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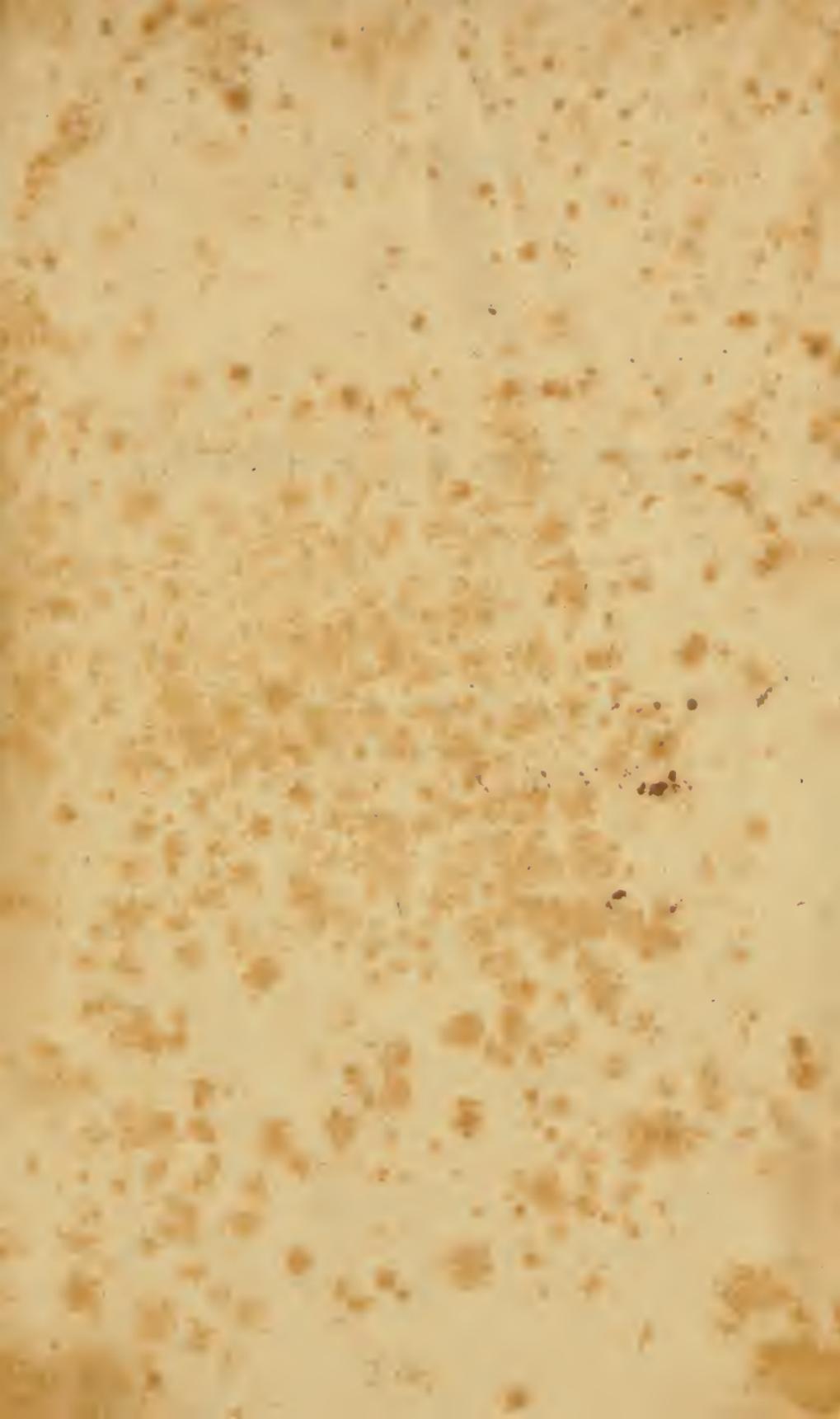
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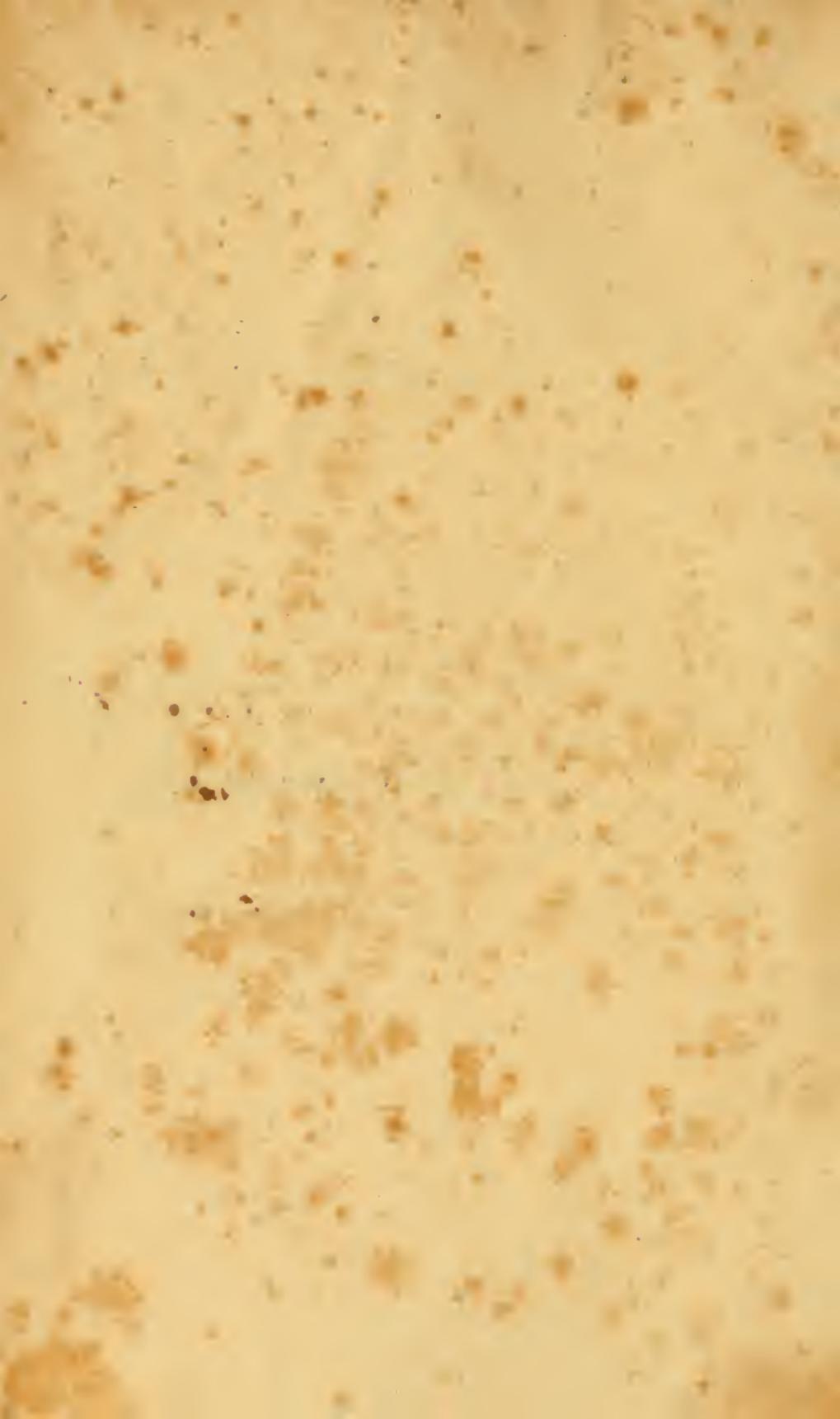
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— was it you
that

named Simeon?

He said, "I am not
the man you are
looking for."





HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. BENJAMIN ALLEN,
RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY E. BACON, No. 39, CHERRY STREET.
Clark & Raser, Printers, 33 Carter's Alley.
1824.

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-third day of August, in the forty-eighth year of the independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1823, the Rev. Benjamin Allen, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

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D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Eighth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Venerable Bede.—Saracens.—Image-Worship.—Popery.—Missionaries.

