the Sundays and holy-days; the order of morning and evening prayer for every day in the year; prayers and thanksgivings upon several occasions; collects for every Sunday in the year; the liturgy of the communion, and public baptism for children; the short catechism, to be learned by every one before he be confirmed. The liturgy of confirmation, matrimony, and burial, as also of the consecration of ministers and the installation of elders, is entirely wanting.

formulary, or that which it is proposed to adopt, possesses most advantages.”

The first fault which Beckwith points out in the present Liturgy is, that it is rather a manual of piety than a body of Scriptural doctrines, so arranged as to furnish instruction to the people. It begins, indeed, with an orthodox confession of sins, but it does not announce clearly enough the remission of these sins through justification by faith; and besides, it does not, in a sufficiently connected manner, direct the attention of the faithful to the dogmas and doctrines of the Gospels and Epistles. A second fault of this Liturgy, and in his eyes the principal one, is, that Holy Scripture is not incorporated into it. “The reading of the latter,” he says, “is abandoned to the discretion of a layman before the worship, properly so called, has begun; and the result is, that while the Church proclaims the Word of God to be the only rule of its faith, to the exclusion of every other, the reading of this Word does not even enter into the duties of him who conducts the worship.” A third reproach with which Beckwith assails the formulary then in use is, that if “the prayers are long enough, the time devoted during worship to prayer and the praise of God is not sufficiently prolonged; the mind is not sufficiently exercised in them to make it diligent and persevering, and time

fails it for that holy contemplation which tends to produce and develop in man habits of reverence and piety in adoration."

The same remarks which Beckwith has just made on the Liturgy he finds applicable to those who take part in the worship:—

"A Church," he writes, "which does not possess a ritual placed in the hands of the people, which none can dispense with, is without the means of edification for the absent, and presupposes far too great an amount of knowledge in the majority of the members. Instruction by the parents, family worship, and the reading of the Word of God in the family, may be recommended by the Church, but she cannot enforce them as a habit. The catechism, public worship, and preaching, are her principal resources. The first is an isolated act, exercising its influence only for a season; the pastors can best judge of its real value. The Holy Scriptures, preaching, and the administration of the sacraments, bring the soul into the presence of its Saviour. But a Liturgy formulates the dogmas, the teachings, the moral of these means of salvation and sanctification. It is a monument harder than brass, on which is inscribed the confession of faith of a Church; a fountain whence life-giving waters daily flow; the chart of its Christian liberty, which no

one has the right either of adding to or of taking from ; a lighthouse which points it out as a harbour of refuge for all those tempest-tossed ones who seek a place where they may cast anchor : lastly, it is the code of a visible Church, which permits every one to judge of the community from which it emanates, and thereby either to join them or to depart from them."

Other advantages still, according to him, proceed from such a Liturgy as he proposes, and this in particular, " That it guarantees the rights of conscience, both of the pastors and people : of the pastors, by determining the general character with which their preaching is to be invested, and by giving them full liberty to reveal all the counsel of God ; of the people, by the certainty which it gives them that the instruction imparted to them will always be in harmony with the confession of faith."

But an indispensable condition for the production of all the good results just indicated is, that the clergy and the people worship all together, and that the form of it is such that the people cannot avoid taking an active part in the worship—"an end which can easily be obtained," says Beckwith, "by the simple introduction into the present formulary of sentences and verses repeated alternately by the clergy and people, and the Psalms of David divided so as to be read through every month in the year.

This simple change," he continues, "would induce the congregations to make use of a book, the want of which would in this way be constantly felt; and while the use of this book would make them more and more familiar with the doctrines of their Church, it would also have the precious result of sanctioning their morality. There are none," he says in conclusion, "not even the indifferent and inattentive, who would not gain by this change; for the constant repetition of Scripture sentences which the Liturgy would contain would store their memory with all sorts of precious words, which, with the help of the Spirit of God, might be of great use to them in the various circumstances of life."

When the Church should thus have placed in the hands of her members, first the Word of God, and then a ritual containing all the fundamental truths, along with a Scriptural manual of piety; when, besides this, she should have addressed them by preaching and exhortations of all kinds,—“she would,” according to Beckwith, “have done all that it was in her power to do: she would have given precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, and there a little; she would have discharged her obligations towards them; her doctrines would distil, according to the words of the prophet, like ‘the latter and former rain upon the earth.’”

Very different results from these are pointed out to him, in the case of a rival Church, which, beginning by great attention to forms, has ended by substituting them entirely for the Word of God. Beckwith does not deny this danger—he admits it; but as this substitution, though a very grave fault, is not a necessary result of the adoption of forms, instead of feeling at all enfeebled by this objection, he makes use of it to defend his own side of the question. “With an erroneous rule of faith,” he says—“with worship and observances in many respects contrary to the Word of God—assailed on all sides, this Church yet holds her ground, thanks to the strength she receives from the ritual. Now how much more surely, if she do not neglect the means, can a Church like the Vaudois Church, founded on the Rock of Ages, count on the richest and fairest future, when, in order to rally to the standard of Zion the scattered members of the flock of Christ, she has only to present to men a means of confessing with their mouth the faith which they have in their heart!”

“Render then,” he says in conclusion, “render to your Church—which holds her place as a visible Church—her just attributes. Let grace be poured into her lips, for God hath blessed her for ever. Let her ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; for ‘the King’s

daughter is all glorious within : her clothing is of wrought gold.' 'Then many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.' "

On the eve of the Synod at which he wished to bring forward this discussion he wrote to Pastor Bonjour a very long letter, in which a slight tinge of severity is perceptible ; which is not to be wondered at, considering the disappointment from which he was suffering.

"I see," he says, "that nothing can be done for the ritual. If the alternate repetition of the psalms by the minister and people be not introduced into the Italian Liturgy, it will be impossible to place it in the hands of the people ; and my ideas on this subject are either erroneous or incapable of realization. But, indeed, I cannot conceive how the Presbyterian principle can be injured by giving the people a share in Scriptural worship.....No one, I suppose, would think of being immovable, unchanging, and infallible, in the matter of a visible Church ; but it looks extremely like this, when people refuse to conform to what is demanded by the times, by circumstances, and by human weakness and ignor-

ance. People hold up to me as an objection," he continues, "the example of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, which has no Liturgy; but that Church has made no proselytes from Romanism, and if she has prospered hitherto, it is less owing to the goodness of her principles, than to the bold, energetic, temperate, and persevering character of her people on the one hand, and to her spirit of opposition to the Established Church on the other."

The Anglican Church, he maintained, has a ritual, thanks to which she has formed her members to habits conformable to the confession of faith; also, though furiously attacked by dissent without and apostasy within (for the hour of temptation has come for her as for all), never "have the strength and worth of her customs shown themselves in such a victorious manner." The Greek Church, the heterodox Romish Church, have lived, by force of habit, for centuries; while, "for want of habits, all the Evangelical Churches on the Continent are in a deplorable state of weakness."

The formation of new churches in the plain, constituted as they naturally will be, is, according to Beckwith, a new element, which it would be dangerous to overlook. "You cannot," he says on this subject, "do violence to the habits of Protestants. Very well. But have you a greater right to do violence

to the habits of Catholics? Would this be a better action in one sense than in another? The former have been brought up according to Protestant habits and ideas, and you say that they need no other form of instruction. I agree. But as for those who have neither the one nor the other, and who, notwithstanding, feel this to be a great want, will you do nothing for them? You tell me that the Word of God will do all this; but the application of the Word of God to individual souls is not the question: the question is how to give church habits to the thousands who will join you, and who have all their Christian life to form, and their Christian career to pass through. Now, the Bible does not point out these things, and it is for the leaders of the Church to arrange them in such a way that the Church may do its work, according to the letter and spirit of the Epistle to the Ephesians.....

“The Protestant Churches of Europe have hardly made any proselytes from Romanism since the Reformation, and it is doubtful whether they ever will. If you have the energy and good sense to present a Church to those fugitives from Romanism, perhaps they will accept it; if, instead of that, you only present them with a Bible, you will perhaps have Christians, but you will not have members of the Church, and these youthful Christians will go to

seek shelter elsewhere.....The practical way to retain them, is to present to them, along with the Bible, a Liturgy so compiled as to teach them what the Vaudois Church is, and to use this Liturgy habitually, directing the congregation to take an active part in it.....

“I know,” says Beckwith in conclusion, “how difficult it is for a layman to address ecclesiastics on subjects which do not properly belong to his sphere of action; but I do not hesitate to take upon myself the odium of such an interference, in the hope of arousing debates on important questions, which, according to me, are at the present time questions of life and death.”

But these debates did not take place. All the other expressions of his ideas on this important subject were treated with the same icy silence and want of attention with which his first attempt at a Liturgy and his letter to the Moderator had been received. And why? Was there in the theories of Beckwith, which we have striven to reproduce as faithfully as possible, no vulnerable side by which his opponents (if they had consented to enter into discussion with him, as he wished) might easily have gained the day? And was it, consequently, the impossibility of refuting his arguments, when at the same time they were resolved not to accept

them, which made them choose to remain silent? Not so: there were weak sides which could not be concealed; they were mentioned, discussed, and triumphed over in private conversation. Or was it that what Beckwith proposed with regard to the Liturgy was of too little importance to be considered, or that the criticisms which he made upon the existing formulary were so unfounded, that to try and refute them, and to submit them to a profound and conscientious examination, was to be regarded as a useless and superfluous task? Neither was this the case.

It is impossible, without self-deception, to deny that many of his remarks are true, and that if they had had justice done them, the ritual would have been considerably improved. We cannot deny, for example, what Beckwith affirms, that in the present liturgical form the Holy Scriptures—instead of occupying in the worship the place of honour which they ought to have in an Evangelical Church—hold the second place, and are theoretically, if not practically, considered as a digression. It cannot be denied, that in our present form of worship, and in that of many other Evangelical Churches on the Continent and elsewhere, there is an excessive preponderance of instruction over adoration, which occupies comparatively little space.

Again, we cannot deny, what Beckwith likewise affirms, that the liturgical formula at present in use, and which, as a simple manual of piety, could not be better—whether because of what it is in itself, or because of the way in which it is used—is entirely incapable of forming those religious habits, which, though they are not life, and can in no case take its place, yet have an unmistakable conservative power over all that belongs to the visible Church. Lastly, it cannot be denied, that, with the exception of the singing and some other bodily postures, the existing form gives the people no directly active part in the observance of public worship. This produces the singular anomaly of a Church most democratic in its government, and yet most aristocratic in its mode of celebrating public worship.

And if all these things are true; if the circumstance that two or three times, of late years, the Synod has appointed commissions to revise the Liturgy, proves that the existing form of it does not give entire satisfaction,—then was not the task proposed by Beckwith a noble and a sacred one, worthy of the enlightened and pious men to whom it was proposed? In seeking to remedy the existing defects, without falling into the opposite ones of excessive length and fastidious repetition, the pastors and other ecclesiastics would have performed a

great duty towards their Church. But they would also have given just satisfaction to that noble heart, to whom the interests of the Vaudois Church were more precious than his own, and who, by his innumerable benefits, and the many sacrifices he had made for more than twenty years of his tastes and preferences in Church matters, should certainly have merited more regard than he received in this instance.*

And how did Beckwith, in his turn, receive the silence, which, for many reasons, he might have felt to be an offence? By devoting for more than two years (we have already mentioned this in the chapter on "Ecclesiastical Buildings") his time, strength, health, fortune, and all his faculties, to the building of the church at Turin,—the first Vaudois church built beyond the limits of the Valleys.

"We English," he said one day to a group of friends with whom he was conversing, "we are not, like the French, people who have many ideas at a time. Generally, we have but one; but we do not easily give it up. And this," he continued, "is a result of the education we receive. At twelve years of age we are thrown into a boat, and told, You are to sail to such a place. The passage is difficult;

* This reproach, which the author has permitted himself to address to his colleagues in the ministry, is as directly addressed to himself, as he did no more than they did, at the time, and in the matter in question.

we advance, retire, turn to the right, and then to the left. Sometimes it lasts a very long time, a day and a night, if necessary; but, in the meantime, the passage is made, and we go on our way." What Beckwith said to his friends on that occasion, is what he practised constantly during all the time of his beneficent and reforming activity in the midst of the Vaudois Church, and more particularly in his efforts regarding the Liturgy. He tried to advance in the way which appeared to him the right one. He could not do it; but what he could not do either yesterday or to-day, he may do to-morrow. He waits for experience, which, he says, is a great teacher, and he counts on its lessons to gain over to his way of thinking those who are opposed to it.

But when the church at Turin, his favourite work, was at last consecrated to public worship, and he saw all that he had done in this respect fully accepted, except his Liturgy, or, failing his Liturgy, something that might show a willingness to enter on the path he had marked out, then there took place in Beckwith something which had never yet happened even in the midst of all his preceding vexations, and his heart received from this circumstance a wound, which, for many years, seemed incurable. He who had spent body and soul in the restoration of the Vaudois Church; who had loved it with the

most tender and compassionate love ; who, for more than twenty consecutive years, had imposed silence on his education and his Anglican habits in order to make himself as much a Vaudois and a Presbyterian as possible, and, during all that time, had constantly partaken of the Lord's Supper in the midst of this Church.....suddenly, he no longer felt himself at liberty to do so ; and, no Anglican form of worship then existing at Turin, he was seen, each time that he wished to approach the holy table, performing the long journey from Turin to Genoa. This continued until the not very distant day, when, regarding his work, though unfinished, to be no longer possible for him, he suddenly broke it off ;—and this time to resume it no more.

CHAPTER XI.

BECKWITH AND THE WORK OF EVANGELIZATION IN ITALY.

LONG ere the evangelization of Italy was even dreamt of as a possibility, Beckwith foresaw it, and looked forward to it as the object of all his efforts. Thus, while he joyfully hailed every indication of the realization of his hopes, he viewed with anxiety and suspicion every measure which seemed destined to frustrate them. When, in the beginning of 1846, he learned that the Municipal Council of Turin had at last done justice to the Protestants of the capital by acceding to their request for a suitable and convenient burying-ground—"Ah!" exclaimed Beckwith, "they have at last decided to grant a place to the dead! That is good. The time is not far distant when they will also be obliged to grant one to the living!" *

But when, as a corrective, under the influence and at the instigation of Monseigneur Charvaz, the

* The inauguration of this cemetery took place on the 15th January 1846. See the records of the Vaudois parish of Turin.

most hostile to the Vaudois of all the bishops of Pignerol, a mission, having the avowed end of converting that people to Catholicism, had been set on foot in the very heart of the Valleys, in the borough of La Tour,* Beckwith was much distressed, and wrote from London, where he then was, to his usual correspondent, the pastor of Saint-Jean, a letter, betraying his anxiety in every line. "I do not know," he says, "from what point of view I am to look at what they are going to do at La Tour. The so-called missionaries will be so many gaolers, plotting against the people. Those at Pignerol, having no heresy to repress, will apply themselves to their creature comforts; but those at La Tour, having nothing to do but the business in hand, and finding it impossible to make much of that, cannot fail to become more or less hurtful. However, it is evident that they now consider Protestants to be of more importance than they have hitherto done, and their success depends entirely on your people. The latter, it is true, expose themselves only too freely—by their ignorance, their idleness, their carelessness, and their want of religion—to the efforts of those who would pervert them. On the other hand, they will perhaps be more on their guard, and more alive

* The solemn installation of this mission, at which Monseigneur Charvaz had induced the King to appear in person, took place on the 25th September 1844, but its actual beginning dates from 1840.

to a sense of their danger, when they find themselves engaged in a struggle against Romish tyranny; but in the main, the relative position of the two parties is unchanged, only you will have a nest of vipers on your threshold, and if you would succeed in trampling them under foot, you must be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace." *

The anticipation of a rapidly approaching struggle, which must be prepared for with discretion and energy, makes itself felt throughout the remarkable letter which he addressed, on the 10th April 1844, to the Table, on the occasion of the Synod's presenting him with a cup, as a mark of gratitude for his many benefactions.