THE two evils which have risen to view during the last century, will not soon be paralleled. The papacy, gathering its foul exhalations to quench the light of truth; and the imposture of Mahomet, like a cloud from the bottomless abyss, withering wherever it falls with instant desolation. Both alike prove the corruption of the human heart, and the importance of relying alone upon Him whose promise still is, *The gates of hell shall not prevail.* Both the Eastern and the Western churches given up to darkness!—the whole orb of Christianity!—But **THE LORD REIGNETH.**

England was distinguished during part of this century by “venerable Bede.” He was looked upon as the most learned man of his time. Prayer, writing, and teaching, were his familiar employments during his whole life.*

* Life of Bede, prefixed to his works. Cologne edition.

He was ordained deacon in the nineteenth, and presbyter in the thirtieth, year of his age. He gave himself wholly to the study of the Scripture, the instruction of disciples, the offices of public worship, and the composition of religious and literary works.

Constantly engaged in reading or writing, he made all his studies subservient to devotion. As he was sensible that it is by the grace of God, rather than by natural faculties, that the most profitable knowledge of the Scriptures is acquired, he mixed prayer with his studies. He never knew what it was to do nothing.

His church history is particularly valuable, though he fell into the too fashionable errors of Rome. In his last sickness he was afflicted for two weeks with a difficulty of breathing. His mind was, however, serene and cheerful, his affections were heavenly; and, amidst these infirmities, he daily taught his disciples. A great part of that night was employed in prayer and thanksgiving; and the first employment of the morning was to ruminante on the Scriptures, and to address his God in prayer. “God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth,” was frequently in his mouth.

Even amidst his bodily weakness he was employed in writing two little treatises. Perceiving his end to draw near, he said, “If my Maker please, I will go to him from the flesh, who, when I was not, formed me out of nothing—my soul desires to see Christ my king in his beauty.” He sang glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and expired with a sedateness, composure, and devotion, which surprised all who were present at this scene.

The following extract from his writings shows the soundness of his faith. “Other innumerable methods of

saving men being set aside, this was selected by Infinite Wisdom, namely, that, without any diminution of his divinity, he assumed also humanity; and in humanity procured so much good to men, that temporal death, though not due from him, was yet paid, to deliver them from eternal death, which was due from them. Such was the efficacy of that blood, that the devil, who slew Christ by a temporary death which was not due, cannot detain in eternal death any of those who are clothed with Christ, though that eternal death be due for their sins."*

In the year 713, the Mahometans passed over from Africa into Spain, and put an end to the kingdom of the Goths, which had lasted near three hundred years. The Christians were there reduced to slavery; and thus were scourged those wicked professors of religion who had long held the truth in unrighteousness; called on the name of Christ, while in works they denied him, and buried his faith under an enormous heap of superstitions. A remnant, however, preserved their independency in the Austurian mountains, who chose Pelagius, a person descended from the royal family, for their king. He expressed his hope, that, after God had chastised them for their sins, he would not give them up wholly to the Mahometans. His confidence in God was not disappointed. Under circumstances extremely disadvantageous, he defeated the enemy, repeopled the cities, rebuilt the churches, and, by the pious assistance of several pastors, supported the gospel in one district of Spain, while the greatest part of the country was overrun by the Arabians. But the successors of Pelagius, by degress, recovered more cities from the enemy.

Christendom at this time presented a very grievous

* On Rom. v.

and mournful spectacle. Idolatry itself was now spreading widely, both in Europe and in Asia, among the professors of the Gospel: men had very commonly every where forsaken the faith and the precepts of Jesus, in all those countries which had been long evangelized. The people, who served the Lord in the greatest purity and sincerity, seem to have been *our* ancestors,* and the inhabitants of some other regions, which had but lately received the gospel.

In proportion as men depart from simple dependance upon Christ for salvation, they multiply unmeaning observances, and fall into the heavy burdens of will-worship. To satisfy their clamorous consciences, they take upon them a yoke, which, when compared to the yoke of Christ, is indeed heavy. They thus avoid the religion of the heart, 'tis true, and the difficult work of humbling the soul, but they become very drudges in the service of superstition.

The Romish church, which had for some time been declining in spirituality, began to fall into the direct worship of images, or rather this worship increased. Gregory had allowed them to remain in the churches as books for the ignorant, and they, ever ready to mistake, made them idols. In this respect the Roman† church advanced in corruption more rapidly than the eastern. And Gre-

* Ireland, which Prideaux calls the prime seat of learning in all Christendom, during the reign of Charlemagne, was peculiarly distinguished in this century. Usher has proved the name of Scotia to have been appropriated to Ireland at this time. Eginhard, the secretary of Charlemagne, calls Ireland Hibernia Scotorum insula. Several of these Scots (Irish) laboured in the vineyard in Charlemagne's time, and were made bishops in Germany. Both sacred and profane learning were taught by them with success.

† I say the Roman; for in other parts of the west, we shall see, that some opposition was made to idolatry.

cian emperors employed themselves in destroying images and pictures, while in Italy they were held in idolatrous admiration.

In 727, Leo, surnamed Iconomachus, the Greek emperor, began openly to oppose the worship of images. Gregory II. whom we may now call Pope, upheld the idolatry, and encouraged its abettors in the eastern church even to rebellion. In Italy also the authority of the emperor was treated with great contempt, and serious attempts were made to elect another in his room. But Leo overcame his enemies, though in the end Gregory's obstinate defence of idolatry actually fomented the rebellion, and, in the end, established the temporal power of his successors on the ruins of the imperial authority.*

In 732, Gregory, in a council, excommunicated all who should remove or speak contemptuously of images. And, Italy being now in a state of rebellion, Leo fitted out a fleet, which he sent thither; but it was wrecked in the Adriatic. He continued, however, to enforce his edict against images in the east, while the patrons of the fashionable idolatry supported it by various sophisms. In all his conduct Gregory now acted like a temporal prince: he supported a rebellious duke against Luitprand, king of the Lombards, his master, and, fearing the vengeance of the latter, he applied to Charles Martel, mayor of the palace in France,† offering to withdraw his obedience from the emperor, and give the consulship of Rome to Charles, if he would take him under his protection.‡

* See Mosheim, Cent. VIII. C. III.

† This is he who had stopped the progress of the Saracen arms. Mayor of the palace, was the title of the prime minister in France, who during the reigns of a succession of weak princes, governed with sovereign power.

‡ This shows that the charge of rebellion against the emperor, is not unjustly made against this pope.

Charles, however, by his wars with the Saracens, was prevented from complying with the pope's request. But he left his power and ambitious views to his son and successor, Pepin. Charles, Gregory, and Leo, all died in the same year, 741, and left to their successors the management of their respective views and contentions.

Zachary was the next pope after Gregory III., an aspiring politician, who fomented discord among the Lombards, and, by his intrigues, obtained from their king Luitprand an addition to the patrimony of the church. The Roman prelates had evidently ceased to worship God in spirit and in truth, and were now become mere secular princes.

Zachary showed how well he merited the title of a temporal governor. He had the address to preserve still a nominal subjection to the Greek emperor, while he seized all the power of the Roman dukedom for himself, and looked out for a protector both against his lawful sovereign and against the Lombards. This was Pepin, the son and successor of Charles Martel in France, who sent a case of conscience to be resolved by the pope, namely, whether it would be just in himself to depose his sovereign Childeric III. and to reign in his room?* Zachary was not ashamed to answer in the affirmative: Pepin then threw his master into a monastery, and assumed the title of king. Zachary died soon after, viz. in the year 752.

The Greek emperor was unable to cope with the sub-

* Fleury, XLIII. 1, calls him a weak and contemptible prince. So the French kings had been for some time. But Gregory I. would have told Pepin, that the weakness of the sovereign's faculties gave the servant no right to usurp the master's authority. Gregory feared God: whereas idolatry had hardened the hearts of these popes, and left them no law but their own insatiable ambition.

tilty of the pope and the violence of the Lombards. Ravenna, the capital of his dominions in Italy, was taken by king Astulphus, who had succeeded Rachis, the successor of Luitprand. This government, called the Exarchate, had continued in Italy about a hundred and four-score years. Stephen, the successor of Zachary, finding the superior strength of the Lombards, now solicited the aid of Constantine, who was too much employed in the east, to send any forces into Italy. In the year 754, the emperor held a council of 338 bishops, to decide the controversy concerning images. They express themselves not improperly on the nature of the heresy.* “Jesus Christ,” say they, “hath delivered us from idolatry, and hath taught us to adore him in spirit and in truth. But the devil, not being able to endure the beauty of the church, hath insensibly brought back idolatry under the appearance of Christianity, persuading men to worship the creature, and to take for God a work, to which they give the name of Jesus Christ.”

Stephen, pressed by the victorious arms of Astulphus, applied himself to Pepin, and wrote to all the French dukes, exhorting them to succour St. Peter, and promising them the remission of their sins, a hundred fold in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting. So rapidly advanced the popedom!

Pepin attacked Astulphus so vigorously, that, in the end, he obliged him to deliver the Exarchate, that is Ravenna, and twenty-one cities besides, to the pope. Constantine, alarmed at the danger of his dominions, in Italy, sent an embassy to king Pepin, to press him to deliver the Exarchate to its rightful sovereign: but in vain. In the issue, the pope became the proprietor of Ravenna

* Fleury, XLIII. 7.

and its dependencies, and added rapacity to his rebellion.

From this time he not only assumed the tone of infallibility and spiritual dominion, but became literally a temporal prince.

In the year 768 died Pepin, the great supporter of the popedom. Its grandeur was, however, not yet arrived at maturity.

Adrian, who was elected pope in 772, equalled his predecessor in ambition, and, by the help of Charlemagne, the son of Pepin, exalted the power of antichrist still higher. The emperors who opposed image worship dying, it began to triumph in the east as well as west. The same emperors had opposed prayers to the saints, and also the monastic life, but these, with other errors, began to take deep root, especially within the boundaries of Rome. Justification by faith seems to have been forgotten. The pulpits were silent on the subject. Large domains were annexed to the church of Rome, as presents from superstitious princes for the pardon of sin. Prayers were offered for the dead, and presents received from surviving relations for offering them.

But there was some opposition to these growing evils on the part of some of the western churches: those newly planted especially, as the church in Britain, and in Germany. A second council of Nice, having, in 787, declared in favour of image worship, its decree met with so much opposition, that Charlemagne directed some of the bishops to examine into the grounds of it. This he did under the influence of Alcuin, a learned Englishman, whom he cherished. The result was a declaration that images might remain in the churches as books for the ignorant, but should not be worshipped. How much

more effectual the conduct of Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, in the fourth century. He, finding a linen cloth hanging on the church door with an image of Christ or of some saint painted on it, tore the cloth. But those were days of greater purity.

Adrian received the decision of the bishops against his decree of Nice with prudence. He did not wish to offend Charlemagne.

France had as yet shown no disposition positively in favour of idolatry. The Roman see, alone, in Europe, had in form supported and defended it. And experience proves, that the greatest stages of degeneracy are to be found in the churches which have subsisted the longest.

Charles and the French churches persevered in their own middle practice: they used images, but they abhorred the adoration of them. In the year 794, at Frankfort upon the Maine, a synod was held, consisting of 300 bishops, who condemned the second council of Nice, and the worship of images.

All his life, however, Adrian continued on good terms with Charlemagne. He died in the course of the next year, and was succeeded by Leo III. Political intrigue, and secular artifice, not theological study, was then the practice of Roman bishops. The Irish, at this time, particularly excelled in divinity, travelled through various countries, and became renowned for their learning; and the superior light, exhibited by England and France in the controversy of images, seems to prove that these countries, in their knowledge of Scripture, and also in their regard for its doctrines, far exceeded Rome. Yet so strongly were men prejudiced in favour of the dignity of the Roman see, that it still remained in the height of its power, and was enabled in process of time, to communi-

cate its idolatrous abominations through Europe. In the east the worship of images was triumphant, but as yet not universal.*

Thus have we seen the church falling into the sin of the pagans. But Christ was not without a people. Even as it was in the days of the prophet, there were many who bowed not the knee to Baal.

Glory be to thy name, O thou Almighty Jehovah, that thou hast preserved thine own cause by thine own hand! If thou hadst not done so, the earth would long ago have been left to midnight darkness.

Several missionaries laboured to diffuse the knowledge of Christ among the heathen during this century, and with success. Winfrid, an Englishman, was a blessing to the eastern parts of Germany. Villehad, another Englishman, was successful among the Saxons. Rumold, an itinerant Episcopal missionary, was useful in Brabant. And the names of several others are handed down to us, who, afar from the scene of ecclesiastical corruption, patiently laboured in the conversion of the heathens. "Let us fight," said they, "for our Lord; for we live in days of affliction and anguish. Let us die, if God so please, for the laws of our fathers, that with them we may obtain the heavenly inheritance. Let us not be as dumb dogs, sleepy watchmen, or selfish hirelings, but as careful and vigilant pastors, preaching to all ranks, as far as God shall enable us, in season and out of season."

* Irene, toward the close of this century, viz. about the year 797, dethroned her son Constantine, and put out his eyes with such violence, that he lost his life. This monster, a worthy patroness of idolatry, then reigned alone, and co-operated with the pope of Rome, in the support of Satan's kingdom. She was deposed and banished by Necephorus, A. D. 802.

Ninth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Success of Rome.—Ado.—Paulicians.—Claudius of Turin.—Missions.

THE shadows of spiritual night thicken as we advance. It was now fashionable to explain Scripture entirely by the writings of the fathers. No man was permitted, with impunity, to vary in the least from their decisions. The great apostolical rule of interpretation, namely, to compare spiritual things with spiritual,* was in a manner lost. It was deemed sufficient that such a renowned doctor had given such an interpretation. Hence, men of learning and industry paid more attention to the fathers, than to the sacred volume, which, through long disuse and neglect, was looked on as obscure and perplexed, and quite unfit for popular reading. Even divine truths seemed to derive their authority more from the word of man than of God; and the writings and decrees of men were no longer treated as witnesses, but usurped the office of judges of divine truth.

The popedom also grew stronger and stronger. Ignorance and superstition were so predominant, that whoever dared to oppose the bishop of Rome, drew upon himself a host of enemies. All, who looked for advancement in the church, attached themselves to antichrist.

* 1 Cor. ii.

The great accumulation of ceremonies, the observance of which was looked upon as absolutely necessary to salvation, drew off the attention of men from Christian piety. The all important article of justification was nearly smothered in the rubbish; and pastors were so much taken up with externals, that they were almost entirely diverted from intellectual improvement.

All attempts to inform mankind were discouraged. Those who were against image-worship contented themselves with a bare assertion of their creed. Idolatry, in the mean time, was practically supported by the whole power and influence of the popedom. Under the superstitious empress Theodora, it triumphed in the east also.

Amid this general defection, Ado, archbishop of Vienne in France, shone as a bright example. He was indefatigable in pressing the great truths of salvation. He usually began his sermons with these, or the like words: "Hear the eternal truth, which speaks to you in the gospel;" or "hear Jesus Christ, who saith to you." He took particular care of the examination of candidates for orders; and was a very diligent disciplinarian. He permitted none, who were ignorant of Christian principles, to be sponsors to the baptized, or to be joined in matrimony, or to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, till they were better instructed.

In England, also, the decline of godliness was grievous. There is reason, however, to believe, that a devotional and, probably, an evangelical spirit prevailed in some parts of the British isles. For monks, in Ireland and Scotland, who gave themselves to prayer, preaching, and teaching in the middle ages, were called Culdees; that is, *Cultores Dei*.

Divine Providence punished the Saxons by the invasion of the Danes, the most lawless and the most savage of all mortals. The great Alfred was indeed raised up to defend his country against them. And, one of his speeches, delivered to the soldiers, before a battle, displays, at once, much good sense and a spirit of religion.

In the preface to Gregory's Pastoral,* a book translated into English, by this prince, for the benefit of his subjects, he observes, that when he came to the crown, there were very few south of the Humber,† who understood the common prayers in English, or, who could translate a passage of Latin into the language, of their own country. He sent copies of Gregory's Pastoral into every diocese, for the benefit of the clergy: with the same beneficent design, he translated also Bede's ecclesiastical history: he himself constantly attended public worship; and, from his youth, he was wont to pray for grace, and to use serious methods to subdue his passions.