"The Table," he says, "has an exact knowledge of all that has been done—of the results arrived at, and the actual position of the Church in presence of her formidable adversary. The principles of Protestantism are well established: they are proclaimed in her institutions; their object is well defined; all that remains to be done is to realize and to develop them. More exposed to outward attacks and to individual temptations, the Vaudois Church will perhaps be called to endure trials in which all her energy and all her faith will be put to the proof. I rejoice in the belief that she has arms in her posses-

* Letter to M. J. P. Bonjour, 9th July 1840.

sion which she can bravely wield on the field of battle ; that those young soldiers of the faith, who stand ready in the distance, will not fail when they are face to face with danger, and that they will maintain untarnished the ancient reputation of their forefathers, who loyally shed their blood for the true liberties of the human race. The path is clear before you. The eternal Word of the living God has been confided to your Church, and she has bound herself religiously neither to add to it nor to take away from it; she has been called to bear through centuries the torch of the gospel, and to make its light to shine in the midst of darkness. ‘ If God be for us, who can be against us?’ You want for nothing else: you have your Bibles, your ministers, your churches, your liturgy, your confession of faith, your schools, your libraries, your intelligence, your friends—everywhere. Your arsenal is well furnished with the arms of the gospel. Sharpen, then, the swords of your spirits, and steep them in that Spirit which shall be given to you liberally, if you apply yourselves like men to your duty. If you make use of all the means which Providence has placed in your hands—with patience, perseverance, and charity—administering the Word with meekness and wisdom, in all integrity of heart, and keeping unblemished the precious trust which has been committed to you

for centuries, as *πρεσβύτεροι* of the ancient Church of Christ in Piedmont,—‘ then thy light shall shine as the morning, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water which faileth not ; and thou shalt be called the repairer of breaches, and he who repairs the roads, that the land may be inhabited.’ ‘ When Joab saw that the front of the battle was turned against him behind and before, he took of the choicest of Israel, and ranged them against the Syrians.’ ‘ Go thou and do likewise.’ Let the Vaudois Church rally around her banner her old men and her little children. March with boldness right upon the enemy, and the God of armies will place himself at your head, and your adversaries will disappear like the dew of the morning. One more effort, and the conflict of ten centuries is ended. ‘ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.’ Thus you will go on from strength to strength. All that is good, truly noble and great upon earth, will render you a worthy testimony ; and you will have a sure reward in Him who has said,—‘ They shall not labour in vain ! ’ ”

When the first political reforms took place in October 1847, very soon to be followed by the promulgation of the *Statuto** and the edict of the emancipation of the Vaudois, the imagination of Beckwith was strongly impressed by these events. It was even more than he had expected. His dream of so many years was on the way to realization; and what he alone had so long foreseen, formed from that time the subject of transports of joy to a whole people.† The joy which Beckwith felt was, however, mingled with many anxieties; chief among which was the fear that the Vaudois Church was not equal to the task which had so suddenly devolved upon her, and that when brought to the light of day, to which she would now be exposed, this might tend to her confusion rather than to her glory.

On the 4th January 1848 he wrote to the Rev. M. Lantaret: "Our friends swarm on all sides; our enemies retire into the shade. It is striking. How-

* The name of *Statuto* is given in Italy to what is elsewhere called a Charter or Constitution. The Constitution was promulgated on the 29th January 1848.

† Though bearing the date of 17th February 1848, this edict, the promulgation of which is chiefly due to Marquis Robert d'Azeglio, only appeared in the official gazette of the 25th. On the evening of that day the palaces of the English and Prussian Ambassadors at Turin were brilliantly illuminated, as well as the houses of most of the Protestants. The news of this happy event reached the Valleys soon enough to allow of hundreds of bonfires being lighted on all the hills, and even on the heights covered with snow; and thus to the joyous demonstrations of the Protestants in the capital were united those of their brethren of the mountains. The Advocate-General, Count Sclopis, called by his position to give his opinion on this measure, recommended strongly its adoption, giving as his chief reason that it was shown by the criminal papers that, in the course of above a century, "no other people of the State could be compared to the Vaudois for moral and social virtue." See "I. Valdesi," by A. Bert, p. 335 and after.

ever, we are only at the beginning of the end, and everything yet remains to be done. Although your fate is far from being decided, you are virtually emancipated, and you have a large share in all that is going on. With energy, the feeling of your duty, and a determined will, you may arrive at great things ; but it depends entirely on yourselves. If each of the Vaudois had the English nation at his side, it would not advance his cause in the least. You are required now to combat individually your fellow-countrymen of Piedmont, to rule them, or to place yourselves on a level with them.

“ If you have independent force, you will succeed ; if not, you will remain concealed among the crowd, and nothing more will be heard of you. Your career—if your torpid existence since the Reformation deserve such a name—is closed. Old things are passed away, and new ones are beginning to dawn. HENCEFORWARD EITHER YOU ARE MISSIONARIES, OR YOU ARE NOTHING. Your first duty is to assert your civil rights, for it is on the existence and the realization of them that your future depends ; and all your future usefulness depends on the place which you will take in Piedmontese society, and on the moral and religious attitude which you will be able to maintain in that society. Do not deceive yourselves ; the foreigner will no longer aid you.

He cannot do so. Either you must remain hidden in your obscurity, or you must draw the eyes of men upon you. You must stand firm, or you will not be able to bear the light of your own candle. There is no medium. Either act efficiently, struggle, persist, arrive at the goal, or be altogether set aside. Your past position has created in the midst of your population bad habits of acting, speaking, and thinking. You must put a stop to all that. You must put yourselves in contact with men, and be in a position to maintain the conflict with men and with things. You must have a conviction of the greatness of your cause, and boldness to march straight forward in the path of civil and religious liberty, without looking back, with probity and perseverance; if not, you will be disowned and eclipsed, and your name blotted out. Either you become a reality, or nothing at all. I confess that I am very uneasy. There are, undoubtedly, some intelligent people here and there, but they are without influence over the masses. The majority of the people are not equal to the position; there is no apparent possibility of assembling either Gideon's three hundred or the flying company of Janavel.* This,

* One of the bravest of the Vaudois captains, who distinguished himself particularly in the persecution of 1686, and who, having taken refuge in Switzerland like the others, but being unable, on account of his age, to accompany his brethren on their return in 1689, was, however, the real leader of that memorable expedition.

Lantaret, is the sad truth ; and it is only by ‘ erasing the past that you can inscribe your names on the annals of the future.’ ”

The declaration of Beckwith at the beginning of this letter, that the Vaudois had no longer any enemies, and that all had become their friends, was proved in a most striking manner, never to be forgotten by those who witnessed it, when, at the first great assembly in the capital, deputations from all the provinces arrived to thank the King for the Constitution he had granted them. The Vaudois had arrived in great numbers, and formed, with the Protestant strangers resident in that city, a column of more than six hundred individuals grouped round a magnificent banner of Savoy, on which were embroidered in silver, in large characters, the simple but expressive words : “TO KING CHARLES-ALBERT, THE GRATEFUL WALDENSIANS.” At the moment when the immense procession, composed of at least fifty thousand persons, was about to move, a deputation from the central committee advanced to the place where the Vaudois deputation was assembled. “ Vaudois ! ” they said, “ until now you have been the last ; to-day let justice be done, and march you at our head ! ” And so they did. The Vaudois column, preceded by its banner, and surrounded by a dozen children in the Italian costume of the six-

teenth century, opened the procession. And then a spectacle, unheard of in the annals of Piedmont, was given to the capital, and through her to the kingdom : in all the streets through which the procession had to pass, wherever the banner of the persecuted Church appeared, hands were clapped, handkerchiefs waved, and hats—sometimes even that of a priest—thrown into the air. Shouts of “*Evviva ai Valdesi, evviva l'emancipazione!*” burst from a thousand lips ; and it frequently happened that some of the spectators, stepping out of the ranks, came and threw themselves upon the neck of some one in the column, accompanying this act, sufficiently eloquent in itself, with words most touching and fraternal. The enthusiasm was indescribable. What a contrast between the acclamations of that day and the cries of “Death to the heretics!” with which, in other times, these same streets had so often resounded, on the occasion of a confessor of the gospel being conducted to execution ! What sign of the times could be better fitted to give an overpowering confirmation to Beckwith's prognostications ?

But if there be a time for festivals, it is not by rejoicings only, or even chiefly, that either a nation or a Church arrives at the accomplishment of its destinies. After the rejoicings, action, intense and full

of energy, deriving its strength from faith in the promises of God,—such was the duty too plainly imposed on the Vaudois Church by these circumstances for her ever to dream of withdrawing from it. But there was one very essential condition of success in this enterprise, of which she was almost entirely destitute, and this was a knowledge of the Italian language.

Although the Vaudois were in all respects Italians—Italian by origin, by geographical position, by character, Italian still more by the form and constitution of their *patois*, which has much more affinity with Italian than with French—it is not the less true that, for more than two centuries, they spoke hardly anything but this latter language, and had almost forgotten that of their own country. The terrible plague of 1630, by carrying off all the pastors, except two, had rendered it necessary to procure foreigners as their successors; and the necessity of learning to understand these new-comers having commenced this deviation, the monstrous tyranny to which the Vaudois had been subjected during so many ages had continued it. Seeing, then, that no Vaudois was allowed to attend a university, or to aspire to any liberal profession, or any employment under Government—that the acquisition of land beyond their own narrow limits was formally for-

bidden them, and commercial pursuits were hardly tolerated—that, consequently, to acquire more education it was necessary to go to some foreign country, and that their only prospect of an earthly future lay in expatriation,—what matter for surprise can we find in the fact that they had abandoned their mother tongue? Surely to impute this to them as a crime, as has sometimes been done, is an act of the most crying injustice.

However this may be, the language which, alongside of the *patois*, was generally spoken in the Valleys was not Italian, but French. Not that Italian was not understood by people of a certain degree of culture, but no one—even among the clergy—could speak it fluently and without mistakes. So great an obstacle as this must be removed as soon as possible, if they did not wish to sink at the very moment of weighing anchor. Beckwith set himself to do so at once; and in less than six months after the promulgation of the edict of emancipation, he had provided the means for four professors of the college* to travel to Tuscany, with the express understanding that they were to pass at least eight months there, “spending whatever money was necessary for the purpose of learning as much

* They were the Rev. Messrs. Bartholomew Malan, B. Tron, F. Gay, and the present writer.

Italian as should be possible within that time. One of these, Professor Malan, who returned to the Valleys some weeks before his colleagues, preached a sermon in Italian (the first for centuries) in the Church of Saint-Jean; which afforded to the excellent General one of the greatest and sweetest enjoyments which his noble heart had ever experienced.

“Malan,” he writes on this subject from La Tour, on the 9th May 1849, “made a brilliant *début* last Sunday at Saint-Jean by a service in Italian. Never did I see the people of Saint-Jean so attentive; and, with the exception of about a dozen words, I am persuaded that they mastered the sense quite as well as they could have done that of a French sermon. I hope, before long, to have the pleasure of hearing the thunders of the Vatican from your lips, and from those of the brave Tron. Sunday was for me truly a day of Pentecost. After twenty-two years of expectation, it was a sweet consolation to hear the voice of a missionary in a Vaudois church, and to have the prospect of raising up the Church of Christ in Piedmont anew to a position such as it enjoyed in the person of the illustrious confessor Claude.”

But Italian learned by a few men was not sufficient to lead the entire Church into the path upon

which Beckwith was so desirous to see it enter. What was wanting with a view to this end was to familiarize the rising generation with Italian. But how was this to be managed? Beckwith's plan was soon resolved upon. Scarcely had the four professors who had been sent into Tuscany returned, than, in concert with the Table and the parochial authorities, he summoned to La Tour all the schoolmasters of the Valleys, and allowed them, in addition to their salaries, thirty francs a month. He then, during three months, by the aid of masters who had been prepared for it beforehand, made them take in, from morning to night, as much Italian as they possibly could; and sent them back, at the end of that time, to their respective schools, so well qualified in this respect, that for the future there was not in all the villages a single school where Italian had not a place.*

And while this instrument was being prepared and sharpened in the way we have just described, other events were occurring which allowed its being turned to account without delay. The Protestants of the town of Turin, who, up to this time, had only enjoyed the privilege of regular worship through the protection which they received from Protestant powers,

* The deliverance of the Table calling the schoolmasters to La Tour is dated 16th June 1849, and bears that they must remain there from 16th July to 18th October.

whose Ambassadors resided in that town, had asked and obtained leave from the Table to form themselves, taking advantage of the liberties proclaimed by the Constitution, into the sixteenth parish of the Vaudois Church. This was a very valuable point gained, of which the administration of the Church did not fail to take advantage, by decreeing, almost within a year, that once a month a sermon should be preached in Italian in this parish. This was the first beginning of a work destined to assume considerable proportions.

Six or eight months later, in June 1850, other events, particularly significant, announced to the Vaudois Church that the moment had arrived for her "to lengthen her cords, and to enlarge the borders of her tent." The seed of the gospel which many years before Mlle. Calandrini, from Geneva, a woman of noble and generous, but above all of a Christian heart, had planted in Tuscany, the birth-place of her ancestors, had not been lost. Many persons belonging to the better class—advocates, literary men, and among them Count Pietro Guicciardini, a descendant of the illustrious historian of that name—had received the good seed into honest and good hearts, where it had sprung up and promised an abundant harvest. This movement, seconded by the excellent Drouin, pastor of the Swiss chapel at Florence, had widely spread,

and the want of fit men to strengthen and carry it on was now felt. As no such men were to be found at the time in Tuscany, the eyes of these new brethren were naturally turned to the Church of the Valleys, as the primitive, and at the same time, the national Church, to instruct, to edify, to strengthen them in the faith, and afterwards, when the propitious moment should have arrived, to organize them as a congregation or parish, according to the rights and discipline of the Vaudois Church. The Table, "blessing God that a door was thus opened for the preaching of the gospel, and that He had condescended to call her, in so direct a manner, to co-operate in the accomplishment of His merciful designs," hastened to fulfil this desire, by giving up to the brethren of Tuscany the Rev. Mr. B. Malan, Professor in the College of La Tour, who immediately repaired to his post. This was the second step taken by the Vaudois Church in the path thus mercifully opened up to her.

A third, and still more important step than the two preceding ones, was not long in following. A short time after the departure of the deputation from Tuscany, two English merchants, who were also true Christians, and in whose hearts the advancement of the kingdom of God occupied a still larger place than their commercial affairs—Messrs. Ambrose Brewin of Tiverton, and Milson of Lyons—

arrived in the Valleys, merely for the purpose of paying them a visit. The Church at that time was occupied more than ever with the subject of evangelization, and, in particular, was in the act of exchanging the monthly preaching at Turin for a regular Sunday service, with a view to founding in that town an evangelistic station. What passed on the occasion of this visit, what interchange of ideas and sentiments took place between Beckwith and his two countrymen, is not exactly known to us. What we know is, that hardly had these two brethren left La Tour when Beckwith addressed the following letter to the authorities of the Church:—

“LA TOUR, *16th September 1850.*”

“MR. MODERATOR,—Two English gentlemen,—the first called Mr. Brewin, of Tiverton, Devon, England; and the other Mr. Milson, of Lyons,—have charged me to acquaint you that in the event of the Table being disposed to appoint Mr. Meille as missionary at Turin, they will engage to pay a sum of 1500 francs a year, in the proportion of 1000 francs from Mr. Brewin, and 500 from Mr. Milson, from the date of Mr. Meille’s appointment, and that for three years consecutively.—Your sincere servant,

“JOHN C. BECKWITH.” *

* These two excellent men who are mentioned in this letter, have both entered into their rest—Mr. Brewin sixteen or seventeen years ago, and Mr. Milson two

The generous offer made in this letter responded too fully to their own thoughts for the Table, having at that time Dr. Revel as Moderator, not to recognize in it a powerful call to go on courageously with the work which they had undertaken; and by a resolution of 19th September 1850, they invited the author of these lines, then a Professor in the College of La Tour, to give up that post, and go to Turin to occupy that of an evangelist, charged with regular preaching every Sunday in the Italian language, and with the work of evangelization in the capital and neighbourhood. Beckwith, in communicating the tidings to him, added on his own part these words: "Go, by all means, and I shall not be long in joining you." In fact, the first regular service in Italian took place at Turin on the first Sunday of November 1850; and from the beginning of 1851, Beckwith, quitting the Valleys, came to fix his abode also in the capital, ready to aid, by all the means in his power, a work which he had urged on more than any one, and which had his fullest sympathy.

The beginning of the work was uncertain and

years ago—and remained to the end devoted friends of the Vaudois Church. The same interest which Mr. Brewin took in this Church, was continued by his excellent widow, who, not to speak of many other acts of generosity, gave up entirely to the work of evangelization of the Vaudois Church in Italy the credit of 30,000 francs which her husband had advanced for the building of the pastor's house at Turin.

difficult, as it might well be, considering the circumstances in which it was undertaken. Would the Government leave it alone, or oppose it? This was the question which suggested itself at every step, and to which the slightly ambiguous text of the Constitution on the head of liberty of conscience permitted the most contradictory replies.* Thus, slowly and prudently, yet surely, the work advanced. The services, begun without ostentation, and with a very limited number of hearers, were more numerous attended from Sunday to Sunday. Many came from curiosity, some possibly from hostile motives, but others came to seek after the truth in all sincerity. With these the pastors ere long formed a connection, and began to hold small meetings in their houses.

A kind of assistance by which the Church of Christ has profited in every age, fell also to the lot of the new work at Turin, in the arrival of a small number of Tuscan brethren, whom persecution had driven from their own country in the spring of 1851. The labours of the Vaudois evangelist at

* The first article of the Constitution is as follows: "The Catholic Apostolic Roman religion is the only religion of the State. Other forms of worship are tolerated *conformably to the laws.*" But what laws? The existing laws, or the laws yet to be made? The minister who would have replied according to the wishes of the clerical party, "*The existing laws,*" whilst remaining faithful to the letter of the Constitution, would have completely denuded it of its spirit, and would have sapped to its foundations the great principle of liberty of conscience. Happily the other interpretation was given by the illustrious Cavour, thus opening up a way in which all succeeding ministers have followed.

Turin had not been altogether fruitless. In several parts of the town, small meetings had been quickly organized, where the gospel was read and explained to an audience which was daily becoming more numerous and more eager to hear. In the beginning of September 1850, the Consistory of the Swiss Church, at the instigation of its President, Pastor Drouin, had decided that an Italian service should be held twice a month in his chapel. The object of this decision, said the deliverance, was "to provide for the spiritual wants of the Grisons connected with that Church;" and such an impulse was given by this means to the work in Florence, that very soon the chapel could not contain the crowds that flocked to it, half of whom at least were Italians.*

The first fortnight of December witnessed the arrival of M. P. Geymonat, from the Theological Hall of Geneva, who had been sent by a committee of that town to unite his efforts with those of M. Malan. This happy circumstance enabled the number of meetings to be increased, and greatly advanced the work, which, by Christmas of the same year, had acquired so much stability, that a

* "I heard M. Malan preach yesterday at Florence in Italian. The chapel was as full as an egg, and a good half of the congregation were new converts."—*Letter from Professor Rollier, dated Pisa, 2nd December 1850. Records of the Table.*

considerable number of the new converts were admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper in the Swiss chapel.

Such a decided step had naturally disturbed "Paolottism,"* and along with it, and through it, the Grand-Ducal Government. The latter, after having tried in vain every means of intimidation—which, without creating too much alarm, might have succeeded in the end proposed, namely, to stifle the preaching of the gospel at its birth—had at last determined to make the attack, by sending the two Vaudois evangelists over the frontier. M. Geymonat, in particular, was sent off in the most brutal manner between two soldiers, and chained like a malefactor; while seven of the Christians, whom the police had surprised in the act of reading and meditating on the Bible in a private house, were sentenced to exile for a year.†

This sentence, the forerunner of one much more severe, which was pronounced about a year later upon the Madiai,‡ had not only secured to the

* The *Paolotti* are the members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Italy; a society which, under the cloak of benevolence, does a work exactly similar to that of the Jesuits.

† These were Messrs. Guicciardini, Betti, Magrini, Guarducci, Borsieri, Solaini and Guerra. The first six chose exile, and came at first to Turin.

‡ June 8th, 1852. The sentence was: To Francesco Madiai, fifty-six months' hard labour at Volterra; and to Rosa Madiai, forty-five months' imprisonment, besides all the expenses of the law-suit. The principal accusation was,—“Impiety shown by proselytism to the so-called evangelical or pure gospel confession.”

mission-station at Turin the help of another able workman, M. Geymonat, to whom the Table had intrusted this field of labour, but, by the presence in that town of those well-known exiles for the faith who had found an asylum there, had quickened and intensified the interest which many had for some time felt in the preaching of the gospel. The meetings, already numerous, which, before that time, had been held from house to house, increased in number still more, and the services in the church were still more fully attended.

The laying of the foundation-stone of the Vaudois Church * in Turin, in October 1851, while it furnished a most convincing proof of the respect of the Government for religious liberty, gave, in some measure, the freedom of the city to the gospel, upon that very soil from which it had been for ages so pitilessly banished. It formed also a powerful encouragement to evangelistic work in this town, by drawing the attention of all classes towards it. Beckwith wrote the following to the Moderator of the Vaudois Church in November 1852 (and what he then said was equally true a year before, when only the foundations of the church were as yet laid) :—

“ You have no idea of the immense help which

* See the chapter on “ Beckwith and Ecclesiastical Buildings,” p. 112.

has been given to our cause by the mere walls of the new church. Perpetual crowds of people of all classes, and discussions and disputes without end, on the subject of religion, have been caused simply by the appearance of the bricks of this church in the capital. I am convinced that these walls and the *Buona Novella* have published Jesus Christ where one could never have expected to find Him."

The *Buona Novella*, to which Beckwith alludes, was a weekly journal of sixteen pages large octavo, commenced at Turin in October 1851, with the view of assisting, by the pen, the work begun by preaching. Beckwith had himself written for this journal, on the controverted question of the Origin of the Vaudois Church, a series of nineteen articles, in which he maintained that this Church was simply the remains of the old Church of Christ in Piedmont, abandoned in the beginning of the twelfth century by her bishops, when the resistance which the diocese of North Italy had for centuries offered to the pretensions of the Papacy had been at last overcome.*

On the evening of the day when the foundation-

* This journal, which was published for ten years at Turin, and for two years at Florence, has been superseded by the *Eco della Verita*, edited at first by Dr. Revel, then for some years by Dr. De Sanctis, and after his death, by M. Auguste Meille.

stone of the material temple had been laid at Turin, the first reception of catechumens took place. These were ten in number, and among them was the Neapolitan advocate, Bonaventura Mazzarella, who was afterwards an earnest evangelist, a member of Parliament, and a judge of the Court of Appeal in Genoa. Thus on the same day was also laid, as it were, the foundation-stone of that spiritual building which was to be raised at Turin to the glory of the Redeemer and of His all-sufficient grace.* Two other events, which filled with joy and consolation all who took part in them, were, a second admission of members a month after the first, and the celebration at Christmas of the Lord's Supper in Italian, in which all were partakers who had before that time been received into the Church. Thus did the gospel spread; and souls in ever increasing numbers, some snatched from superstition, some from unbelief, were translated from darkness to marvellous light. And while these things were going on in the capital, the Lord was preparing the way for a similar work in Genoa, the second city of the kingdom, and the centre of Mariolatry.

On the 24th November of the same year, 1851, Captain, afterwards Admiral Pakenham, of the British Navy, who, having himself been banished

* See Appendix, letter D,—the formula of engagement signed, in the mission-station at Turin, by the catechumens who desired admission into the Church.

from Tuscany, had found refuge in Genoa, wrote to one of his friends, that having begun in this town meetings which were every day more numerous attended, he stood much in need of the help of a Vaudois minister, under whose direction and help he might carry on what he had been permitted to undertake.* The minister required not being to be found at once, and prudence rendering the greatest discretion necessary in all the proceedings of the Church directors, they confined their efforts in the meantime to establishing a temporary mission, by means of which they might become fully acquainted with the nature and extent of the movement, with a view to furthering it in every possible way. This mission, confided successively to MM. Geymonat and Malan, both of whom had been banished from Tuscany a year before, led to a petition being addressed to the Table, in July 1852, by sixty persons, asking that they might have evangelical worship in the town of Genoa, conducted by a pastor of the Vaudois Church.† Such a request being entirely in accordance with Beckwith's views, he determined to use every effort to obtain a favourable answer.

“ You know better than I do,” he writes on this subject to the Moderator, on the 6th August 1852,

* Letter from Admiral Pakenham to the author.

† This letter bears the date of 28th July 1852. See the Records of the Table.

“the present position of affairs in Genoa. I have asked M—— to desire Malan not to leave the town till he has received a communication from you. I would impress on you the great importance of doing your utmost to aid this mission, losing sight, for the moment, of every other consideration.

“It is evident to me, that if churches are to be formed outside the Valleys, we must aim at the exclusively Catholic element.” (Beckwith had a very poor opinion, in view of this object, of the Vaudois and Protestant element in general.) “Now it is only at Turin or Genoa that we can hope to make a beginning which may lead to a tangible result, and go on in its own strength. Genoa offers even greater facilities for this than Turin. A church formed in Genoa would not only be capable of maintaining itself, but also of assisting churches which may be formed in the country.* Though you can hardly expect support from the higher classes, yet it is of the last importance that you should have a certain number of manufacturers and head-workmen, who are in a position to give work to those who, for the sake of religion, have lost their situations, and to renew by this means, so to speak, the broken links of the social chain.

“I look upon it as a matter of life and death to

* We regret to say that neither of these hopes has yet been realized.

strike the iron at Genoa while it is hot. Overthrow then all the obstacles which either yourself or others may raise to this work. Aim straight at this capital point. Two citadels, placed at the two extremities of the kingdom, will offer a place of refuge for the weak and a rallying-point for the strong. The ramparts once manned, we shall have ammunition and inexhaustible supplies, which will enable the garrison to resist the attacks of the world, the flesh, and the devil.”*

The result of this letter was a resolution by the Table, ten days later—17th August 1852—to send M. Geymonat from Turin to Genoa, to be stationed permanently there. By the blessing of God on his labours, and with the help of Signor Mazzarella, who was soon sent by the Table to his assistance, a prosperous Church was speedily established.

And, by a remarkable coincidence, on the very day when this resolution was taken, a letter was despatched to the Table from Geneva, containing a matter of the greatest importance. The proposal it contained was destined, not only to fill the place left vacant in the important station of Turin by the departure of M. Geymonat, but also to give to the cause of Italian evangelization one of her most able champions. We need not inform our readers who M. De Sanctis was, nor by what series of providential

* See this letter in the Records of the Table.

dispensations he had been led from Rome, where he held the brilliant position of Vicar of Santa Maria Maddalena, and Theologian of the Inquisition, first to Malta, and thence to Geneva. In the latter place he had remained for nearly three years, occupied with the evangelization of his countrymen who were settled there, and with the composition of his numerous polemical writings, which have contributed so powerfully to the progress of the gospel in Italy, and have gained for their author so great a celebrity.* It was, then, on the 17th of August, the very day that the Table had decided to translate M. Geymonat from Turin to Genoa, that M. De Sanctis addressed to that body a letter which, on account of its special importance, we shall here give entire :—

“ GENEVA, 17th August 1852.

“ *To the Members composing the Table of
the Vaudois Church.*

“ HONoured FATHERS AND BRETHREN IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD,—It is now nearly five years since I abandoned the Romish faith; and, from that moment my desires have always been directed to—

* It was, as he relates the story himself, on the 10th September 1847, that he left Rome to go to Malta, where he spent about two years; where, towards the end of 1849, he wrote his treatise on *Confession*; and whence he went in 1850 to Geneva,—called by the Italian committee of that town, having at its head the venerable Colonel Tronchin.—See “*Biography of Dr. De Sanctis*,” by Dr. Chiesi, *Advocate, of Pisa*.

wards the Church of the Valleys, because in her I recognize the true, primitive, apostolic Italian Church. During the five years that I have spent among Christians, it has been several times proposed to me, even with the prospect of temporal advantage, that I should join some Church; but I have always refused, considering that an Italian who seeks sincerely the good of his countrymen should belong to no other than the ancient Italian Church. In this way I have spent nearly five years, waiting for a favourable opportunity of asking for admission into this Church. After much prayer that the will of God might be made known to me, it seemed to me that to remain longer isolated, without belonging to a visible Church, was, to say the least, an abnormal state. I therefore feel that I ought not to delay another instant in asking to be admitted into your Church. I come, therefore, by this letter, humbly to pray the Table to admit me as a member of the ancient Italian Church, known by the name of the Vaudois Church. And as, since I abandoned the Romish Church, my occupation has been the evangelization of the Italians, either by writing or by preaching, I believe that, for the glory of God, I ought to continue to evangelize. It is for this reason that I venture to ask the Table for the imposition of hands, and ordination to the holy ministry: not that I believe

that the imposition of hands can communicate any virtue to me, admitting as I do that the calling comes from God, and not from the Church; but because I believe that the calling of God ought to be recognized, and I may almost say legalized, by the Church to which we belong. Further: in order that the Table may form a judgment regarding me, I lay before it the following original documents:—

“ 1. Diploma of Doctor in Theology, 11th April 1834.

“ 2. Diploma of Professor of Philosophy and Theology, 23rd April 1834.

“ 3. Pontifical Nomination as Theologian of the Inquisition, 9th June 1837.

“ 4. Diploma of the Academy of the Catholic Religion, 9th February 1837.

“ 5. Diploma of Preacher in Rome, 4th August 1838.

“ 6. Diploma of Priest in Rome, from 15th February 1840 till my departure from that city, 11th September 1847.

“ 7. Nomination to the office of Prosynodal Examiner for the Diocese of Velletri, 3rd March 1847.

“ 8. Regular pontifical passport, to show that I have not fled from Rome.

“9. Certificate of the Cardinal-vicar for my departure, and Certificate of my superior.

“10. Two autograph letters of Cardinal Ferretti, then Secretary of State, which he wrote to me after my departure from Rome, to induce me to return.

“To avoid the expense of postage, I shall not send all these documents, which are in my hands, nor a number of others also in my possession; but I shall bring them with me, if it please you to grant me the favour which I ask.

“As my affairs, however, do not permit of my being long absent from Geneva, I beg you, in the event of your granting my request, to be so good as to fix the day of my examination, and, if possible, to allow me to preach my sermon on the same day.

“I must also request that you will have the goodness to keep silence, as far as you can, on the subject of this letter, as I would rather not have this matter made public until it is decided.

“I have nothing more to add but the earnest entreaty, by the bowels of divine mercy, that you would grant me the favour I ask.—I have the honour to be, sirs, your very humble and devoted servant,

“LUIGI DE SANCTIS.”

The acquisition of so distinguished a member for the Vaudois Church, and so able a labourer for its field of evangelization, was too pleasing a prospect not to be at once accepted by the Table. Accordingly, on the 1st September following, they informed M. De Sanctis of their full acceptance of his proposal. At the close of a conference with the body of pastors, he expressed his deep attachment to evangelical doctrines, and his love for the Vaudois Church, whose confession of faith and discipline he declared himself ready to sign; and who, in her turn, held out to him, in the person of her pastors, a friendly hand, and acknowledged him as one of her members.

The Table, seeing in M. De Sanctis a new labourer whom the Lord had raised up in answer to the prayers of those who felt the importance of the salvation of souls, and specially of the work now being carried on at Turin, appointed him, by a resolution of 12th October 1852, to the office of evangelist in that town, as fellow-worker with M. Meille, in all that concerned the advancement of the kingdom of God in that town and neighbourhood.* The arrival at this station of a man like De Sanctis—who to a spotless reputation and extensive know-

* See Appendix E, for the text of the resolution of the Table concerning Dr. De Sanctis' coming to Turin.

ledge united the zeal of a convert, and the prestige of a brilliant position, which he had given up for the gospel—gave a most powerful impulse to the progress of the work to which he had devoted himself. The meetings, already well attended, became still larger; and within a few months of his arrival, the names of no fewer than eighty persons—men and women—were inscribed in the roll of catechumens, who attended with the utmost regularity the private teaching which was given them preparatory to their admission into the Church.

“Our affairs here,” wrote Beckwith to the Moderator, 10th November 1852, “appear to prosper. The meetings are very numerous, and the Italian congregation is almost too large for the chapel. Including Sunday, there are twelve services in the week. Those who attend these meetings are certainly animated by the best intentions; for with the greater part of them there can be no unworthy motive. There is, without doubt, already a considerable leaven of evangelization in Piedmont, and the Scriptures are daily becoming more widely circulated. The progress already made is certainly greater than could reasonably have been expected.”

Could a brighter prospect, or one more full of encouragement, have been offered to the wondering

eyes of the friends of the gospel then at Turin? And no one rejoiced in it more than Beckwith. While he watched, day by day, the progress of the church, of which he superintended the building, he also did all in his power to further the spiritual work. He held conferences with the evangelists as to the best means of attaining this end; conversed in the evening in his drawing-room, up to a late hour, with men of every degree of rank and education, who gladly sought his counsel; and besides all this, he composed for publication various writings—of which we shall speak afterwards—in connection with this work of evangelization, labouring at them with an ardour and a perseverance scarcely to be expected even in a young man. The church, meanwhile, the erection of which was to work a new era in the history of religion among the Vaudois, was progressing daily. On the 26th December 1853, it was (as we have already stated*) solemnly dedicated to the Lord, in presence of an immense concourse of people. For Beckwith, it was the happiest day in his life; the day which began, so to speak, the realization of his dearest hopes.

We have already related by what a mysterious dispensation of Providence, that which, for many reasons, might have been considered the real start-

* See the close of Chapter X.

ing-point of his labours, was in reality the means of drawing them to a close. Neither could it have been imagined that, less than a year after an event so full of promise as this, the young Church at Turin would be rent asunder by a painful schism. The instrument of this schism—for we cannot (and never could) call him the author of it—was he whose admission, a year before, into the Vaudois Church, had been a subject of so much joy and thanksgiving. Now commenced an era of strifes and divisions, which, passing from the capital to Genoa, in which place also the work had gone on peacefully, gradually spread in all directions, and became for the work of Italian evangelization a source of great weakness—a withering simoom, blasting that rich harvest which the Lord had sown!

But the work of Beckwith, in spite of this interruption, was nevertheless of the greatest importance. Without him, indeed,—without the efforts of every kind by which he had not only prepared and rendered possible, but had made secure the beginnings of the work,—it would almost certainly never have been accomplished. And if, as Chancellor Oxenstiern said, “between the wisdom of God and the folly of men the Church advances,”—if, in spite of all the follies by which imprudent

friends have compromised the work of God in the Peninsula, that work still progresses and gains ground, bringing with it spiritual freedom for the individual, and regeneration and political stability for society, it is to Beckwith, under God, that Italy is chiefly indebted for this great service.

CHAPTER XII.

BECKWITH AS AUTHOR AND EDITOR.



THE man whose remarkable existence we have traced so far, was too much a man of his time and of his country, and knew too well the inestimable value of the press in relation to both of these, not to feel himself impelled to add this means of action also to those he had already employed. One part of his publications, consisting of reprints, or translations, goes back as far as the first years of his residence in the Valleys. On his first glance at the schools after his arrival, two things struck him in particular : first, the absence of reading-books accessible to all the children ; and in the second place, that the French language—though spoken and read in schools and families, and though used in public worship—was scarcely intelligible to the greater part of the children.