A set of men, called the Paulicians, rose in the east, who appear to have possessed much of the spirit of the gospel, and to have laboured zealously in its propagation. They were charged with various errors and were persecuted with the utmost rigour. Theodora is said to have slaughtered one hundred thousand.

The pope alluded to this bloody massacre, when he commends Theodora in the same letter for the manly vigour she exerted, the Lord co-operating,‡ as he blasphemously adds, against obstinate and incorrigible heretics: and moreover, he adds, *you followed the directions of the Apostolical see.*

* Alfred invited John Scotus, not the famous John Scotus Erigena from Old Saxony into England; and founded the University of Oxford. That of Cambridge was of a date somewhat later.

† Collier, Vol. I. B. 3.

‡ Domino cooperante.

The Paulicians, at length, after 150 years suffering, departed from their principles by taking up arms. From that time, though they shone as heroes, they declined as Christians. But from their existence during 180 years, the term we may allot to them, they show the power of divine grace operating to wide extent at the very time that the church at large was labouring to clothe itself in darkness. Nor was the west without some fruits of the spirit.

The absolute power of the pope, the worship of images, and the invocation of Saints and Angels were opposed, as in the last century, by several princes and ecclesiastics. A council at Paris, held in the year 824, agreed with the council of Frankfort in the rejection of the decrees of the second council of Nice, and in the prohibition of image-worship. Agobard, archbishop of Lyons, wrote a book against the abuse of pictures and images; in which he maintained, that we ought not to worship any image of God, except that which is God himself, his eternal Son; and, that there is no other Mediator between God and man, except Jesus Christ, both God and man.

The novel notion of transubstantiation, which began to show itself, was vigorously opposed. In Italy itself, Angilbertus, bishop of Milan, refused to own the pope's supremacy, nor did the church of Milan submit to the Roman see till two hundred years afterwards.

But of all the true witnesses of the day, Claudio, bishop of Turin, was most eminent. He has some title to be called the first reformer. By his writings he copiously expounded the Scriptures: by his preaching, he laboriously instructed the people: "in truth," says Fleury, "he began to preach and instruct with great application."

The calumnies, with which his principles were aspersed, are abundantly confuted by his commentaries on various parts of the Old and New Testament, still extant in manuscripts, in various French libraries. A comment on the Epistle to the Galatians is his only work which was committed to the press. In it he every where asserts the equality of all the Apostles with St. Peter. And, indeed, he always declares Jesus Christ to be the only proper head of the church. He is severe against the doctrine of human merits, and of the exaltation of traditions to a height of credibility equal to that of the Divine Word. He maintains that we are to be saved by faith only; holds the fallibility of the church; exposes the futility of praying for the dead, and the sinfulness of the idolatrous practices then supported by the Roman see.

Against the worship of the saints, he quoted the writings of the fathers as well as scripture. "We must honour them, because they deserve to be imitated, not worship them with an act of religion. We envy not their bliss in the uninterrupted enjoyment of God, but we love them the more, because we hope for something correspondent to these their excellencies, from him who is our God as well as theirs." These things, says Cladius, are the strongest mysteries of our faith. In defending this truth, I am become a reproach to my neighbours; those, who see me, scoff at me, and point at me to one another. But the Father of mercies and the God of all consolations has comforted me in my tribulations,* that I may be able to comfort others, who are oppressed with sorrow and affliction. I rely on the protection of him, who has armed me with the armour of righteousness and of faith, the tried shield of my eternal salvation.

* 2 Cor. i.

So true is it that all the real disciples of Christ will be persecuted by even nominal Christians. This world, however, is not their rest.

Reproached by the church, he thus wrote: “Being obliged to accept the bishopric, when I came to Turin, I found all the churches full of abominations and images; and because I began to destroy what every one adored, every one began to open his mouth against me.—They say, we do not believe, that there is any thing divine in the image; we only reverence it in honour of the person whom it represents. I answer, if they, who have quitted the worship of devils, honour the images of saints, they have not forsaken idols; they have only changed the names. For whether you paint upon a wall the pictures of St. Peter or St. Paul, or those of Jupiter, Saturn, or Mercury, they are all dead, and are therefore now neither gods, nor apostles, nor men. If you worship Peter or Paul, you may have changed the name, but the error continues the same. If men must be adored, there would be less absurdity in adoring them when alive, while they are the image of God, than after they are dead, when they only resemble stocks and stones. And if we are not allowed to adore the works of God, much less are we allowed to adore the works of men.—If the cross of Christ ought to be adored, because he was nailed to it, for the same reason we ought to adore mangers, because he was laid in one; and swaddling clothes, because he was wrapped in them.” He goes on to mention other instances, and adds, “we have not been commanded to adore the cross, but to bear it; and to deny ourselves.—As to your assertion that I speak against the going to Rome by way of penance, it is not true; I neither approve nor disapprove such pilgrimages; to some they are

not useful, to others they are not prejudicial. It is a great perversion of the words ‘thou art Peter,’ &c. to infer from them, that eternal life is to be gained by a journey to Rome, and by the intercession of St. Peter.—The Apostolic, that is, the pope, is not he, who fills the see of the Apostle, but he, who discharges its duties.” His adversaries could bring no argument against him save tradition and the usage of the church.

His writings were either suppressed or secreted. The reign of idolatry had taken place, and the world worshipped the “*beast*.” The labours, however, of Claudio, were not in vain. In his own diocese, at least, he checked the growing evil; and Romish writers have owned, that the valleys of Piedmont, which belonged to his bishopric, preserved his opinions in the ninth and tenth centuries. Whence, it is probable, that the churches of the Waldenses were either derived, or, at least, received much increase and confirmation from his labours.

The gospel was spread during this century among the Bulgarians and Sclavonians. Moravia also received the truth. The Russians, too, had a Christian bishop to instruct them.

Among the circumstances that deserve to be recorded, the following is one. Frederic of Devonshire, nephew to Boniface, (alias Winsfrid) the apostle of Germany, so renowned in the last century, was appointed bishop of Utrecht, and, dining with the emperor, Lewis the Meek, was exhorted by him to discharge his office with faithfulness and integrity. The bishop, pointing to a fish on the table, asked whether it was proper to take hold of it by the head or by the tail. “By the head, to be sure,” replied the emperor. “Then I must begin my career of faithfulness,” answered Frederic, “with your majesty.”

He proceeded to rebuke the emperor for an incestuous connexion, which he openly maintained with Judith the empress; and, in the spirit of John the baptist, told him, "that it was not lawful for him to have her." Lewis had not expected this salute; and, like Herod, was not disposed to give up his Herodias. No sooner did the empress hear of this rebuke, than, in the true temper of an incensed adulteress, she began to plot the destruction of Frederic; and, by the help of assassins, she at length effected it. Frederic being mortally wounded, insisted, however, that no blood should be shed on his account; and died in a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the relation of Boniface.

The conduct of Anscarius and Vitmar, two missionaries to Sweden, ought not to be forgotten. In their passage they were met by pirates, who took the ship and all its effects. On this occasion, Anscarius lost the emperor's presents, and forty volumes, which he had collected for the use of the ministry. But his mind was still determined: and he and his partner having with difficulty got to land, they gave themselves up to the direction of Providence, and walked on foot a long way, now and then crossing some arms of the sea in boats. Such are the triumphs of Christian faith and love. They arrived at Birca, from the ruins of which, Stockholm took its rise, though built at some distance from it.* The king of Sweden received them favourably; and his council unanimously agreed to permit them to remain in the country, and to preach the gospel. Success attended their pious efforts. Many Christian captives in Sweden rejoiced at the opportunity of the communion of saints which was now restored to them; and, among others, He-

* Puffendorf's Hist. of Sweden.

ligarius, governor of the city, was baptized. This man erected a church on his own estate, and persevered in the profession and support of the gospel.

The strong faith of Anscarius was afterwards tried by various vicissitudes; but he had, at length, the satisfaction of seeing the word of God triumphant in both Sweden and Denmark.

Tenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Midnight of Popery.—Adelbert.—Missions.—Theophylact.

THE corruptions of this period were so monstrous, that even the annalist of the Roman church, notorious for his attachment to the popedom, could say: “This was an iron age, barren of all goodness; a leaden age, abounding in all wickedness; and a dark age, remarkable above all others for the scarcity of writers, and men of learning.* Christ was then, as it appears in a very deep sleep, when the ship was covered with waves; and what seemed worse, when the Lord was thus asleep, there were no disciples, who, by their cries, might awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep.”

The crimes of the popes themselves were most atrocious. All this, however, was predicted. The book of the Revelation may justly be called a prophetic history of these transactions, and the truth of Scripture is vindicated by events of all others the most disagreeable to a pious mind.

* Baron. Annal.

Still, in the year 909, a council was held at Trosle, a village near Soissons in France, in which they expressed their sentiments of Christian faith and practice, without any mixture of doctrine that was peculiarly popish. Many churches still had the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. Even the doctrine of transubstantiation itself, the favourite child of Pascasius Radbert, was still denied by many, and could not as yet gain a firm and legal establishment in Europe. Opposition was also made by kings and councils to the authority of the pope. One of the most remarkable instances of this kind took place in the council of Rheims, which deposed a bishop without the consent of the pope. A few words of the discourses of Arnulph, bishop of Orleans, the president, may deserve to be distinctly quoted.* “O deplorable Rome, who in the days of our forefathers producdest so many burning and shining lights, thou had brought forth, in our times, only dismal darkness, worthy of the detestation of posterity: What shall we do, or what counsel shall we take? The gospel tells us of a barren fig-tree, and of the divine patience exercised toward it. Let us bear with our primates as long as we can; and, in the mean time, seek for spiritual food, where it is to be found. Certainly there are some in this holy assembly, who can testify, that in Belgium and Germany, both which are near us, there may be found real pastors and eminent men in religion. Far better would it be, if the animosities of kings did not prevent that we should seek, in those parts, for the judgment of bishops, than in that venal city, which weighs all decrees by the quantity of money.—What think you, reverend

* Bishop Newton, in his 3d Vol. p. 161, on the prophecies, of whom I have made some use in a few foregoing sentences, assigns the words to Gerbert, of Rheims. The acts of the synod which I have mentioned show his mistake; they expressly ascribe them to Arnulphus.

fathers, of this man, the pope, placed on a lofty throne, shining in purple and gold? whom do you account him? If destitute of love, and puffed up with the pride of knowledge only, he is antichrist sitting in the temple of God.”*

There is an ultimate point of depression in morals, below which the common sense of mankind and the interests of society will not permit the scandalous profligacy of governors, whether secular or ecclesiastic, to descend. The church of Rome had sunk to this point in the present century. Not only moral virtue itself, but even the appearance of it, was lost in the metropolis: and the church, now trampled on by the most worthless prelates, and immersed in profanenesss, sensuality, and lewdness, called for the healing aid of the civil magistrate. Otho I. emperor of Germany, came to Rome: and by the united powers of the civil and the military sword, reduced that capital into some degree of order and decorum. He put an end to the irregular and infamous customs of intruding into the popedom, and confirmed to himself and his successors the right of choosing the supreme pontiff in future. The consequence was, that a greater degree of moral decorum began to prevail in the papacy, though matter of fact evinces but too plainly, that religious principle was still as much wanting as ever. The effect of Otho’s regulations was, that the popes exchanged the vices of the rake and the debauchee, for those of the ambitious politician and the hypocrite; and gradually recovered, by a prudent conduct, the domineering ascendancy, which had been lost by vicious excesses.

A man eminent in this century was Adelbert. He was born in 956, and ordained by Diethmar, archbishop of

Prague. He beheld this same archbishop dying in terrible agonies of conscience, on account of his neglect of pastoral duty, and his secular avarice. Adelbert was appointed his successor; but with so little satisfaction to himself, that he was never seen to smile afterwards. Being asked the reason, he said, "it is an easy thing to wear a mitre and a cross, but an awful thing to give an account of a bishopric, before the Judge of quick and dead." Bohemia, the scene of his diocese, was covered with idolatry: there were Christians, indeed, in that country, but chiefly nominal ones. In vain did the pious archbishop endeavour to reform the evils and abuses. The people undesignedly gave the noblest testimony to his sincerity, when they observed, that it was impossible for him and them to have communion with each other, because of the perfect opposition of life and conversation. Adelbert sighing over the wretched objects of his charge, and still willing to labour in the best of causes, travelled as a missionary into Poland, and planted the gospel in Dantzig. Here his labours seem to have been crowned with good success. In visiting a small island he was knocked down with the oar of a boat: however, recovering himself, he made his escape, rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and with his fellow labourers quitted the place. Indeed he was forced to flee for his life; and, at length, was murdered by barbarians in Lithuania; or, as some think, in Prussia, about the year 997. Siggo, a pagan priest, was the principal instrument of his death. He is commonly styled the apostle of Prussia,* though he only evangelized the city of Dantzig, which is in the neighbourhood of that country. Such was Adelbert;—and so small is the account

* Mosheim, Cent. XI. Chap. I.

transmitted to us, of one of the wisest and best of men, whom God had raised up for the instruction of the species,—a man willing to labour and to suffer for Christ!

The gospel was restored to Hungary, and planted in Norway and Poland. The Head of the Church evidently reserved to himself a *godly seed*, and by their labours extended the knowledge of salvation.

Specimens of gold, such as the following, are found among the rubbish.

Theophylact, a writer of the age, thus says, “The righteousness of God preserves us, not our own righteousness: for what righteousness can we have, who are altogether corrupt? But God hath justified us, not by our works, but by faith, which grace ought to grow more and more consummate; as the apostle said unto the Lord, increase our faith.* Truly it is not enough to have once believed. For, as the benefits of divine grace exceed human thoughts, there is absolute need of faith to conceive and apprehend them.—The righteousness of God is by faith. This needs not our labours and works; but the whole belongs to the grace of God. Moses asserts, that man is justified by works.† But none are found to fulfil them. Justification by the law is therefore rendered impossible. This is the righteousness of God, when a man is justified by grace, so that no blemish, no spot is found in him.”‡

“O rich advantage, exceeding human thought, that every one who believes on him, gains two things, one that he does not perish, the other, that he has eternal

* Luke xvii. 5.

† He appears to mean the same thing which St. Paul does, by the expression, “Moses describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them.”—Rom. x. 5.

‡ Cent. Magd. Id. p. 78.

life.—The faith of Christ is a holy work, and sanctifies its possessor. It is a guide to every good work: for works without faith are dead, and so is faith without works.—There needs not the circuitous and afflictive course of legal works, but God justifies in a summary way, those who believe. For, if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*—Faith is a shield, not vain sophisms, not fallacious argumentations. These hinder the soul, faith protects it.—Know, that thou must not exact a reason from God; but however he dispose of thee, thou must believe him.”†

Giselbert, another writer, says, “When I speak of the righteousness of God, I do not mean his absolute righteousness, but that with which he clothes man, when he justifies the ungodly. The law and the prophets bear witness to this righteousness. The law, indeed, by commanding and threatening, and yet justifying no man, sufficiently indicates that man is justified by the gift of God, through the quickening Spirit.—From God, beyond question, arises the beginning of salvation, never from us, nor with us. But the consent and the work, though not originating from us, is, however, not without us.”‡ Of the work of grace, and of the duty of man in sanctification, he seems to speak with evangelical accuracy. The only error is, that by speaking of justification, as effected through the quickening Spirit, he seems to confound justification with sanctification.

* Rom. x. † Cent. Magd. Id. p. 83. ‡ Cent. Magd. Id. p. 78.

Eleventh Century.

CHAPTER I.

Heretics.--England.--Anselm.--Spread of the Gospel.--Crusades.

THE arts and sciences revived in some degree in the west during this century, but the eastern church suffered so much from the Turks and Saracens, and from internal divisions, as to prevent a progress in knowledge. William the Conqueror, savage and imperious as he was, restored letters to England, which, amidst the Danish depredations, had been almost extinguished.

In the year 1017, certain persons were discovered in France, who were charged with heresy, and on their refusal to recant before a council held at Orleans, thirteen of them were burnt alive.* It is not easy to say, what was the true character of these men. It is certain, that they opposed the then reigning superstitions, and that they were willing to suffer for the doctrines which they espoused.