The first of these wants Beckwith sought to supply by publishing in one small volume, for the special use

of schools, an edition of the two books of the Bible which seemed to him to condense in the most elementary and the most complete form the substance of the Christian faith. From the Old Testament he chose the book of Genesis; and from the New, the Gospel of Luke. The service which he rendered by this publication (notwithstanding the contrary opinion which theorists may have on this question) was very great, and became still more so in proportion to the increase among us of Sunday schools, for which the existence of this little book became a great treasure. The numerous editions of it which have been published—first in England, then in Italy, (last of all in Florence)—speak more eloquently than words of ours can do, of the great usefulness of this little volume, and the happy inspiration which led Beckwith to publish it.

The means by which he strove to remedy the second of the defects mentioned, was the translation into Vaudois *patois*, and then into Piedmontese, with the French text opposite, of the Gospels of St. John and St. Luke, and the Catechism of Osterwald (then in use in the Vaudois Church); and afterwards the translation into Piedmontese* of the entire

* The translation into Vaudois *patois* of the Gospels according to St. Luke and St. John, and of the Catechism of Osterwald, is the work of M. Pierre Bert, formerly Moderator, and pastor of La Tour; and these two publications bear the date of London, 1832.

The translation into Piedmontese of these same writings, as well as that of the

New Testament and the Book of Psalms. But these translations had not the happy practical results that might have been expected. As the *patois* of each parish in the Valleys was different from that of every other parish, the effort made by the translator to modify and amalgamate the various dialects had the inevitable result of making them all incomprehensible. And besides, the reading of *patois* being in all countries much more difficult than that of living languages, it was found that the same children who, after one or two years at school, could read French or Italian very tolerably, failed completely in reading *patois*. The assistance which Beckwith had hoped to give, by this translation, towards a more complete understanding of the two languages, was thus reduced to nothing, or next to nothing.

He was quite right when he wrote in one of his letters,—“The Romanists have their Latin; the Vaudois have their French; in fact, they are both on the same footing.” He was right again, perfectly right, when, in the same letter, he complained—he, the most assiduous attendant at the catechisings—

entire New Testament and the Book of Psalms, does not bear the name of any author, but is due to the pen of M. le Chevalier Henri Geymet, of the Vaudois Valleys, then resident at Luzerne, in the employment of Government, and a particular friend of Beckwith. These last were all published in London. The New Testament—in large 8vo, with 480 pages—is of the year 1834. The two Gospels—in large 8vo, 232 pages—of the year 1838; the Catechism—in 12mo, 239 pages—year 1839; and the Psalms, 1840.

that "he never yet had heard the catechism properly taught;" and when he declared that if the pastors would not take the trouble of making themselves intelligible by having recourse, if necessary, to the use of the *patois*, their hearers would soon give up listening to sermons which they could not comprehend, and go to hear the discourses of the Romish missionaries preached in Piedmontese, which they could understand easily. But he was wrong in flattering himself that the printing, at great expense, of books in *patois*, would be an efficient remedy to oppose to this evil. The reform of schools which were to be the means of imparting to the masses a more familiar knowledge of French or Italian, or both,—this was the true direction in which progress was to be made. And to this Beckwith applied himself with even more energy than to the other reform, so that its good effects are already beginning to be felt, and are increasing day by day.

But besides publications like those of which we have spoken, in which he performed only the part of editor, Beckwith had early employed himself in publications of a totally different nature,—original works, intended to supply wants peculiar to the Valleys themselves, or to the state of evangelization in general.

"Had I foreseen," he writes in 1834, "that this

winter would have been so mild, I should perhaps have passed it in the Valleys. But, all things considered, I think I have employed my time more usefully here. I have finished the edition of the Four Gospels in Piedmontese, and I have made some progress in a work on agriculture for the small proprietors of the Valleys, and even of the plains; for I do not pretend to teach ladies and gentlemen,—I take in hand only the lower orders. I am at present working at an article on the vine, and when I go to occupy my corner at the fireside of the parsonage of Boby, I shall require to be enlightened by the pastor as to the present state of agriculture in his parish; the measures in use, and the way of employing them; the culture of the vine, of cereals, of vegetables, and of fruit-trees; the nature of the soil; the kind of rocks; the way of making wine; the quantity of the produce, either by acres, or as a whole; the acknowledged defects caused by circumstances, by ignorance, by prejudice, or even by laziness.....The experiments made by both French and English on these matters will form the basis of my book; but the Piedmontese custom must be placed in comparison with these, in order to obtain a result applicable to the present state of agriculture in this country.” *

* Letter to Pastor Muston of Boby. London, 25th March 1834.

We cannot tell why this book, which he here describes as already so far advanced, has never seen the light; but the very fact of such a plan having been conceived by Beckwith, is an additional proof that his mind was ever open to all that was good and useful. Religious subjects, however—more especially those which were bound up with the work of evangelization—were those which, in preference to any others, urged him to the use of his pen. We have spoken in its place, * and at sufficient length not to return to it, of one of these publications,—the *Saggio di Liturgia ad uso dei semplici*, compiled and printed in 1850, with a view to the work of evangelization which was about to begin. We have also said a word upon the series of nineteen articles on the Origin of the Vaudois Church, published in the *Buona Novella* in the course of the year 1851. These were, so to speak, a commentary, written beforehand, on the inscription which Beckwith had already chosen for the façade of the church which he was preparing to erect in the capital: “Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls” (Jer. vi. 16). †

Four other publications, all sufficiently important,

* See Chap X., on the Liturgy.

† This inscription is to be read, in Italian, over the entrance to the church.

on very different subjects, appeared successively between the years 1852 and 1856 : the *Regula Fidei*, in 1852 ; the *Horae Apocalypticae*, in 1853 ; *L'Esistenza di Dio, una Vita Avvenire, Pene e Ricompense*, in 1856, and the *Messia Redentore*, also in 1856. The first of these treatises, we are told by the author, aims at establishing the true nature of an ecclesiastical faith ; the second is addressed to persons who have attained to faith ; the two last are for those who, though without professing to be believers, are well-disposed towards the truth, and wish to know it, or at least the arguments on which it is founded.

“ I consider it as an acknowledged fact,” he writes with regard to the first, the *Regula Fidei*, “ that if there be in reality documents and testimonies proceeding from the apostles by oral means, then Christians are bound to accept them as equally inspired with the books of the New Testament. But a question here arises : Do such documents really exist ? Yes, replies the Romish Church, and points to the writings of the Fathers of the Church. But have these writings the value which is attributed to them by such a supposition ? That which is called the tradition of the Fathers, is it in reality an apostolic tradition, having a right to the same unquestioning belief on our part as the inspired writings, and con-

sequently forming equally with these an integral part of our faith? Such is the question which this book seeks to examine and to decide. And this is the conclusion at which the author arrives after a learned and honest disquisition, first on the Fathers, and then on the Holy Scriptures:—

“The Councils and the Fathers having frequently fixed on opposite meanings, and the authenticity of their writings being not only often equivocal, but in many instances evidently altered by interpolations, it is impossible either to give them credence, or to trust to the opposite interpretations, from which many different and irreconcilable opinions have arisen. And as these passages are not inspired by a direct and miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost, as is the case with the writings of the Apostles, it is clear that these writings can never serve as a rule of faith. When we are convinced that we possess an authentic and distinct testimony of the will of God in a written revelation, we must make it the absolute rule of our life: “For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off...but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it” (Deut. xxx. 11–14).

This volume, translated, along with the others, into very good Italian by a distinguished literary

man, and written with much force of reasoning, was sufficiently approved of, notwithstanding its essentially learned character, to be put through a second edition (Florence, 1867), now also completely exhausted.

The *Horae Apocalypticae, ossia le Profezie di Daniele e dell'Apocalisse di San Giovanni*, is one of a series of attempts to explain the only prophetic book of the New Covenant. The different systems of interpretation in the Apocalypse, says the author in his introduction, may be reduced to three. 1st, That of the *Preterists*—the principal representative of whom is Bossuet, who applies this book almost exclusively to the past, and who endeavours to confine the sense of the prophecy to the fall of the Jewish nation and of the ancient Roman Empire. 2nd, That of the *Futurists*—originated towards the end of the sixteenth century by the Jesuit Ribera, who, with the exception of the First Vision, and the Epistles to the Seven Churches, applies the whole of the Apocalypse to distant events; that is to say, to the second coming of Christ. 3rd, That of the *Protestants*—who consider the Apocalypse as the book in which are foretold all the principal events relating to the Church and to Christianity, from the time of St. John until the end of the world. After refuting the first two of these systems, Beckwith proposes

to develop the third, and prefaces the study of the Apocalypse by that of the Prophecy of Daniel, which stands in the closest connection with the Revelation of St. John.

The revelations contained in the Apocalypse are, says the author, divided by the Lord himself (Rev. i. 9) into two parts; the things which *are*, and the things which *shall be*. In the first part are comprehended the Epistles to the Seven Churches; a faithful picture of what then existed. The second part, separated from the preceding by a new voice, a new blast of the trumpet, an entirely new scene, and new accessories, contains the events relating to the future of the Church and of the world. This second division, which—setting aside the first five chapters, to which the author devotes only a few pages—embraces the entire book, is subdivided into six parts, of which only four and a part of the fifth are commented on, as bearing on events already accomplished.

The first of these six parts—unfolding chapters vi. and vii.—makes us eye-witnesses of the transitory greatness, the decline and fall, of Pagan Rome, in presence of the growing power of Christianity. The second—bearing on the eighth, and the first twenty verses of the ninth chapter—displays to us the punishment and the ruin of Christian Rome,—which,

as a penalty for her apostasy, is occupied in the West by the Goths, in the East by the Saracens, and afterwards by the Turks. The third part—having for its text the last verses of chapter ix., the whole of chapter x., and the first twelve verses of chapter xi.—relates to us the history of the reform which appeared towards the middle of the period when the mystery of the sixth trumpet was accomplished. In the fourth part—which contains an explanation of chapters xii., xiii., and xiv., excepting verses 6th to 8th—is related the history of the origin and character of the Papacy, and of its temporal dominion, preceded by the irruption of the barbarians into Western Europe. The fifth part relates to events accomplished only in part: the fall of the Papacy and of its temporal power, under the vials of God's wrath successively poured out. The passages relating to this period are the last five verses of chapter xi., verses 6th to 8th of chapter xiv., chapters xv. and xvi., verses 1–12. The rest of the book, from verse 13th to the end of chapter xvi., has not been made the subject of any remarks by our author, as the predictions therein contained relate, according to him, to events not yet accomplished, and on which it would consequently be rash to pronounce an opinion.

This publication, for the composition of which Beckwith had drawn largely upon the larger work

of the Rev. E. B. Elliot on this subject, was written in a simple form, and with all the clearness necessary to the subject it treats of. It appeared so new and fascinating to those among whom it made its appearance, that in less than two years the first edition was completely exhausted, making it necessary to publish a second—which has also in turn disappeared. Rome, as may well be imagined, is in no way spared in this book. It is the papal authority that figures as the Beast of the Apocalypse; as identical with the “little horn of the beast with ten horns,” described by Daniel (Dan. vii.); with “the man of sin” of St. Paul (2 Thess. ii.); and, finally, with the “Antichrist” of St. John himself in his epistles (1 John ii.). To induce, by the most urgent solicitations, those who are within its pale to come out of it, and to participate no longer in its iniquities, if they do not wish to be overwhelmed in its ruin,—“such is,” says the author, “the end which has induced him to use his pen, and which he has constantly had in view while writing, and the realization of which would be his best reward.”

The two other writings of which we have given the titles—that on *The Existence of God, a Future Life, Punishments and Rewards*, and the other on *Messiah the Redeemer*—although excellent in themselves, have not had the same success as their pre-

decessors, probably from their eminently philosophical and argumentative character, which is much beyond the intelligence of ordinary readers, and which can only be followed by minds accustomed to abstraction, and more or less familiarized with this branch of study. Of the fifteen sections of which the treatise entitled *The Existence of God* is composed, three are devoted to tracing the causes of atheism; five others to proving the contradiction which this system presents to a host of the most clearly demonstrated facts, both in physical and moral science. The four following contain the enumeration and development of the proofs which the various sciences, successively and seriously investigated, furnish of the existence and activity of a Supreme Being. The fourteenth, with the same end in view, treats of final causes; the fifteenth, and last, is devoted to the explanation of the thesis that our comprehension of the divine nature can in no case proceed from our own progress in knowledge, but must come directly to us by revelation.*

The treatises on *A Future Life* and on *Punishments and Rewards* are a purely philosophical and rational demonstration of the majesty and reality of a future life, as well as of the rewards and punishments which must necessarily accompany it.

* This treatise is less a composition than a collection of fragments, extracted from the works of several eminent writers, English and German, on the subjects here discussed.

As for *The Messiah as a Redeemer (Il Messia Redentore)*—which we may define as a philosophy of redemption, as taught in the gospel—the object of this composition is to demonstrate the total insufficiency of *natural religion* to explain truly the relation between God and man, and to satisfy conscience in that respect ; and the perfect conformity between reason and the Christian revelation, which has for its fundamental truth “ God becoming man in Christ Jesus, to work out, by means of a perfect satisfaction of His justice, the reconciliation of man to Himself, and to restore him to obedience and happiness.”

Other writings—a series of *Discourses upon Genesis*, a treatise on *Justification by Faith* and *A Collection of Scripture Passages* on the principal doctrines of the Gospel—were found among Beckwith's papers, ready for publication. Like the preceding ones, they show their author to have been possessed of a strong faith, a humble and entire submission to the Word of God, and the most fervent love for perishing souls. Such unwearied activity on the part of one who, whether from his already advanced age, or from the events of his past career, might so easily have persuaded himself that this task did not concern him, is not this a most touching spectacle, and a noble example of the testimony which every believer should bear to the truth ?

CHAPTER XIII.

LAST YEARS OF THE LIFE OF BECKWITH—1854-1862.



WE have endeavoured in the preceding pages to give our readers as complete an idea as possible of the active life of Beckwith—especially that part which relates to his connection with the Vaudois Church. Two things yet remain to be done ere our task is completed : first, to relate the history of the latter period of his noble existence, from the day when, so to speak, it was eclipsed, and withdrew into the shade, until the time when, weary and worn, it sank peacefully to rest, within the precincts of those Valleys which were studded far and near with the proofs of his benevolence. In the second place, we have to dwell upon the eminent qualities which Beckwith displayed in the accomplishment of his task, and more particularly on the source whence alone such virtue could proceed. We must fix on the day following

the dedication of the church at Turin, as the date when the active career of the General came to an end. The motive for this we have already explained. Not that he returned from Turin at this time (on the contrary, he remained there two years longer), nor that he ceased for a single instant to take an interest in whatever was going on in that city, or anywhere else, in regard to the advancement of the kingdom of God in Italy ; but he no longer showed, in this respect, either any initiative or co-operative energy ; and this cessation of activity was the more complete, as it was with him a matter of conscience.

The following reply to an invitation of a very pressing and cordial kind, addressed to him by the Moderator, to be present at the Synod * of 1854, will prove that we do not exaggerate in speaking as we have done. †

* " You know that your presence would be a joy and blessing to all the members of Synod. Professor Rollier and his wife have begged me to express to you the happiness it would give them if you would take possession of what rooms you require in the house which they occupy, thanks to your inexhaustible liberality. I earnestly beg you, in the name of the Table, not to deprive us of one of the greatest gratifications which we shall obtain from our approaching Synod,—that of seeing you, and of feeling that you approve by your presence of what we have hitherto been permitted to do for the advancement of the kingdom of God in this country. This, however, is much more your work than ours."—*Letter of the Moderator, Mr. J. P. Revel, of the 16th May 1854.*

† More than any letter from the pen of Beckwith, have we been obliged to alter this one, as to construction, to make it as near French as possible ; but we certainly declare (and this declaration applies to whatever we have produced in this volume, either letters or fragments of letters of the General's), that as far as the intention or meaning is concerned, it has been in no way modified or altered, and that the text which we have given always expresses Beckwith's meaning in the most exact manner.

“TURIN, 22nd May 1854.

“MY DEAR MODERATOR,—Your honoured letter of the 16th is expressed in that spirit of cordiality which has always characterized any personal relations I have had with you, Moderator, and with the Table of which you are the president. Everything in this world must at last draw to a close. As long as your Church had no liberty of action, I was happy in being able to help it in the unequal struggle it had to maintain ; but being now emancipated from the trammels which impeded its progress, and being in a position to make the best of its principles and its efforts, it is no longer necessary for me in any way to interpose. My object was to establish the ancient Church of Piedmont in the metropolis of its country. Providence has granted my prayers, and given a happy issue to our efforts. The sacrifice which this task demanded of me, was to impose silence on my judgment, my opinions, my prejudices and my habits. I accepted that task, which had for its reward the success of all my material efforts. As for the moral results, they were entirely in other hands, over which I had no influence. Opinions were different, and one party could not accept the arguments and conclusions of the other. The aims had not been so adjusted as to hit the same

mark. Even though one listened with patience and deference, there existed notwithstanding an insurmountable barrier, and an inevitable distrust, which placed in relief the respective parts to be enacted, and obliged one of the parties to perform a purely material task. This inferior part I have faithfully performed ; but my means are exhausted, and I can continue it no longer. But even had I the power, I should not use it ; and beyond this sphere there is no longer any possibility of action for me. All communication with the excellent men who exercise the ministry in the Church of Turin is out of the question. Guided by different opinions, by other views, by other sentiments, and with other principles and other duties imposed upon them by their Church and by their position, they could not, in the special case in question, listen to the words of one who is a stranger, without any special vocation. They would even be wrong in so doing ; and he who addresses these lines to you will be very careful not again to begin a career which has already cost him so many unhappy hours. No man can bring his opinions to bear on others, unless he has a right to proclaim them ; and if I have consented to occupy this false position, in order to induce you to accept the means which I deemed the best for facilitating the preaching of the Word of God, it would be labour lost to

occupy it any longer, especially as it is now out of date.