Some time after there appeared, in Flanders, another sect, which was condemned in a synod held at Arras, in the year 1025, by Gerard, bishop of Cambray and Arras. They had come from Italy, being the disciples of Gundulphus, who taught there several supposed heretical doctrines. Gerard himself, in a letter which he wrote on the subject, observes, that the disciples of Gundulphus travelled up and down to multiply converts, and that they had withdrawn many from the belief of the real

* Du Pin. 1st. Edit. Vol. IV. Cent. XI. p. 110.

presence in the sacrament. “This, said they, “is our doctrine, to renounce the world, to bridle the lusts of the flesh, to maintain ourselves by the labour of our own hands, to do violence to no man, to love the brethren. If this plan of righteousness be observed, there is no need of baptism; if it be neglected, baptism is of no avail.”

Not long after the supposed heretics of Orleans, arose the famous Berengarius of Tours, who wrote against the doctrine of the real presence. His writings called forth the most learned Romanists to defend the tenets of Paschasius Radbertus; and Berengarius was compelled to renounce, and to burn his writings. But he recanted again and again.

In England, Elfric, the archbishop, directed in one of the canons published at a council in which he presided in 1006, that every parish priest should be obliged on Sundays and on other holidays, to explain the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and the gospel for the day, before the people, in the English tongue.

Let the reader who has seriously considered the importance and excellency of evangelical truth, reflect on the preciousness of the doctrines, which the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and some of the plainest and most practical passages of the New Testament do either exhibit or imply; and he will be convinced, that, if the canon of Elfric had been obeyed with any tolerable degree of spirit and exactness in a number of parishes in England, the ignorance and darkness could not have been so complete nor so universal, as we are generally taught to believe it was. The gospels read in the churches, I suppose, were either the same as, or similar to, those which are read at this day; nor is it to be imagined,

that a familiar exposition of them, in conjunction with the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, would be in vain; because, in every age, the preaching of Christian fundamentals is accompanied with a divine energy, and the word returns not void to its Divine Author, but prospers in the thing whereto he sends it.* The mixture of superstitious inventions might adulterate, but could not altogether destroy the efficacy of the word of God.

Under William,† the papal power, which hitherto had by no means been so absolute in England as in the southern countries, began to be felt more strongly, and soon reached the same height, which it had attained in France and Italy. The tyrant found it a convenient engine for the support of his own despotic authority: and while he took care that every one of his subjects should, in ecclesiastical matters, bow under the yoke of a bishop of Rome, he reserved to himself the supreme dominion in civil affairs, and exercised it with the most unqualified rigour. Lanfranc, whom he appointed archbishop of Canterbury, zealously supported the power of Rome, and confirmed the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation by his influence and authority. Anselm, his successor, was a man of much excellence, though led away by the reigning superstitions. He had many contests with William Rufus his king, who indulged in the rapacity of the Norman princes. At one time William demanded of him a thousand pounds. He offered the king five hun-

* Isaiah lv.

† Osmund, a Norman, privy counsellor to William the Conqueror, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, corrected the liturgy used in his diocese. And he was thought to have done the work so judiciously, that the service "In Usum Sarum," was received in other dioceses, and became common throughout England. For, before this time, every diocese had its appropriate liturgy. Collier's Eccles. History.

dred pounds, which were refused in disgust. Anselm gave the sum to the poor, rather than rack his tenants to double it, and said to the tyrant,—“If I am used according to my station, all I have is at your service; if I am treated as a slave, I shall keep my property to myself.”

Such, however, were the iniquities of the tyrant, that Anselm withdrew from England and remained retired upon the continent until the reign of Henry I. He wrote and preached during his exile with success, and he attended one council in which he displayed great power of argument. Toward the end of his life, he wrote on the will, predestination, and grace, much in Augustine’s manner. In prayers, meditations, and hymns, he seems to have had a peculiar delight. Eadmer says, that he used to say, “If he saw hell open, and sin before him, he would leap into the former, to avoid the latter.”

His views of the virtue and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ he thus expresses:*

“Christ was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin. For, in the law, the sacrifices which are offered for sins, are called sins. Hence Christ is called sin, because he was offered for sin.—He hath blotted out all sin, original and actual; he hath fulfilled all righteousness, and opened the kingdom of heaven.—By one offering he perfects forever:† for, to the end of the world, that victim will be sufficient for the cleansing of all his people. If they sin a thousand times, they need no other Saviour, because this suffices for all things, and cleanses every conscience from sin.”

“Thus, Father Almighty, I implore thee by the love of thy Almighty Son; bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to thy name: free me from the bonds of sin; I ask this of thee by the only coeternal Son: and by

* On 2 Cor. v.

† Heb. x.

the intercession of thy dearly beloved Son, who sitteth at thy right hand, graciously restore to life a wretch, over whom, through his own demerits, the sentence of death impends. To what other intercessor I can have recourse, I know not, except to Him, who is the propitiation for our sins.* That the only begotten Son, should undertake to intercede for me, with the eternal Father, demonstrates him to be man; and that he should succeed in his intercession shows, that the human nature is taken into union with the majesty of the deity.”†

He addresses the Son of God as “the Redeemer of captives, the Saviour of the lost, the hope of exiles, the strength of the distressed, the enlarger of the enslaved spirit, the sweet solace and refreshment of the mournful soul, the crown of conquerors, the only reward and joy of all the citizens of heaven, the copious source of all grace.”‡

The gospel was established during this century in Hungary; it prospered in Norway, and spread among the Sclavonians and the tribes in their neighbourhood.

The triumphs of the gospel in Denmark were, upon the whole, very conspicuous in this century. Hear the account of Adam of Bremen, who wrote concerning the situation of this country in the year 1080. “Look,” says he, “at that very ferocious nation of the Danes—for a long time they have been accustomed, in the praises of God, to resound Alleluia. Look at that piratical people. They are now content with the fruits of their own country. Look at that horrid region, formerly altogether inaccessible on account of idolatry; they now eagerly admit the preachers of the word.”§

* De Vestiment. † Chap. viii Rom. ‡ Spec. Sermo. Evang. C. 19

§ Gibbon, vol. v. c. 55.

Toward the close of this century, the northern nations ceased to invade the southern entirely. The last attempt was made by Magnus, king of Norway, on the isle of Anglesea; but he was repulsed by Hugh, earl of Shrewsbury,* in the eleventh year of William Rufus. “That restless people seem about this time to have learned the use of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devastations spread over them by those piratical invaders. This proved one great cause of the subsequent settlement and improvement of the southern nations.”

So writes the infidel Hume; but we may attribute the change to the gospel, and not to agriculture.

But what more especially distinguished the 11th century, was the beginning of the crusades. Even before the violation of Palestine by the Saracen arms, it had been a prevailing custom among the Christians of Europe to visit those scenes rendered interesting by religion, partly through delight in the effects of local association, partly in obedience to the prejudices or commands of superstition. These pilgrimages became more frequent in latter times, in spite, perhaps in consequence, of the danger and hardships which attended them. For a while the Mohammedan possessors of Jerusalem permitted, or even encouraged a devotion which they found lucrative; but this was interrupted, whenever the ferocious insolence, with which they regarded all infidels, got the better of their rapacity. During the eleventh century, when from increasing superstition, and some particular fancies, the pilgrims were more numerous than ever, a change took place in the government of Palestine, which was overrun by the Turkish hordes from the north. These

* Hume, vol. i. c. v.

barbarians treated the visitors of Jerusalem with still greater contumely, mingling with their Mohammedan bigotry, a consciousness of strength and courage, and a scorn of the Christians, whom they knew only by the debased natives of Greece and Syria, or by these humble and defenceless palmers. When such insults became known throughout Europe, they excited a keen sensation of resentment.

Twenty years before the first crusade, Gregory VII. had projected the scheme of embodying Europe in arms against Asia; a scheme worthy of his daring mind, and which, perhaps, was never forgotten by Urban II. who in every thing loved to imitate his great predecessor.* This design of Gregory was founded upon the supplication of the Greek Emperor Michael, which was renewed by Alexius Comnenus to Urban, with increased importunity. The Turks had now taken Nice, and threatened, from the opposite shore, the very walls of Constantinople.