“I shall therefore, Moderator, not attend the Synod of the 29th May. I hope that its deliberations will have the effect of consolidating the Churches of Genoa and of Turin. I beg you to present my affectionate greetings to the other members of the Table; to thank M. Rollier for his offer of hospitality; and to believe that I have always been grateful for the attention which you have shown me on every occasion.

“CHARLES BECKWITH.”

Nothing particular marked the rest of this year 1854, and the greater part of 1855; but towards the end of September of the latter year, a blow fell simultaneously on an honourable family, on the whole Vaudois population, and on Beckwith himself. We speak of the unexpected death of the venerable Dr. Gilly. This most true friend, who had devoted to the Vaudois Church an ever increasing affection—who bore it, as it were, in his heart—had visited the Valleys during the month of June of the same year, accompanied by his excellent wife and his eldest son; and he had spent several weeks there, making himself not only useful but agreeable,—so much so, that he, a prebendary of

Durham, did not disdain to walk about a mile every morning, to give an English lesson to the young ladies of the upper school. Before quitting the Valleys, he several times expressed the hope that he might speedily return thither. But, alas! this hope was not to be realized. Scarcely arrived in England, Dr. Gilly took to his bed, and after a few days' illness, gave up his soul to God, on the 10th September 1855. The news of his death, which was quite unlooked for, fell like a heavy blow on the strong but tender heart of the General.

“Venerable and dear friends,” he writes on this occasion to the Table, “Dr. Gilly’s son had already communicated to me the event which has plunged us all in mourning, only one day before the receipt of your letter, and on the day following that on which I learned that our friend was ill. Judge, therefore, of my consternation at the announcement of this unexpected blow! That benevolent and gentle spirit reposes now on the breast of his Saviour and his God. It is not now the hour of consolation, but that of resignation and faith; the hour of prayer on behalf of those who are the most afflicted and broken-hearted—his poor widow and his children. When peace and religion shall have regained their dominion over suffering humanity,

then will be the time to gird up our loins to continue the work to which he has put his shoulder for so many years."

And laying aside, with a view to this work, the reserve to which he had condemned himself for two years—

"You have," he continues with the accent of former days, "the knowledge and understanding of what your task is: you are young; the path of your duty is clearly marked out for you; your brethren in religion are beside you to aid and encourage you. But I lay it upon you always to vindicate your independence; to appeal to your energy; to act like men specially charged with the interests of the Church of Christ in these countries; to discharge the debt contracted by you towards our Saviour for the long years of preservation, of protection, of encouragement, and of blessing that have been accorded to you, and towards that host of devoted friends who have assisted and sustained you in so many difficult circumstances, and who have finally conducted you to the metropolis of your country, after so many long centuries of exile and persecution.

"Whatever may be your personal piety, it is as a people and as a Church that you have been borne on the Everlasting Arms, and placed in sight of the

whole world ; it is as a people and as a Church that you are called upon to proclaim the truth. In a former letter, you exhorted me to make a sacrifice of opinions and prejudices which were not in harmony with the actual state of things, or with your mode of action. I, in my turn, exhort you to use all possible self-abnegation with regard to those amongst whom recent events have placed you ; to take into account their antecedents, their ignorance, their weaknesses, and the power of their habits ; and all this without seeking your own satisfaction.

“I think this is the lesson you may learn from the character, the career, and the example of the friend you have just lost. Neither nature, nor even religion, has endowed me with that gentleness which was a distinguished feature in the character of the man who has just descended to the grave ; but I feel profoundly the beauty of this virtue. Thoroughly acknowledging the moral worth of St. Peter, I yet think that St. John was the disciple of his Divine Master. United in the bond of peace, may we pass the rest of this our earthly career in rendering to each other all sorts of good offices.—Your affectionate

“ CHARLES BECKWITH.”

Notwithstanding the decided and firm tone of this letter, the wound inflicted on Beckwith's heart

by this unexpected event was painful and deep. In the death of Gilly, he mourned not only the friend of thirty years' standing, whom he was never again to see here below, but still more the intelligent and devoted fellow-labourer who had stood firm when he had felt himself almost inclined to give way, and whose removal was an irreparable loss to the Vaudois Church. The dread of having entered upon a work contrary to the true interests of this Church, by leading her, feeble as she was, into undertakings beyond her strength, took possession of his mind, to such an extent as to trouble him and imbitter his sorrow still more. Was it then to be wondered at that his health, already shaken by age, and by the wounds which he had received, was unable to hold out against such violent shocks. Towards the beginning of December of this year Beckwith took to his bed, and in a very short time the malady had made such progress that the doctors quite despaired of his recovery. These were sad and weary days for all those who surrounded him, and most of all for the young wife, who never left his bedside. The delirium was incessant, but its character only proved still more how strong and loving was the interest he felt in that Church, to the restoration of which he had devoted his life.

In the Valleys, anxiety and consternation filled

every heart. Everywhere, in the churches and in families, at the invitation of the Table, fervent prayers were offered up to implore the Almighty to restore him to health. And when these prayers were heard, and Beckwith might be said to be convalescent, the desire of giving expression to the joy which every one felt at this happy event, occasioned a manifestation which was touching in its simplicity. An album was presented to him, richly bound, having on the cover his initials exquisitely embroidered in gold, and containing a collection of detached leaves, on which one and the same idea—the happiness felt by the Vaudois Church at the restoration to health of their dear and venerable benefactor—was expressed in every variety of form, by hundreds of persons of all ages and conditions. Beckwith was extremely touched by these proofs of sincere affection.

“The marks of affection and consideration,” he writes to the Moderator on the 14th May 1856, “of which I have been the object, on the part of the entire Church, have seldom been accorded to a man who, like myself, is without any recognized position in that Church. The value of this manifestation consists in the proof it offers of the moral and religious condition of the clergy and the people. At the same time, it is a proof that the prayers and

efforts of thirty years have been heard and crowned with success by Him who is the giver of all grace. So precious a leaven will end by leavening the whole lump; and we may look forward to those happy days when all shall know the Lord,—which is the end of all our aspirations. I beg of you, Moderator, to present to the Table, to the Clergy, and to the Churches, my thanks and the expression of my gratitude for the public prayers which have been offered up for my recovery, and to assure them that I shall all my life remember an act which honours equally those who performed it and him who was the object of it.”

The letter to the ladies who had been deputed to present the album to him, written some weeks later (13th March 1856), when his health had considerably improved, is one of the most touching and beautiful that ever came from his pen :—

“LADIES,—It is the prerogative of your sex to be the messengers of peace and affection. God has created you to maintain and promote peace on earth and good-will towards men.

“I am persuaded that you undertook this mission with joy, and that your hearts have outstripped the locomotive in its rapid course.

“The album which you have brought me is laden with the sacrifices, the cares, the joys and the sorrows of thirty years : but this load does not bind it to the earth ; it mounts towards the skies on the wings of angels, whose mission it is to present to our heavenly Father the sweet incense of sincerity and gratitude.”

After this introduction, followed by some general considerations upon the result of his labours, and passing in review the different classes of persons who had aided in the composition of this album :—

“Do not forget, young people,” he says, “that the Scriptures are given us to instruct us in righteousness, in order that the man of God should be perfect. ‘*Justum et tenacem,*’ is the golden ode of the poet. Receive this doctrine into an honest heart. Our faith should be sincere ; ‘*Honesty is the best policy,*’ says the English proverb. Exercise scrupulously the cardinal virtue of obedience. He who is called upon to teach it to others, ought above all other things to know it himself, by submitting to a severe discipline.

“And you, amiable young girls, be always attired in the purity of a sweet and peaceful spirit, in order to win souls to Christ.

“I need not exhort my old friends, the teachers,

to patience; you are the patterns of this virtue. 'Be instant in season, and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, be vigilant, endure afflictions, and do the work of an evangelist.'

"And you, young aspirants to that career of patience and self-denial, train yourselves courageously for the most useful, the most honourable task, and also the most full of immediate and future results which it is given to men to fulfil; imitate those who have preceded you in this career, and those instructresses who lead young girls to Christ, in the paths of chastity and of conjugal love;—and may the prayers of the orphan ascend to the throne of Him who hears their cry and that of the widow.

"Finally, students of theology, ponder well the high destiny which awaits you. You lay the foundations of that knowledge which will make you princes in Israel. You are about to receive a mouth and wisdom, which no one shall be able to gainsay or resist: the future of your Nation and of your Church is in your hands. Labour to render yourselves approved of God, as workmen without reproach. Guard well the good treasure intrusted to you by the Holy Spirit.

"I make no appeal to the venerable pastors who have kindly shown their affection for me in contributing to fill this album. Without their concurrence,

God's blessing would have been wanting, which has been conveyed by their means.

“Long years employed in preaching Christ crucified, and in declaring the means of sanctification, call for gratitude and respectful silence. It would not be wise to clothe in words sentiments that lie hidden in the depths of the heart.

“To you once more I express my gratitude, honoured mothers of families, and to you, amiable young women, for your trouble in putting together this expression of the feelings of so many hearts.

“I pray earnestly for the young persons who have contributed to this offering; and for all those to whom, by reason of their more advanced age, I may give the title of friends.

“I pray for the spiritual and temporal welfare of all the Vaudois population; and I append to this a signature which, I am sure, will not be forgotten by them long after I have descended to the tomb.

“JOHN CHARLES BECKWITH.*

“TURIN, *13th March 1856.*”

The happiness which Beckwith felt at this time was so real and profound, all that he had before suffered was so completely forgotten, that he wished, when spring came, and before quitting Piedmont, as

* This letter was addressed to Mesdames Caroline Vertu, Amélie Muston, Fanny Parise, and Mlle. Louise Appia.

he had intended doing, to return for some time to the Valleys, to steep himself, as it were, physically and morally, in the soothing influence of an affection as strongly felt as it was simply expressed.

After having remained some time longer at Turin, he went to Paris, where his worthy spouse soon rejoined him, and where a letter addressed to his particular friend, the deputy—M. Joseph Malan—informs us that he has been installed since the 25th October in an apartment at No. 4, Avenue Matignon, “better in body and mind,” he writes, “than he had been for many long years.”

“Absence from Piedmont,” he writes a little after this, to the author of this book, “was for me a positive necessity. Whether it was the climate, or an excessive strain on the mind, I know not; but, both morally and physically, my health was completely shaken. I think, too, that some root of bitterness had taken possession of me which deserved a severe chastisement. God had withdrawn his Spirit from me, and I had a feeling of being, as it were, paralyzed in body and mind; so much so, that I felt myself reduced to a state the very reverse of my normal condition. Suffering, prayer, and the ministry of two Anglican clergymen, have cauterized my wounds; the services of my Church and the hand of my heavenly Father have brought me to a state

of convalescence; I am regaining my strength, though weakened, and I am again conscious of inward life and of bodily strength."

Towards the end of this letter, with regard to the news M. De Sanctis had given him of the progress made at Turin, Genoa, and other places, by the Free Church, which that minister had joined on leaving the Vaudois Church, Beckwith adds:—

"This is an additional reason for strongly organizing the Vaudois Church at Turin; for, in fact, since the days of St. Paul the Church has always been in an ecclesiastical state. But this," he insinuates, "would lead us to a ground fertile in disputes, which will in the end be solved, but in which experience has proved to me the uselessness of taking any part."

Now this ground, fertile in disputes, of which Beckwith only says a passing word, occupied notwithstanding a large portion of his thoughts; a proof of which will be found in the fragments of several letters which follow, addressed by him from Paris to several persons.

"I went yesterday," he writes to M. Joseph Malan, in the letter already quoted, "to see a French colonel who had come to call upon me. He showed me a Protestant chapel with a congregation of from six to seven hundred members,

the greater number of whom were converts from Catholicism.

“The neighbouring faubourg might also, it would appear, have had its congregation, but for the opposition made by the Minister of Public Worship, acting under the influence of the curé. Notwithstanding, I see quite well that if the Protestants had an organization capable of contending with these difficulties,—if they had the good sense, the judgment, the perseverance and the disinterestedness which are requisite,—if they knew how to sacrifice their own opinion to the interests of Jesus Christ, and condescended to excuse the weaknesses of Roman Catholics, the obstacles would only be so many directions given to their efforts, and so many means of stimulating their energy. But in all this they are utterly wanting. We have miserable preachers. Everyone seeks privately to put himself forward, to advance his interest, and thinks of nothing but of giving pre-eminence to his own peculiar opinions. With such a state of matters all union becomes impossible—in fact, there is not one Protestant Church, there are multitudes and hordes, in the midst of which the clergy themselves are the great cause of separation.” *

“My task,” he writes later, upon the same subject,

* Letter to M. Joseph Malan, 25th October 1856.

to the Moderator elected in place of Dr. Revel—
Pastor Malan of La Tour—“ was to found a visible
Church in Piedmont for the protection of Catholics,
and not of foreign Protestant-Calvinists; to set
up as a standard the ancient Church, with her his-
tory, her traditions, her rights, her faithfulness, her
martyrdom, all to witness in her favour; to sum up
in a liturgy in the vulgar tongue, her rule of faith, its
letter, spirit, and character; to place in the hands
of all classes of society her confession of faith, and
at the same time a manual of her dogmas, her
doctrines, and her worship; to furnish her ecclesi-
astics with a method of pointing out with precision,
day by day, within four walls, what are the truths
of the gospel; to exercise a certain authority, and
as it were a moral coercion, over those who are
obstinately perverse, ill-informed, presumptuous, vain,
indifferent and irreverent; to supply the deficiency
which exists in all Protestant Churches—that is to
say, the absence of direct influence over the members
of the flock outside the walls of the church,—a want
more particularly felt in regard to Roman Catholic
converts;...in short, to lay the foundation of a reason-
able obedience to men in the institutions of Christ,
in order by this means to prove the obedience which
they profess to have towards God, and thus, as it
were, to stem the torrent of personal pretensions, of

arguments without end, all tending to this same result, viz., that one is to do exactly as he pleases, and never in anything to yield to any authority which does not perfectly coincide with his own ideas." *

The question of the liturgy, that question which had occupied so much of his thoughts, and caused him so much suffering, and of which he here merely says a word in passing, is resumed more at length in a letter addressed by him two years later to a friend in England :—

“ What you say in regard to the liturgy is perfectly true, but no one would now lend an ear to your views. A church has no direct action upon its members except within its own walls ; and certainly the end for which a church is instituted—that is to say, the sanctification of man—is more surely attained by a church which, like the Anglican Church, obliges its members to take an active part in its worship, and fixes their attention upon the dogmas and the doctrines of the gospel by constant repetition, from childhood to old age.

“ A stranger may frequent the Vaudois service for a whole year, without ever obtaining, during that period, the smallest knowledge of the distinctive character of the Vaudois Church, and without having

* Letter to the pastor, M. B. Malan, Moderator, dated from Paris, 14th July 1857.

discovered any reason for attaching himself to that particular communion. I have insisted upon the necessity of giving to the Roman Catholics of Turin some means by which they might know what a Protestant Church really is, and at the same time of placing in their hands a descriptive summary of the outward profession of faith which they are called upon to adopt, which might equally serve as a catechism, a rule for themselves, and a means of communicating to others the reasons for which they had separated themselves from their Church. This could only be done publicly by a liturgy with the responses in Italian : because the Vaudois liturgy, not being in the hands of the congregation, is consequently useless ; as the congregation remains standing before the officiating clergyman, and has neither the time, nor is it obliged, to look at the book. But according to modern ideas,—any addition to the operations of the Holy Spirit being dangerous or blamable,—my views could not be accepted.” *

These thoughts are not, however, the only ones with which his correspondence shows him to have been occupied at this period ; others are disclosed, of a more personal, more familiar, and, we are almost tempted to add, a more peaceful character. For

* Letter to Mr. G. H. Lake ; dated from Calais, 27th January 1860.

instance, in regard to the discourses he heard at Paris, in the chapel of his own communion, he writes :—

“I have remarked in my Church a certain modification in the style of the sermons, even of those who incline to the Low Church, and who rest upon grace as a fundamental principle. The preachers attend chiefly to the spiritual condition of their auditors, to a sort of review of their past conduct, to the possibility of their being led astray by employing themselves actively in the religious works most in vogue, by intellectual activity in the discussion of all sorts of doctrines and differences which disturb the Christian world, by frequenting the services of the church, and even by prayers which might not proceed from an anxious regard for the spiritual life, or from self-denial in moments of trial and temptation,—thus substituting things external for life itself. They refer to the doctrines of grace quite in their absolute sense. But in what way, they take care to add, do you profit by them? Are you upright in spirit? They endeavour to awaken and alarm your conscience, to bring before you your conduct, your words, your actions, and their general consequences in this world, with the inevitable result of a future judgment. They treat their subjects, one at a time, in a concise

and somewhat rapid manner; the subject is exhausted in twenty-five minutes, and they leave the congregation ill at ease, silent, and dissatisfied with themselves,—directing their attention solely to personal salvation, offering no resistance to the arguments and subterfuges, which people seize upon with eagerness, to escape the reproaches of conscience, thus putting to flight that dishonesty of spirit which is the great scourge of the Christian as well as of the heathen world.” *

The generous initiative taken by one of his countrymen—Mr. G. H. Lake—with a view to procuring supplemental salary for the most necessitous of the pastors of the Valleys, is a subject which appears more than once in his correspondence at this time.

“I think,” he writes in regard to this, from Paris, on the 30th April 1857, “that your capital and your annual subscription will justify your project of fixing an allowance of £12 a year on five ministers; and it is a great matter to be able to assist five ministers, with large families, and without private means.”

And one month only after this—on the 2nd of May 1857—in replying to a letter in which Mr. Lake had asked him for the support of his name to

* Letter to the author, dated 5th January 1857.

carry out this undertaking, "My dear sir," he says, "people in England generally think that a military man ought to command his regiment, and ought not to meddle in church matters; however, if you think by using my name you will attract more fish to your net, put me down for £10. I have given so much to the Vaudois, that now the time has come to give to my own Church, during the short time that remains to me. As for my letter, I have no objection that it should be printed in the same manner as your circular. Only I do not wish it to be put in the public papers. The world is tired of the Vaudois, and it would be very imprudent for us, who have never been very much admired either by the High or the Low Church, to run the risk of a hostile paragraph."

After some further advice as to the destination of the sums collected, or to be collected, Beckwith adds: "You are, however, perfectly competent to manage this matter, and the advice of an old man should be taken for what it is worth. The business of life is the work of the young."

The three following letters, addressed, with an interval of a year between each, to the author of these lines, contain details and sketches regarding this period of his life, and his views upon the general

political and religious condition of Europe at that time. They are sufficiently interesting to make us think we should not deprive our readers of them. The first, written at Paris, and dated the 15th January 1858, is thus expressed :—

“MY DEAR M——,—Your obliging letter of the 30th December has given me much pleasure. It is true that the Protestant citadel has cost much, but the result is not to be despised, and I doubt whether your undertakings would have succeeded, had they not been protected as they are. For myself, I have spent the past year in my usual way; but your letter found me very lame, and I continue so still. The fact is, that winter, and my seventy years, begin to make themselves felt, and my poor body suffers in consequence. My mind, however, does not suffer; and I am so well taken care of by my blessing of a wife, that I get along very pleasantly, with now and then an *oh!* and an *ah!*

“Last night we were on the point of losing our Emperor. I do not know how it happens, but I hear this morning that no one has been arrested. If we had lost the Emperor, I think we might as well have been at Lucknow. This Paris is the worst residence in Europe, and I have an idea of leaving it in due time; for the possibilities are too serious to contem-

plate, and one would have to submit to consequences which neither courage, management, nor foresight could avert. I trust that Providence will help you through your clerical trials, as it has done in the case of Belgium. It is true that the grade of your electors is inferior to that of your constitutional sister ; however, you have enough of stuff in you to make us hope better things for the future. As for your administration, nothing on earth can be more theoretical ; and your actual wants have always to be satisfied by some project which is never carried into execution. I am firmly convinced that our friend N—— N—— will get over his trials in the course of this year, and that his life will be like a mirror, which a breath may tarnish for an instant, but which is soon restored to all its brightness. ‘ *Integer vitæ,*’ that is the true ground in which the Spirit takes root.”

“ I am leading an Anglican life at present ; however, I go in the morning with my wife to her Presbyterian church, and accommodate myself wonderfully well to the religion of Grandpierre. We see quite as little of the sun as in England, but it is not cold : we have no snow, and, above all, we have not to endure those extremes of heat and cold to which we are exposed in Piedmont. When summer comes, I propose taking my wife to England, to complete her education in the matter of fog and damp.”

“However, she does not appear to mind the misty life very much which we lead here. It is true that we are not so well off in regard to friends and acquaintances as we were at Turin ; still we have some, and from time to time we have some of our relations staying with us, so that our life goes on well enough. Our kind regards to Madame and to Paul, to Bert and his wife, and to the members of the former Table and of your Consistory. A good new year to every one. Grace, health, and peace of mind. We English are worked in a thousand ways ; for we have to bear the burden of civilization and of the gospel for the benefit of others. If our shoulders bend under the weight, I know not very well who could take it up and walk upright. I think, however, we shall not give way. England, Belgium, and (who could have thought it ?) Piedmont shall walk together in the front ranks.—Adieu, M——

“ CHARLES BECKWITH.”

The second letter, of the 4th January 1859, is from Calais, whither Beckwith had some months before transported his household gods :—

“MY DEAR M——,—The good wishes and blessings of a minister of the gospel are of great importance to him who is the object of them. I thank you with

all my heart ; and in this my wife joins me. My idea is realized in what you tell me of the probable progress of the gospel in Piedmont. My opinion is that neither Protestantism nor its ecclesiastical forms will take root in Italy ; and that the movement will go on increasing secretly, until it bursts forth politically and religiously under the pressure of circumstances. I also think that if you had had the clear-sightedness to adopt larger views, and more in keeping with the necessities of your position, than those which you have been taught, your Church might have placed herself at the head of this movement : but the occasion has been lost, and it will be the Roman Catholics who will charge themselves with this office. The defect and the capital weakness of Protestants is their having entirely disregarded and lost sight of the principle of obedience. Their very piety makes this an obligation of conscience. There will be terrible judgments required to put them right on this score.

“ I do not suppose there is good sense or honesty enough to reconstitute a Table which has the intelligence and the consciousness of its authority, and at the same time the firmness of will sufficient to make them effective. In the Revel Table you had all this ; and for that very reason it was set aside.”

“ I have returned into the bosom of my Church,

and I occupy myself with my profession—that of arms. My position is more natural, and I am consequently more peaceful... My wife lives in darkness here, for we rarely see the sun. But otherwise Calais is not a bad residence; and I am only four and a half hours distant from London, where I have always a house open for my reception, and intellectual resources at my disposal. I find, besides, my Anglican Church well kept up here. I have good health; I want nothing. That God's blessing may rest on you and on your children, is the fervent prayer of

“CHARLES BECKWITH.”

The third letter, written like the preceding from Calais, and dated 9th January 1860, runs thus:—

“MY DEAR M——,—Your letter has pleased me much, because it is full of good-natured gossip; for all that regards little children, women and girls, is infinitely preferable to big words upon transcendental matters, of the real meaning of the why and the wherefore of which we are ignorant. ‘What is the most useful of all knowledge?’ asks the old catechism. Who has ever understood this question? and above all, who has ever answered it? This, however, has not hindered many excellent people from passing their life under the influence of the Spirit of God, to fall asleep peace-

fully on His bosom. As for myself, my wife has taught me religion, from morning till night, since the happy day of our union; and this without preaching me a single sermon, and regularly going to sleep whenever I did so to her, after the fashion of the day. Also, I have (thanks to her) discovered the difference that exists between little affairs performed during the course of the day with patience and affection, and theological discussions, the theory of which I had already acquired, but the practice of which was wanting in my system. She has filled up the gap.

“What are we to do with the Pope? Good Catholics with us say many things on this subject which are quite true, but they forget that all these things ought to have been said and put into practice ten centuries ago. Be it wisdom or folly, the days of the Papacy are numbered. Bonaparte has given it the *coup de grace*, and now it knows not to what saint to address itself. England and the Protestants have nothing to do with it. The Emperor of Austria, his concordat and the Pope, will all go to the wall together. A little sooner, or a little later, my Apocalypse will be realized to the entire satisfaction of every one, except the Archbishop of Genoa. *

* Monseigneur Charvaz, formerly Bishop of Pignerol, and a great enemy of the Vaudois, against whom he had written much.

“ My wife has gone to hear a French Methodist, for want of some one better, although it is Monday. She is neither carried away by the Anglicanism of her husband nor by Dissent ; but she goes in the cold from the pure spirit of docility. She begs me to present to you her affectionate remembrances as well as to Madame. You did not mention Paul ; was he under the table ? May the Almighty bless your ministry, and support and enlighten the brave Piedmontese Major and his wife ; which he undoubtedly will. As for us, we have our heads full of line-of-battle ships, fortifications, and carbines : all indispensable things in the present condition of affairs, so thoroughly bungled, that half-a-dozen congresses would not be able to set us right. If this evil spreads to us you will not see me so soon in the street ‘ Principe Tommaso.’—Your affectionate

“ CHARLES BECKWITH.”

Fortunately for those who, regretting his absence from Piedmont, sighed for his return, Beckwith was deceived in his calculations as to the prolongation of his absence, for in little more than a year afterwards, in the spring of 1861, he left Calais, and with his wife and servants returned to the Vaudois Valleys. When he arrived there, the Synod of the Church was assembled, and holding its sittings in the church of

St. Jean, at a short distance from the country-house of Major Peyrot, where he went on his arrival. A deputation of the assembly, headed by the president, was immediately commissioned to pay their respects to him, and to welcome him on his return among his grateful friends. Beckwith gave a most cordial reception to the deputation. Whilst he expressed his happiness at finding himself amongst "his own" people, he yet excused himself from returning amongst them, "as he was now a man not fit for anything." "Were it otherwise," he added, "I should not for one moment hesitate to take up my work at the point where I had left it, and in applying myself to it with the same ardour as formerly; but I really cannot do it." The following day, when he went to the Synod, the whole assembly, by a spontaneous movement, rose at his entrance, and the deliberations were for a moment suspended.

The joy, however, which was felt by every one at seeing him again, was not without a mixture of sorrow, occasioned by the evident symptoms of weakness portrayed on his features and general appearance. That which had, however, in no way changed was the loving, tender heart, which, under an outward austerity, was always open to any good work. His habits also remained the same. Every

day he took his accustomed long walk, alone on foot, stopping every now and then, either to admire what he saw or to speak to those he met with on his way. Every evening, also, he received in his drawing-room people of every age and rank, "who were kind enough," as he expressed it, "to come and shorten his evenings." On Sundays, no matter what the weather was, he attended regularly at church, not only the principal service, but also the Sunday school,—which he attended regularly to the end. To hear the Scriptures explained to little children had a peculiar charm for him; and in order to have the pleasure of hearing it explained in this way, (as he could not have walked four times a day the distance between the church and Major Peyrot's) he spent the whole interval between the services in the church, reading his Bible or meditating, only leaving it to refresh himself at a neighbouring house with a glass of water and a mouthful of bread.

Winter approaching, he left the country, and fixed his abode at La Tour, in a house which he himself had got built for the use of the professors, and which the Table had hastened to place at his disposal. The symptoms of weakness, already very visible when he re-entered the Valleys, became every day more perceptible. Soon his longwalks had to be replaced by shorter ones; but what he was most tenacious about was his

taking them alone and without the company of anyone who might be supposed to take charge of him.

Never had his sympathy for the suffering appeared more touching than since he had become one of them himself; and above all, when he had occasion to show this sympathy to children. Well or ill, however, children were to the end the principal interest of his existence, and nothing gave him greater enjoyment than to assemble a number of them around his own table, and to witness their delight at the sight of the good things presented to them. One day when a particularly good cake was served, "Which piece will you have?" he asked a little girl, who with eager eyes was devouring the tempting prospect—"The largest!" she answered, without hesitating; and the good General laughed most heartily at this charming *naïveté*.

Amongst the surprises prepared to amuse him, few succeeded so well as that of a choir formed under his windows, towards night-fall, by the college students; or the sudden arrival of a troop of young girls in his drawing-room, old pupils of his school, who would thus come to spend a part of the evening with their kind old friend. How well, notwithstanding his seventy-two years, he knew how to suit himself to them, and to enter fully into all their interests and occupations! What a charm there was in

his conversation ; into which, in the midst of mirth and gaiety, he could introduce so well a wise or grave word!

But the time came, towards the beginning of summer, when even these enjoyments were no longer permitted ; when, instead of his usual walk, he could only pass a portion of the day in his arm-chair, at the corner of his garden, and where the torpor of his faculties caused an almost constant inclination to sleep. But what even then still survived in him was his tender interest in the schools, which were to him a constant subject of concern. “ You should give particular attention to two things,” said he to a young schoolmistress, who, in passing, had inquired after him : “ these are, reading and arithmetic. By reading, your young girls will become acquainted with the most important of books—the Bible ; and arithmetic, by unfolding their intelligence, and by giving them habits of exactitude, will make them, later, good mothers of families.”—“ Never lose sight,” he said to another, “ of the end you ought always to have in view ; that is, to lead souls to Christ.”

Towards the 15th of July his weakness so increased that he could no longer leave his bed. Evidently the end was rapidly approaching, but gently, peacefully, and without any great suffering. Now and then a few words spoken of eternity, with those friends who came to see him, proved to the

last the reality and firmness of his hope. At last, on the 19th, which was a Saturday, at a quarter to six in the evening, the noble old man, like a labourer worn out by a long day's work, fell gently asleep in the arms of his Saviour; not being aware, nor his wife either, that he was leaving behind him a dear child, whose birth, had it happened in his life-time, would have filled him with joy, but who only entered the world six months after the author of its days was laid in the tomb.

The news of his death spread like wildfire throughout the parishes of the Vaudois villages, and, though long foreseen, awakened everywhere the deepest sorrow. From all parts crowds hastened to look for the last time on the venerated features of him whose appearance on the soil of the Valleys had been to them, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, like a resurrection from the dead. On Monday, the day appointed for the interment, thousands of persons, men, women, and children, followed the coffin silent and sad, as one might expect from people who had suffered so great a loss. Good Christian words, pronounced over the grave by Professor Jean Revel, while recalling once more to mind how much the Vaudois population owed to him whose mortal remains had just been committed to the earth, directed with power the hearts and thoughts of

those present towards that eternal world, where all those who, like Beckwith, have placed their trust in Jesus, and who have sought to “turn many to righteousness, shall shine like the stars for ever and ever.” (Dan. xii. 3.) A simple but elegant monument, erected in great part at the cost of the Vaudois population, indicates the spot where he sleeps, in the cemetery of Torre-Pellice. The four following inscriptions are inscribed on its four sides.

On the front :—

TO THE VENERATED MEMORY
OF THEIR ILLUSTRIOUS AND CONSTANT BENEFACTOR,
Major-General Charles Beckwith,
BY THE GRATEFUL VAUDOIS CHURCH.

On the opposite side :—

Born at Halifax, in America, the 2nd October 1789. Came for the first time to the Valleys in September 1827. Died at La Tour, the 19th July 1862.

On the west side :—

“I have laboured in my generation ; it is for those who shall come after me to carry on the work I have begun, and to transmit it in a still more advanced state to their successors.”

(Beckwith’s own words, extracted along with the following from his correspondence.)

On the east side :—

“If in the world to come I meet a poor old woman and two little children who have benefited by the seed I have sown, I shall feel rewarded for all the sacrifices I have made for those schools, where the little that is taught is really true and really good, being founded on repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUALITIES WHICH BECKWITH DISPLAYED IN HIS WORK,
AND THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THAT WORK PROCEEDED.



AND now, from the brink of the newly closed grave, let us throw a retrospective glance on the past, and endeavour to estimate the qualities which Beckwith more particularly displayed in his work, and the source from which proceeded all the good it was given him to do : this will be the best method of extracting from this history the valuable lessons which may be learned from it.

One great quality, which we perceive if we attentively consider his work, is the wisdom and prudence which Beckwith constantly displayed in all his relations, either in regard to the authority of the Church the advancement of which was the object of his labours, or in regard to the political authorities of the country. Had Beckwith not always worked in the most perfect harmony with the

Vaudois Church, had he not on all occasions treated it with the most perfect consideration, had he not always given it the foremost place, whatever might really be the moral worth of those who represented it, who can tell what suspicions he might have aroused, or how many susceptibilities he might have awakened, susceptibilities and doubts which might have been great obstacles to his work ?

And as for the political authorities, with a government such as existed in Piedmont during the greater part of Beckwith's active career, suspicious beyond expression, distrustful of thought above everything, and in anyone who dared to feel and act a little differently from the common suspecting at once a conspirator against whom it was necessary to guard itself ; above all, with a government so entirely under the dominion of the priesthood, that nothing could be done without their permission or through them,—had Beckwith not proceeded with the utmost circumspection, how could he, a stranger as he was, without any official mandate, alone and without support, have dared do a fourth part of the things he accomplished, without being sent twenty times to the frontier ? But if there was any project to be carried out, that Beckwith was at the bottom of it, every one knew ; it was he who counted the cost and prepared the plans—he above all who put his shoulder

to the wheel. But those only who appeared on the scene, as though everything originated with them, were either the municipal councils, or the Table, or the consistories—that is to say, the parties to whom, even with the worst will possible, the right to take part in affairs which were entirely their own, and to work within their own jurisdiction, could not be refused.

And this same wisdom, how it showed itself in the method he took to secure to himself, little by little, the concurrence of the Vaudois population in the accomplishment of the successive reforms which he had conceived! To have asked at the very first from this population all that he wished, and all that he succeeded eventually in obtaining, in the way of pecuniary sacrifices, would have been a sure way of meeting with a refusal. On the other hand, to have asked for nothing, to have done all for them, and without them, would have been, not only to encourage a disposition which is unfortunately too deeply rooted amongst the Vaudois—that is, to allow others to take charge of their affairs—but it would have been doing a work with no durable foundation, which, on the disappearance of the man who had consecrated his life to it, would have fallen to pieces.