Peter, a hermit of Picardy, roused by witnessed wrongs, and imagined visions, journeyed from land to land, the apostle of an holy war. The preaching of Peter was powerfully seconded by Urban. In the councils of Piacenza and of Clermont, the deliverance of Jerusalem was eloquently recommended and exultingly undertaken. It is the will of God! was the tumultuous cry that broke from the heart and lips of the assembly at Clermont. This was in 1095.

Every means were used to excite an epidemical frenzy;

* Gregory addressed, in 1074, a sort of encyclical letter to all who would defend the Christian faith, enforcing upon them the duty of taking up arms against the Saracens, who had almost come up to the walls of Constantinople. No mention of Palestine is made in this letter. Labbé, *Concilia*, t. x. p. 44. St. Marc, *Abrégé Chron. de l'Hist. de l'Italie*, t. iii. p. 614.

the remission of penance, the dispensation from those practices of self-denial which superstition imposed or suspended at pleasure, the absolution of all sins, and the assurance of eternal felicity. None doubted that such as perished in the war received immediately the reward of martyrdom. False miracles and fanatical prophecies, which were never so frequent, wrought up the enthusiasm to a still higher pitch. The priests left their parishes, and the monks their cells; and though the peasantry were then in general bound to the soil, we find no check given to their emigration for this cause. Numbers of women and children swelled the crowd; it appeared a sort of sacrilege to repel any one from a work which was considered as the manifest design of Providence. But few undertakings have been attended with more disasters. So many crimes and so much misery have seldom been accumulated in so short a space, as in the three years of the first expedition. We should be warranted by contemporary writers in stating the loss of the Christians alone during this period at nearly a million: but, at the least computation, it must have exceeded half that number.* To engage in the crusade, and to perish in it, were almost synonymous. Few of those myriads who were mustered in the plains of Nice returned to gladden their friends in Europe, with the story of their triumph at Jerusalem. Besieging alternately and besieged in Antioch, they drained to the lees the cup of misery: three hundred thousand sat down before that

* William of Tyre, says, that at the review before Nice, there were found 600,000 of both sexes, exclusive of 100,000 cavalry armed in mail, l. ii. c. 23. But Fulk of Chartres reckons the same number, besides women, children, and priests. An immense slaughter had previously been made in Hungary of the rabble under Gualtier Sans-Avoir.

place; next year there remained but a sixth part to pursue the enterprise. But their losses were least in the field of battle; other causes combined with the sword.

Twelfth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Crusades.—Bernard.—The Cathari.

JUST at the close of the foregoing century, pope Urban* held a synod of one hundred and fifty bishops, in order to promote the crusades, and exhorted the Christian world to concur in supporting the same cause. He died in the year 1099, and Jerusalem was taken by the crusaders in the same year.† The pale of the visible church was extended by the conquests of the western warriors, and several episcopal sees were again formed in regions, whence the light of the gospel had first arisen to bless mankind. But these were of short duration; and, what is much more material to be observed, while they continued, they gave no evidence, that I can find, of the spirit of true religion. This is a circumstance, which throws a very unpleasing shade on the whole character of the fanatical war which at that time agitated both Europe and Asia. Among a thousand evils which it produced, or at least encouraged, this was one, namely, that indulgencies were now diffused by the popes through Europe, for the purpose of promoting what they called the holy war. These had indeed been sold before by

* This pope, viz. Urban II. held the famous council here mentioned, at Clermont in Auvergne, A. D. 1095, for the recovery of the Holy Land.

† Baronius, Cent. XII.

the inferior dignitaries of the church, who, for money, remitted the penalties imposed on transgressors: they have not, however, pretended to abolish the punishments, which await the wicked in a future state. This impiety was reserved to the pope himself, who dared to usurp the authority which belongs to God alone. The corruption having once taken place, remained, and even increased from age to age, till the time of the reformation. It is needless to say, how subversive of all piety and virtue this practice must have been. That the Romanists did really promote this impious traffic is but too evident from their own writers.* Hence the strict propriety of St. Paul's representation of the man of sin, *as showing himself that he is God*,† is evinced; hence, the characters of those, who opposed the power and doctrine of popery in those times, received the most ample vindication, and hence the merit of the reformation itself may, in a great measure, be appreciated. I only add, that the whole discipline of the church was now dissolved, and men, who had means to purchase a license to sin, were emboldened to let loose the reins of vice, and follow, at large, their own desires and imaginations.

The conquests obtained by the first crusade were constantly molested by the Mohammedans of Egypt and Syria. They were exposed, as the out-post of Christendom, with no respite, and few resources. A second crusade, in which the emperor Conrad III. and Louis VII. of France were engaged, each with seventy thousand cavalry, made scarce any diversion; and that vast army wasted away in the passage of Natolia.

* See Mosheim, Cent. XII. p. 595. Qu. Edit. Morinus, Simon, and Mabilion, are the popish authors, who are not ashamed to vindicate this system of iniquity.

† 2 Thess. ii.

But a perpetual supply of warriors was poured in from Europe, and in this sense, the crusades may be said to have lasted without intermission during the whole period of the Latin settlements. Of these defenders, the most renowned were the military order of the Knights of the Temple and of the Hospital of St. John,* which were instituted, the one in 1124, the other in 1118, for the sole purpose of protecting the Holy Land. The Teutonic order, established in 1190, when the kingdom of Jerusalem was falling, soon diverted its schemes of holy warfare to a very different quarter of the world. Large estates, as well in Palestine, as throughout Europe, enriched the two former institutions; but the pride, rapaciousness, and misconduct of both, especially of the Templars, seem to have balanced the advantages derived from their valour. At length the famous Saladin, usurping the throne of a feeble dynasty which had reigned in Egypt, broke in upon the Christians of Jerusalem; the king and kingdom fell into his hands; nothing remained but a few strong towns upon the sea-coast.

These misfortunes roused once more the princes of Europe, and the third crusade was undertaken by her three greatest sovereigns, in personal estimation as well as dignity; by the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, Philip Augustus of France, and Richard Cœur de Lion of England. But this, like the preceding enterprise, failed of permanent effect; and those feats of romantic prowess, which made the name of Richard so famous both in Europe and Asia,† proved only the total inefficacy of all

* The St. John of Jerusalem was neither the Evangelist, nor yet the Baptist, but a certain Cypriot, surnamed the Charitable, who had been patriarch of Alexandria.

† When a Turk's horse started at a bush, he would chide him, Joinville says, with, *Cuides tu qu' y soit le roy Richard?* Women kept their children quiet with the threat of bringing Richard to them.

exertions in an attempt so radically absurd. Palestine was never the scene of another crusade. One great armament was diverted to the siege of Constantinople; and another wasted in fruitless attempts upon Egypt. The emperor Frederick II. afterwards procured the restoration of Jerusalem by the Saracens; but the Christian princes of Syria were unable to defend it, and their possessions were gradually reduced to the maritime towns. Acre, the last of these, was finally taken by storm in 1291; and its ruin closes the history of the Latin dominion in Syria, which Europe had already ceased to protect.

A man of great eminence in this century, was Bernard, abbot of Clairval. He was born at Fontaine, a village of Burgundy, in the year 1091; and was the son of Tecelinus,* a military nobleman, renowned for piety, at least according to the ideas of religion prevalent at that time. The same character is given of his mother Aleth. She had seven children, of whom Bernard was the third. From his infancy he was devoted to religion and study, and made a rapid proficiency in the learning of the times. He took an early resolution to retire from the world, and engaged all his brothers and several of his friends in the same monastic views with himself. The most rigid rules were agreeable to his inclinations: and, hence, he became a Cistercian, the strictest of the orders in France. The Cistercians were at that time but few in number: men were discouraged from uniting with them on account of their excessive austerities. Bernard, however, by his superior genius, his eminent piety, and his ardent zeal, gave to this order a lustre and a celebrity which their institution by no means deserved. At the

* Life of Bernard by Gulielmus, 1077.

age of twenty-three, with more than thirty companions, he entered into the monastery. Other houses of the order arose soon after, and he himself was appointed abbot of Clairval.* To those novitiates, who desired admission, he used to say, "If ye hasten to those things, which are within, dismiss your bodies, which ye brought from the world; let the spirits alone enter; the flesh profiteth nothing." Strange advice this may seem, and very different from the meekness and facility which our Saviour exhibited towards young disciples.† Nor would it be worth while to have mentioned it at all, but that it evinces the extreme disadvantages, which then attended the pursuit of religious knowledge, and the cultivation of piety. Yet, amidst all these disagreeable austerities, the soul of Bernard was inwardly taught of God; and, as he grew in divine life he gradually learned to correct the harshness and asperity of his sentiments. Finding the novitiates to be terrified at his severe declarations, he used to preach to them the mortification of carnal concupiscence, and lead them on with a mildness and clemency, which, however, he did not exercise toward himself. He injured his health exceedingly by austerities, and, as he afterwards confessed, threw a stumbling block in the way of the weak, by exacting of them a degree of perfection which he himself had not attained. He had induced all his brethren to follow his example of retirement. They were five in number; and his only sister still remained in the world, who, coming to visit the brethren in the monastery, in the dress and with the attendance of a lady of quality, found herself treated with such neglect, that bursting into tears, she said, "though I am a sinner, nevertheless for such Christ died." Bernard, moved

* Life of Bernard, 1085.