Beckwith proceeded quite differently. As long as certain faults were not felt, he did everything himself;

and he was obliged to do all this, because, in these circumstances, to ask assistance from others would have been a useless work. But whenever—thanks to certain wants being satisfied—others began to make themselves felt, and to call for similar satisfaction, Beckwith only came forward on condition that he should not be left alone, and that, to the assistance he was willing to give towards the object required, aid should be furnished by them in a proportion more or less considerable according to the requirements of those who appealed to his beneficence. This was the line of conduct from which he never departed; and, thanks to it, he not only obtained, in the way of coöperation, much more than he could have expected, but founded his work on a durable basis. “Ah! had the Vaudois suspected, when I came among them,” we heard him laughingly say one day, “all the money which in time I should succeed in obtaining from them, instead of receiving me as they have done, they would have pelted me away with stones!”

Another quality which stands out not less strongly than the preceding, in the work which he accomplished, is the promptitude and correctness of his conceptions, and the unalterable firmness with which he carried them out. With the exception of one or two instances in his long career, where

his judgment appears to have been at fault (not, however, in the main point, nor with regard to the real nature of the evil which he sought to remedy, but rather as to the means which he employed to carry out the remedy), Beckwith conceived all his projects with most astonishing judgment, adapting always most perfectly the means to the end he had in view, and generally succeeding beyond all expectation. And if the exactness of his conception was remarkable, his firmness of intention and his determination to carry out at any price that which he had proposed, were also qualities which yielded in nothing to the others. Neither the apathy of some, nor the ill-will of others, nor the annoyances of all kinds to which, from the nature of the work he had imposed on himself, he was exposed, prevented him for one moment from bringing to a happy issue what he had planned, so long as he had not to contend with difficulties really insurmountable.

But that which, in Beckwith, and the work he had for so many years pursued, strikes one even more than all the different qualities we have enumerated, is the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice which shines out everywhere, and which in fact is the foundation of it all. In truth, whilst with many men the difficulties and annoyances which arise in a

work constitute in their eyes a reason for withdrawing from it, with Beckwith these were the very things which induced him to undertake it. "There is nothing," we remember him saying, "which I detest more than grammar—above all, German grammar; therefore I decided upon beginning each day with an hour of it. Nothing prepares us better," he adds, "for all the annoyances of the day, than to begin it with something for which one feels a dislike." And indeed his whole life, from the first day that he put his foot upon the soil of the Valleys, until, his years at an end, he fell asleep in the bosom of his God, was a life of continual trial and sacrifice under one form or another.

What self-denial was it, in fact, for such a man—who, from his social position, his culture, the refinement of his manners, and the exquisite amiability of his temper, might have been an ornament to London society—to come during the six dreariest months of the year—sometimes for an entire year—and bury himself, as it were, in the abode of a Vaudois minister of the Valleys, having no other society but what the place afforded,—pastors, professors, schoolmasters, simple agriculturists, with their wives and daughters; no other amusement than their conversation and small news, which could not be very varied, to cheer his fireside during the long

evenings ! What a sacrifice this was few can understand who have not witnessed the comforts of an English home—thus to pass long years in a humble dwelling, where there was neither carpet, nor sofa, nor even a stuffed chair, and where only an old cook and a housemaid composed the whole domestic establishment. What a sacrifice for a mind like his, capable of amusing himself with the higher speculations of science—a mind finding pleasure in high and deep studies—to renounce all these almost entirely, in order to occupy himself wholly, from morning till night, and often a part of the night itself, with plans and estimates of all kinds—for walls, benches, tables, wooden beds, linen, and crockery, and a hundred other things, none of them more intellectual than those we have just mentioned !

But above all, what a sacrifice (that of money we shall not mention, however considerable it was, because so small in comparison with others)—what a sacrifice was that which probably no one amongst those who were the objects of it has ever taken into consideration, or duly weighed : the daily and continual sacrifice, during thirty years, of his habits, his tastes, his preferences, and his most rooted and dearest convictions as an Englishman, strongly attached to his Church, in a country in every way different from his own, in the midst of a

Church with the organization of which he had but little sympathy, and with appliances which were often very far from what he would have desired; frequently obliged to give his assent to measures which he deemed defective, whilst others, from which he had promised himself the happiest results, were neutralized and rendered impotent by the effect, sometimes, it is true, of opposite convictions, but more frequently by that inveterate indolence which is the greatest and most insurmountable barrier to all progress!

What self-denial for a mind so convinced, and by nature so resolute, as his, to bend every day, and during long years, to minds and wills so very much less enlightened and intelligent than his own; and, when he could not bend them to his views, yielding to theirs, with a view to secure in part at least the good which he wished to accomplish, and which a rupture might have resulted in making for ever impossible. What self-denial, so much the more admirable in times like ours, when, under the name of *fidelity to principle*, there is no species of egotism or presumption which does not claim sufferance; when people think themselves in no way obliged to make any concession, or defer to the advice of others; when divisions and quarrels are counted as nothing, when things the most important

and vital—such as the peace and unity of the Church—are pitilessly sacrificed to some opinion that has been adopted, even though it has reference to something quite secondary in point of truth!

But, acknowledging these qualities, what, we again ask, was the principle which produced them? from what source did Beckwith derive them, so as to be able first to project and then to execute such a work as we have just related? Is the secret of this wonderfully beneficent activity to be found simply in human virtue? or was there in the motive which gave Beckwith power to accept and pursue his task something which came from a higher source than anything human, and which finds in God alone its real and complete explanation? In other words, was Beckwith's work simply that of a philanthropist, or must we view it mainly as that of a Christian? As regards ourselves, this question has long been solved. When one has had the rare privilege of living and working side by side, so to say, with this remarkable man, one feels, without doubting for an instant, from what divine heights flowed this fertilizing spring, displaying itself in efforts of every variety, and producing the blessed fruits which we have just portrayed.

Yes, Beckwith was more and better than a simple philanthropist. He was a Christian; and it is be-

cause he was such a sincere and thorough Christian, that he accomplished what he did, and was favoured even in his life-time with such a measure of success as seldom falls to the lot of those who engage in labours of that kind. By nature and deep-rooted conviction, not less than by birth, Beckwith belonged to the Anglican Church. The preceding chapters have furnished us with sufficient proof of this. But to which of the three great parties into which that Church is divided would he from preference have attached himself? We think we may answer, To none. Not certainly to the *Broad or Latitudinarian Church*, from which his belief, in all points coinciding with the old and wholesome orthodox evangelical doctrine, would have withheld him. Neither was it to the *High Church*, the attachment of which to ritual would certainly have had for him a considerable attraction. But its exaggeration on many points inspired him with distrust; and this whole party had, in his eyes, the double fault—first, of giving to tradition in matters of faith an importance which Beckwith attached to the Bible alone; second, of driving onward almost inevitably to Romanism by exaggerating the value of episcopal ordination. But he by no means attached himself to the *Low Church* party, although their doctrines were identical with his own, and though

they numbered amongst them many of his best and most faithful fellow-labourers. Certain customs peculiar to numbers of that party, otherwise so excellent,—that of their fondness for prayer-meetings, where the greatest approval is often given to discourses neither of the wisest nor always of the most truthful nature, and where truth is frequently sacrificed to make the subject patronized for the time more interesting;—these customs, and others besides, were peculiarly repugnant to his expansive and strong character, and became still more so when they related to religious matters. A slave of the truth, even in the smallest details, he had such a horror of seeming better than he was, that the anxiety which many display to conceal their faults made him as open in showing his own.

None, therefore, of these three parties which we have just named could claim Beckwith as properly belonging to them. A pure and open Anglicanism was his sole standard of a visible Church and of ecclesiastical organization. But, above all, Beckwith was a Christian—not after the fashion of modern innovators, who pretend to the name when they have long abandoned the reality of it, but a Christian after the fashion of the apostles and the reformers; a Christian by the nature of his belief, not less than by the strict consistency which in every-

thing he endeavoured to maintain between his convictions and the most trivial details of daily life. That, in reviewing his belief, we have in no way exaggerated or attributed to our hero opinions and doctrines which were not his own, let the following fragment serve as proof, which we have extracted from the kind of manifesto which, as we have seen, he compiled in 1837, with the view of pleading before the body of pastors the cause of the "Moderator for life." Speaking of "truth itself," which the Vaudois pastors were commissioned by God to announce to their countrymen, here is the idea which he had of it, and the elements of which, according to him, it is constituted :—

"He has called you," he says to them, "to proclaim, with a loud voice, original sin, life and immortality ; to announce to all men the free pardon of their sins ; to publish the advent of Jesus Christ, the God-man, sole Mediator between God and man ; to revive in the heart of man the lost image of God ; to preach Christ crucified ; justification by faith in Jesus Christ, which shows itself in works—that justification which will plainly prove to men how unjust they are, and how impossible it is to justify themselves before the Judge of the universe ; sanctification by the Holy Ghost, who will reveal to each one his impurity, and will show him his inability to

purify himself otherwise than by the precious blood shed for him. God has chosen you to spread the gospel ; to teach men to live justly and soberly in this world ; to sanctify the Sabbath ; to obey the authorities established by God ; to honour fathers and mothers ; to love their neighbours as themselves ; and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.”

If we wish to know, in regard to the particular subject of God’s Word, what that Word was to him, and the place that it held in his system of doctrine, let us read the two following fragments, extracted from his correspondence, and there can be no further doubt on this subject :—

“The Word of God,” he writes, “will give us an entire victory. It is in the rule of faith that our strength lies. Our minds once enlightened on its true nature and on that of the visible Church, it is all over with Rome.....Has God spoken ? and what has He said ? That is the question. We must have Jesus Christ in person or in word. The reports of the Fathers or others, in regard to the oral traditions or the apostles, signify nothing. We have not *verbal* tradition, we have not their words ; and even if we had them, we should have to confront them with the Word of God. It is useless to say that we can-

not understand this Word. And why should it be more difficult to understand the Word of God than the word of man? Aristotle and Laplace knew quite well how to teach their science; and why should the Almighty not know how to teach His? The first are obliged to address men's minds as they find them; but God supplies at once the science and the means of receiving it. Let us always attach ourselves with more tenacity to that Word, an attachment which is the distinctive attribute of the servants of Jesus Christ. Let us guard with fidelity the precious gift which has been confided to your ancestors and to yourselves for long centuries. Subscribe on your banner the *Logos*; and unfurl this sacred banner on the highest of the towers of your Zion."*

"All that regards religion, which is not written in the Bible," he wrote to a young lady, "is more or less uncertain, and you can trust to no other guide as a *rule of faith*. There you have positive truth. It is God who speaks there, and God who dictates what is there. You may be told that you cannot understand it yourself; but the gospel is the power of God, and is preached by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, to every heart. You will be told that you cannot arrive at the true sense of the Scriptures, and it is certain that you cannot understand the

* Letter to Pastor Lantaret, dated La Tour, 23rd January 1845.

whole of them. But we are not saved by our knowledge, but by faith in Jesus Christ. You can quite well believe in your heart, and with your mouth confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and you will be saved.”*

This idea, that the interpretation of the Bible is of the Holy Ghost, as we have just written, is often repeated in his correspondence; and the gracious words with which the Apostle John encouraged the faithful of his day, by reminding them that they had “received the grace of the Spirit,” was one of those passages on which he loved most to dwell.

And, to pass from his belief, properly so called, to the application of it to his daily life, was not the reality of Beckwith’s Christianity in this respect more than abundantly demonstrated by the proof of what he accomplished? The following quotations, borrowed from his correspondence, may suffice to put this beyond all doubt. What a sweet gospel perfume breathes throughout the advice which he gives to young married people just beginning life!

“Attach yourselves,” he says to them, “always more and more to Him who alone can serve as a solid basis for your conjugal love. Walk uprightly before him, in all integrity of heart. Think of others; and if you have neither gold nor silver, do

* Letter to Miss Emilie Bottino, dated La Tour, May 1844.

not spare the words of life. Above all, exhort others by a life of holiness. Assemble your children around you, teach the Scriptures, preach Christ crucified, reprove the wicked, support one another, persevere without being discouraged, and you will see that the aspect of your home will always become more smiling, your heart will expand, your understanding will yield itself more and more to the truth, and joy and wisdom will establish themselves amongst you. Become like little children, and you will be wiser than the sages.”*

What powerful words were used by this noble wounded hero of Waterloo—become a soldier of Jesus Christ—to incite those who surrounded him to fight valiantly the battles of his Master!—“We are witnesses, B——,” he writes, in 1844, to the venerable pastor of Saint-Jean, “posted at the foot of Mont Viso, to render testimony to the truth: ‘*Lux lucet in tenebris.*’ † Let us carry the torch which God has confided to us; and if he thinks right to lay upon us His cross, let us bear it likewise with joy and gratitude. Events proceed with rapid steps, and will soon speak loudly. Let us gird up our loins; Christ is at the door. Let us be prepared to open; for He shall come at an hour when He is not expected.” ‡

* Letter to Pastor Lantaret, dated from La Tour, 3rd January 1844.

† [“The light shineth in darkness”—the motto of the Waldensian Church.—*Tr.*]

‡ Letter to Pastor Bonjour of Saint-Jean, dated from London, 24th October 1844.

“Your strength is immense,” he writes, about a year later, to another minister of the gospel. “The God of Israel marches before you. Let there be no delay, no indifference. Do not lose courage. Sure of your path, you shall go from strength to strength. In vain will formidable adversaries try to stop your way; in vain will clouds of darkness surround you. The star of the gospel, with its gentle splendour, will go before you, lighten your tottering steps, and never stop until it shines on the abode inhabited by Jesus.”*

What treasures of tenderness and, at the same time, of Christian experience in these lines which he addressed from London, in 1839, to him who had been, more particularly, his fellow-worker in the great things that he had, up to that time, undertaken and accomplished, and who was then just recovering from a severe illness, from which it had not been expected he would recover!—“My dear B——, I have returned thanks with all my heart to God, who has graciously preserved your life, which is in every way so necessary to us. It is always my idea that a long illness is a noble thing to make us feel exactly of what stuff we are made. It marks a crisis, an epoch, in our lives from which to start afresh. It brings us to the door of the

* Letter to Pastor Lantaret, dated the 23rd January 1845—already quoted.

sanctuary, and lifts the veil which hides the interior. It makes us measure our stature, and puts many things before us in their true light. Let us, then, thank anew our gracious Father, who has granted unto us so many blessings; and let us entreat Him to grant us strength to turn all these things to His glory and to our profit.”*

What elevation of sentiment, and what wisdom drawn from the true Source, are revealed in the following advice, given to a mother who had consulted him on the subject of her daughter's marriage:—“Experience must already have taught you, madam, the complete nothingness of everything that does not contribute to our salvation, and the small satisfaction afforded by the poor advantages which may fall to our lot in this world. We could not be greater than a king or a queen. The king torments his body and agitates his mind; and I do not think that the queen is very happy. A few balls, a few soirées, a few entertainments, a few ornaments,—and then it is over. If your daughter, refusing more brilliant offers from religious and conscientious motives, chooses, in calm deliberation, what she considers the surest means of insuring perseverance in the gospel of Jesus Christ, she will infallibly have

* Letter to Pastor Bonjour of Saint-Jean, dated Windham Club, St. James' Square, London, 29th June 1839.

her reward ; and never, in the most trying circumstances, will she be abandoned by Him to whom she has given this proof of obedience.”

What sound Christianity is that which he recommends to a young person, formerly a pupil at his school, and placed, from family circumstances, in a circle almost exclusively Catholic !—“ Let us live in all openness and liberty of heart, my dear E—— ; and let us constantly direct our attention to that which is noble and generous. Let us be nobly religious, without pride ; let us think nobly and act nobly towards every one, in all humility. Let us nobly sacrifice our interests, our inclinations, and, above all, our caprices, for the good of others ; let us nobly forget ourselves, and direct our efforts to the good of those with whom Providence has placed us in contact. We need not soar very high to effect this. Daily life offers us a much wider field for this purpose.”*

How touching—especially on the part of a man who had done so much, and was gifted with a mind so superior and so cultivated as his—the modesty which is expressed in the following words, extracted from a letter addressed to the author of the “ Israel of the Alps : ”—“ My studies,” he says, “ were under two learned professors, the adjutant and the sergeant-

* Letter to Miss Emilie Bottino—already referred to in p. 293.

major, and I do not pretend to teach men. But if twenty years hence it is admitted that I have done something for the religious instruction of children, I shall be satisfied.”*

In fine, what humble but firm faith in prayer is manifested in the following short words,—short, but so eloquent in their brevity,—addressed to a friend under trial:—“You have done well to pray; if we went down upon our knees more frequently, we should not have to suffer as we do.”†

But the document which, in our opinion, brings out Beckwith’s faith at once most characteristically and most completely, whether from a practical or a doctrinal point of view, and with which for that reason we wish to close these extracts, is the letter which he, in 1840, addressed from London to one whom he knew to be a stranger to the truth, Colonel Sir William Napier, his old comrade-in-arms in the Peninsular war, on the occasion of his publishing his excellent History of that campaign.

“LONDON, 20th April 1840.

“MY DEAR NAPIER,—Many thanks for your kind letter, which gave me much pleasure. I shall apply to Boon, and as soon as I am in possession of a house of my own, I shall have a copy of the

* Letter to Pastor Alexis Muston, dated Saint-Jean, 10th January 1835.

† Letter to Pastor Bonjour of Saint-Jean, dated 1st October 1839.

“ Peninsular War ” gorgeously bound and gilt, and shall give it a prominent place amongst my household gods. I know not what furrows, according to Malebranche, my own ideas, or those of others, may have traced on my brain ; but old age proceeds with his work on the outer man, and now a spring, and now a spoke is amissing, thus seeming to denote that all is not exactly as it ought to be, and that one day or another my locomotive will refuse to go up the incline. My mind, however, seems to accommodate itself to these external changes which my machinery must necessarily undergo ; and I go on my way, marching steadily onwards, under the influence of circumstances which, in the eyes of many, may appear least capable of giving the happiness which even this life may offer. I attribute this to clear and distinct views as to the end and object of existence, and to quiet perseverance in an inferior class of duties, which are more within reach of our capacity than others of a more brilliant kind. To love truth for its own sake, and to put it in practice, seems to me man’s whole duty. I have no means of assuring myself of the truth, but by a direct revelation from God ; and the fact of this revelation once acknowledged, I accept its manifestations, and I use it according to the directions which are given me. I have found great advantage in studying this

science; and by patient reasoning from the known to the unknown, I have attained that opinion of the subject, which is in reality a knowledge of it, and which simple perception could never give. It is not, however, a difficult operation, for no one accomplishes it so well as women and little children. Evil is disobedience; good is obedience: every good soldier desires to obey his general. A voluntary, joyful obedience, inspired by affection, is the duty and the interest of whoever loves his country and his companions-in-arms; it is the noble sentiment which enabled the Forty-third to throw themselves, in the most perfect order, into the thick of the battle, and to fasten the sacks of powder on the gates of Ghuznee! But how much more is obedience due to that glorious Being, author of all that can adorn or ennoble human nature; to Him who, having formed the universe, takes care of little children! This great Being descended amongst us in human form, to place the fact of His existence beyond all doubt; to make known to us the exact state of our relations with Him; to show us our real condition; and to point out to us the way of attaining that happy immortality which is the natural desire of all; whilst to prove to us with clearness, that repentance for past faults is unavailing for our salvation, He has taken the burden upon Himself, and He has done for

His children, as a heavenly Father, that which exceeds the power of an earthly one. The laws and systems of philosophy only multiply our difficulties, and only help to prove more clearly the utter futility of conforming to their directions. This is what He declares in the clearest terms, and He promises to do for us that which we are utterly incapable of doing for ourselves : ‘ Believe only what I tell you, and this faith will restore you to your original state, and will place you once more in a close relation with Me; for you can have no existence independent of my power.’ No one can desire a higher place than to be the servant, and even the friend of the Almighty. No one can ask from human sympathy that same mercy which is to be found with Him who knows of what we are made, and who is united to us by the sentiment of eternal unity. No one will sacrifice his life for us; but God has done so. Our own nature induces us to provide for our salvation; religion saves us by its own power: the one enjoins us to do what none of us can do; the other works in us what no one can do for himself. There is no end of making many books, and too much study is a ‘ weariness of the flesh;’ and there is a talent of more value, and a wisdom more profound, in one line of a child’s catechism, than there is in all the united volumes of Spinoza. Men may confuse and

upset the truths which respond equally to the wants and wishes of all; but it is not given to human folly to measure the mercy and wisdom of God : from one single portion of God's truths taking root in the heart may spring forth a fountain of truly intellectual life, and fear and love of the Author of all truth. Write no more books ; let worldly men devise their own plans ; and avoid, at the same time, men and things that can but irritate and annoy noble minds, and that produce no good fruit in the latter years of our existence. Women and children will experience more true religion in a minute, than men will be able in the course of a year to extract from their irritating controversies. One day or another we must all lay down our arms : it is on our part true wisdom to do so in time. Sitting on the shore in the rays of the setting sun, let us contemplate it with tranquillity and calmness, as it descends beneath the horizon into the clouds of the night which must close upon us. But as twilight falls, do not let us forget that our day-star may rise again upon regions much more brilliant, and that there its eternal splendour may shine for ever on our heads. I am sorry I did not know your whereabouts when here, otherwise I might easily have put myself in communication with you. I heard with much pleasure news of your amiable son, and I trust that your

daughters also may reward your affection. I am sure it will be so. Present my compliments to Mrs. Napier; thank her for the pleasure I experienced in her society when I visited Freshford. God bless you!—Always affectionately yours,

“CHARLES BECKWITH.”

Such was Beckwith on his nobler side. The faith of Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh, suffering for the sins of the world, and recalling us to God by the sacrifice of Himself; the Word of God the supreme and absolute rule of our belief; the Holy Ghost applying to the soul of the believer the promises which are there contained,—such was his belief. And this faith, which was the foundation of his hope, and the source of his peace, was also the secret of his strength and of his success in the work which he had undertaken. May those who, like him, wish to perform here below a work which will never pass away; and, above all, may those for whom he has laboured, think on this, and follow his example!



APPENDIX.

A.

HALIFAX, *23rd December 1803.*

MY DEAR CHARLES.—Inclosed in this you will find an order for three guineas on Messrs. Coutts and Co. You may put two of them in your own pocket, and the third you may divide between your cousins, my dear sons, on your first visit to Hampstead.

Charles, you are just about to lose the society of your dear parents, and to go into a foreign country, which will be to you a land of strangers. You are young, my dear boy, but not too young to take from one who loves you sincerely a few words of good advice on the occasion of your departure. I write in haste, and shall therefore not weary you with a long letter.

Call to mind, Charles, the years you have passed under your father's roof, and remember with what pains and anxiety that excellent man has endeavoured to impress upon your tender heart the invaluable principles of religion and morality. Remember the care and devotion of your most amiable and excellent mother, and try never to forget a single syllable of her advice; for there are few people who possess such excellent judgment combined with such integrity of heart. Remember also, Charles, that you have here a grandfather and a grandmother, to whom you owe much more than your young mind can as yet understand. What excellent advice they gave you, to which, when still quite a child, you listened attentively (and such impressions are lasting)! and what an example they were to you of virtue,

honour, and religion, and of everything, in short, which constitutes respectability of character ! You have here also other good friends and relations ; do not forget them, Charles. May their virtues be always present to your mind, and, I need not say, to your affectionate heart. May their faults be forgotten ; for there is no one perfect here below.

On your arrival in the great and happy country where you are going, be on your guard against the numerous temptations which in all probability will assail you ; for great and happy as is that country above all others, you will still find that vice and wickedness are spread everywhere, and that the staff and buckler of religion are perhaps still more necessary for your protection there than here in this primitive colony, where there are not so many temptations.

You intend to embrace the profession of arms. Be submissive as well as brave ; and avoid in your manner all that has the least appearance of boasting. Be loyal to your king (God bless him !); and in the happy days of prosperity, as well as in the dark ones of adversity, open the good Book which accompanies this letter, as the most worthy object of your attention, and the chief source of consolation. Health and happiness be with you, my dear boy. May that good God, whom I hope you will continue to serve faithfully, be your guide in the difficult path of life ; and may He give to those who take an interest in your welfare, and to your dear parents in particular, the inexpressible joy of seeing in you one who is an honour to us all. —My dear Charles, yours very affectionately,

JAMES STEWART.

B.

Charles Albert, by the grace of God, King of Sardinia, Cyprus, and Jerusalem, Duke of Savoy, Mont Serrat, and Genoa, Prince of Piedmont, and General Grand Master of the Military Order of Sts. Maurice and Lazarus, &c.

MAJOR-GENERAL BECKWITH, having for more than twenty years fixed his residence at Torre di Luzerne, with the sole

view of benefiting the population of these Valleys, consecrating his person and his substance to the relief of the poor, to the comfort of the infirm, and the furthering of elementary instruction, with such noble zeal and elevation of feeling, that in diffusing his benevolence he pays no regard to the difference of religion, but only to the need he feels of succouring suffering humanity ;

Filled with just admiration towards a person of such generous spirit, we are pleased to testify to him our approval by decorating him with the Cross of the Order of the Knights of Sts. Maurice and Lazarus. Therefore in this present, signed with our own hand, with perfect knowledge and with royal and magisterial authority, we have nominated and named the said Major-General Beckwith a Knight of the said sacred Military Order, according to the royal magisterial patent of 9th December 1831, with all the honours thereto belonging, commanding all the knights of the Grand Cross, the commanders and knights, and whomsoever it regards, to acknowledge, and to cause him to be acknowledged, as a knight created by us ; for this is our will.

Dated at Turin, the 15th December, the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty-eight, and of our reign, the eighteenth.

C. ALBERT.

C.

Prayer offered up at the consecration of the Waldensian Evangelical Church at Turin, 15th December 1853.

O LORD, our God, to whom heaven and earth belong—thou who hast been, art, and wilt be to the end of time, the Rock of our salvation, the sole hope of thy people—we bless thee, because thou hast been pleased to preserve in thy sanctuary the light of thy Word, and to allow it to remain among us in the most calamitous times, when the faith of many was shaken. We bless thee, because after having instructed, blessed, consoled, and saved our fathers by thy Word of truth, thou permittest us

miserable sinners, their descendants, to dedicate a house as a new sanctuary to thee, and to put in it, for the edification of thy people, the light of thy Holy Word.

O God of mercy, there is none other like thee in heaven or in earth. Thou hast preserved the covenant of mercy to thy servants, who walk before thee with all their hearts. Thou hast been with our fathers, and now thou fillest us with thy mercies, so that we their children can publish triumphantly the Word in the midst of our dear country, and set apart for thee a church, in which thou mayest be adored in spirit and in truth.

Is it indeed true, O Lord, that thou wilt deign to dwell in the midst of us? The heavens and earth cannot contain thee, and how much less this house, which the hands of men have built? Yet thou hast said by the mouth of thy Divine Son, that where two or three are met together in thy name, there thou art in the midst of them. Oh, wilt thou then be in the midst of thy people who will meet to pray in this church, and to adore thee? It is by faith in this thy holy Word that we invoke to-day thy holy presence in the midst of us, and that we beseech thee to select this place, that it may be the place of thy dwelling, and the footstool of thy throne of mercy in our dear Italy. Let thine eyes be open day and night upon this church; put thy name upon it, and hear and answer the prayers which will be offered in it by thy servants. Hear, O Lord, the supplications of this people, and of their pastors, when they shall pray unto thee; answer them from the place of thy holy habitation; send down upon us grace and pardon.

When any of us shall sin (and who can present himself pure in thy sight), and with contrite and humble heart shall cast himself at thy feet, resting all his hope on Jesus Christ, the only Saviour whom thou hast given us, then, O Lord, answer and forgive. When an afflicted family shall arise in the hour of their sorrow, and shall come into this place to seek consolation in prayer for their desolate hearts, do thou then, O Lord, answer and console them. When any scourge shall send desolation into this town, when famine shall cause tears of sorrow to be shed,

and when thy people, truly humbled, shall come into this place to acknowledge their sin, and to invoke thine aid, do thou then, O Lord, hear them, and open thy hand freely to give. When our country is in danger, and when our enemies and thine shall plot its ruin, when thy people shall meet to pray thee for the prosperity and the peace of the country, and for the welfare of the king, for concord among the powers of the State, for the preservation and increase of our liberty, do thou then, O Lord, answer our prayer, and hear us from the throne of thy mercy. And when we pray to thee for our benefactors, for our brethren in Jesus Christ, who are persecuted for the sake of the gospel, and for our infirm and afflicted ones, do thou spread over them, from the temple of thy glory, all thy consolations.

Bless, O Lord, this church, and let it be a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid ; let it be the beacon which shall show to our countrymen the truth of the gospel ; let it be the grain of mustard seed which grows to a great tree ; let it be the source of every blessing to our dear country. And whatever prayer is offered in it unto thee by any one, or by thy people assembled together, answer it, and send down thy blessing upon the suppliants.

Hear also the stranger, who is not of thy people, and when he shall come into this place to beseech thee, do thou grant his request, that the stranger may know that thou art the only true God ; and that thy name may be invoked in this temple. May there always be preached in it thy pure Word, and nothing but thy Word ; and therefore bless the pastors who publish it, that they may teach this generation the same holy doctrine which Paul, the apostle of thy Divine Son, preached in our Italy, so that the faith of the sons of Italy may be known as an example in all the world. Never allow in this temple dedicated to thee anything to be proclaimed but thy Word. Let it never be profaned by human doctrine, or by superstitious practices, which are not of thy teaching. Send down thy Holy and Divine Spirit that He may dwell in it, according to the promise of thy Son, when thy gospel shall be preached in it ; let thy Spirit

quicken thy ministers, and lead them into all truth ; and open thou the hearts also of those who listen, that the holy seed of thy Word may strike deep roots and bear fruit, and that our Redeemer may live and reign in us. And now, O Lord, we beseech thee, let thine eyes be lifted upon us, let thine ears be attentive to our prayer, and answer us according to thy promise. Arise, O Lord, and come into thy dwelling-place that we have prepared, offered, and consecrated to thee. Let thy ministers be clothed with righteousness, and thy saints leap for joy. Hear our prayer, in the name of thy beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, and to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory, praise, and blessing, for ever and ever. Amen.

D.

WE, the undersigned, having acquired the conviction that the Church in which we were born and educated, in consequence of its having wandered very far from the teaching of God as found in the Holy Scriptures, cannot be held by us to be the true and lawful spouse of Jesus Christ ;

Having, on the other hand, recognized in the Evangelical Vaudois Church, which from time immemorial has maintained in this Piedmont a strict conformity in doctrine and practice to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles ;

Convinced that to abandon error, when once recognized, with a view to embrace and profess the truth which God has revealed to us, is the sacred duty of every one who has a conscience, and that to neglect such a duty would not only be a grave offence, but give occasion to the greatest dangers :

For these reasons, of our own free will, moved by the sole desire of bringing peace to our souls, and giving to Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us by His precious blood, that testimony which we are all bound to give Him, we declare that we abandon to-day externally, as we have already done spiritually, the Church, whose members we were by birth, to return to the Church of Jesus Christ and of the apostles, the Church of the

gospel; and to become members of that part of the Church which is called Waldensian, to whose doctrine and discipline we fully adhere, praying all those who profess the same faith to receive us as brethren, and members with them of the same body, whose head is Jesus Christ; assuring them of our firm resolution in the Lord to employ ourselves with them, as well by our words as by our actions, in promoting the growth of the Church and the glory of God, making this the supreme aim of all our proceedings. All this in the name and in the presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore. Amen.

E.

THIS day, the 12th October 1852, the Table having met in the usual hall of meeting, to the number of those undersigned, resolved as follows:—In reference to the letter of Dr. Louis Desanctis, dated Geneva, 17th August 1852, in which that Christian, distinguished by his profound knowledge and his lively and active piety, manifests a desire to be received as a member of the Vaudois Church, and addresses a formal request to the Table to that effect, and desires to receive from it the imposition of hands that he may be regularly called to continue the work which he has already prosecuted for about five years—viz., the evangelization of the Italians;

And considering the letter of the Table of the 1st September following, in which, gladly acceding to the first of these requests, and pointing out to him the steps necessary for this end, it proposed to M. Desanctis to come and occupy the post left vacant at Turin by M. Geymonat, who had just been sent to Genoa;

And considering the letter of 15th September, announcing to the Table M. Desanctis' departure for the Valleys, and his having resolved in the presence of the Lord to follow His guidance, ready to work where he can for the glory of God and the gospel;

Considering also the last letter of the said M. Desanctis, dated Turin, 9th October current, in which he accepts without

reserve the proposal made to him by the Table in its previous letter, that he should unite with Brother Meille in the work of evangelization which had been carried on, with God's blessing, during the past year in the capital ;

Considering that a numerous meeting of Vaudois ministers—to whom M. Desanctis evidenced his deep attachment to evangelical doctrine, and his love for the Vaudois Church, whose Confession of Faith and Church Discipline he has declared himself willing to sign—that these ministers have given him the hand of fellowship, and have received him as a real and living member of this Church ;

Preserving a sweet remembrance of the following words, which this new brother pronounced on this occasion, “ Even if the representatives of the Church should refuse to admit me into her bosom, I feel that I should be none the less one of her members, for my feelings and the voice of God inwardly assure me that I am one ;”

And seeing in M. Desanctis a new worker whom the Lord in His faithfulness has granted to the prayers of all those who understand the importance of the salvation of souls, and in particular of the work going on at Turin, the Table decrees :—

1. M. Desanctis is appointed as evangelist at Turin, in the service of the Vaudois Church, and charged to coöperate with the Rev. M. Meille in all that concerns the advancement of the kingdom of God in that town as well as in its neighbourhood ;
2. He shall be allowed a salary of 3500 francs from the 1st October current, besides an allowance for the expenses of removal and travelling, to be determined on by the Table when M. Desanctis hands them a note of his expenses ;
3. A copy of this will be given to M. Desanctis and his fellow-worker, M. Meille.

The members of the Table :—

J. P. REVEL, *Moderator* ;

P. LANTARET, *Joint-Moderator* ;

DURAND CANTON, *Secretary*.

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