† Matthew ix. 14.

with an expression so truly evangelical, remitted his severity, gave her directions suited to the taste of the age, and, probably, still better advice.

Bernard, however, having reduced himself to the greatest weakness by his absurd excesses, and being obliged to take more care of his health, was humbled under a sense of his folly, and frankly confessed it, in the strongest terms.* He recovered his strength, and began to exert himself, by preaching, and travelling from place to place, for the real good of mankind. It is wonderful to observe, with what authority he reigned in the hearts of men of all ranks, and how his word became a law to princes and nobles. His eloquence, indeed, was very great; but that alone could never have given him so extensive a dominion. His sincerity and humility were eminent, and his constant refusal of the highest ecclesiastical dignities, for which he was, doubtless, as well qualified as any person of his time, gave, in his circumstances, an unequivocal testimony to the uprightness of his character.

That which eminently marked the character of Bernard, amidst the profusion of honours heaped on his character throughout Europe, was his undissembled humility. Though no potentate, whether civil or ecclesiastical, possessed such real power as he did in the Christian world, and though he was the highest in the judgment of all men, he was nevertheless, in his own estimation, the lowest. He said, and he felt what he said; namely, that he had neither the will nor the power to perform the services, for which he was so much extolled, but was wholly indebted to the influence of divine grace. At intervals, from the employments of ecclesiastical affairs, he

* Id. 1094.

meditated on the subject of the book of Canticles. The love of Christ toward his church, his great condescension towards it, though sullied and dishonoured by sin, the reciprocal affection also of the church toward the divine Saviour, the prelibations of his love afforded toward her, varied however with anxieties and interruptions, these subjects engaged his attention, and he wrote on them in that manner which experience only can dictate.*

Abelard, a self-sufficient teacher, of shallow knowledge, but great pretensions, having advanced certain errors concerning the Trinity, and, as a necessary consequence, denied the doctrine of atonement and the influences of divine grace, Bernard opposed him, and demonstrated the inconsistency of his views, with the gospel. In so doing, he thus presented the truth:—As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. The fault has truly laid hold of me, but grace has also visited me. If the judgment was by one to condemnation, the free-gift was of many offences unto justification.† Nor do I fear, being thus freed from the powers of darkness, to be rejected by the Father of lights, since I am justified freely by the blood of his Son. He who pitied the sinner, will not condemn the just. I call myself just, but it is through his righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,‡ and he is made of God for us righteousness.§ Thus is man made righteous by the blood of the Redeemer; though Abelard, this man of perdition, thinks the only use of his coming was, to deliver to us good rules of life, and to give us an example of patience and charity. Is this then the whole of the great mystery of godliness, this which any uncircumcised and unclean person may easily penetrate? What is there in this beyond the

* Life of Bernard, 1123. † Rom. v. 16. ‡ Rom. x. 4. § 1 Cor. i. 30.

common light of nature? But it is not so: for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.* Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent;† and, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.‡ —He asks, had the devil dominion over Abraham and the other elect? No; but he would have had, if they had not been freed by faith in him that was to come. As it is written, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad. It was the blood of Christ, which like dew distilled on Lazarus, and preserved him from the flames of hell through faith in him who was to suffer. We must believe of all the elect of that time, that they were born as we are, under the powers of darkness, but were thence delivered before they died; and that only by the blood of Christ.

There were some faithful champions of primitive spiritual devotion in this century, who opposed the reigning superstitions into which Bernard had fallen.

Evervinus of Stemfeld, in the diocese of Cologne, wrote to Bernard, a little before the year 1140, a letter, preserved by Mabillon, concerning certain heretics in his neighbourhood.§ He was perplexed in his mind concerning them, and wrote for a resolution of his doubts to the renowned abbot, whose word was law at that time in Christendom. Some extracts of this letter are as follows: “There have been lately some heretics discovered among us near Cologne, though several of them have, with satisfaction, returned again to the church. One of their bishops and his companions openly opposed us in the assembly of the clergy and laity, in the presence of

* 2 Cor. ii. 14.

† Matt. xi. 25.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 5.

§ Allix, Churches of Piedmont, p. 140.

the archbishop of Cologne, and of many of the nobility, defending their heresies by the words of Christ and the apostles. Finding that they made no impression, they desired that a day might be appointed for them, on which they might bring their teachers to a conference, promising to return to the church, provided they found their masters unable to answer the arguments of their opponents, but that otherwise they would rather die, than depart from their judgment. Upon this declaration, having been admonished to repent for three days, they were seized by the people in the excess of zeal, and burnt to death; and what is very amazing, they came to the stake, and bare the pain, not only with patience, but even with joy. Were I with you, father, I should be glad to ask you, how these members of Satan could persist in their heresy with such courage and constancy, as is scarcely to be found in the most religious believers of Christianity?"

This people of Cologne were true *Protestants*. Egbert, a monk, and afterwards abbot of Schonauge, tells us,* that he had often disputed with these heretics, and says, "These are they who are commonly called Cathari." Egbert adds, that they were divided into several sects, and maintained their sentiments by the authority of scripture. See by the confession of an enemy their veneration for the divine word, and their constant use of it, in an age when the authority of Scripture was weakened, and its light exceedingly obscured, by a variety of traditions and superstitions. "They are armed," says the same Egbert, "with all those passages of Holy Scripture, which in any degree seem to favour their views; with these they know how to defend themselves, and to oppose

* Allix, p. 149.

the Catholic truth, though they mistake entirely the true sense of Scripture, which cannot be discovered without great judgment."—"They are increased to great multitudes throughout all countries—their words eat like a canker. In Germany we call them Cathari; in Flanders they call them Piphles; in French Tisserands, because many of them are of that occupation."^{22*}

The Cathari were a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious race of Christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the reigning idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the divine word. Their numbers were very considerable in this century; and Cologne, Flanders, the south of France, Savoy, and Milan, were their principal places of residence.

"They declare," says Egbert, "that the true faith and worship of Christ is no where to be found but in their meetings, which they hold in cellars and weaving-rooms. If ever they do accompany the people with whom they dwell, to hear mass, or to receive the sacrament, they do it in dissimulation, that they may be thought to believe what they do not; for they maintain, that the priestly order has perished in the Roman church, and is preserved only in their sect." They attended the public worship, much in the same manner, as the apostles themselves did to the Jewish church, while it existed, still preserving an union among themselves in worship, and in hearing sermons, so far as the iniquity of the times would permit. It were to be wished, that all serious Christians had acted in that manner, and had not been so hasty as some of them have been, in forming a total separation from the

* That is, weavers; see Du Pin, Cent. xii. p. 88.

general church, then the happy influence of their views in religion might have spread more powerfully; nor is there any particular danger that they themselves would have received infection from the world, while they were estranged from it in practice and in manners. After all, circumstances may arise, when an entire separation from the whole body of nominal Christians may become necessary to the people of God. But this should never be attempted with precipitation. And the meekness and charity, which the Cathari exhibited in this point, seem highly laudable.

Such was the provision of Divine grace, to take out of a corrupt and idolatrous world of nominal Christians, a people formed for himself, who should show forth his praise, and who should provoke the rest of mankind by the light of true humility, and holiness; a people, singularly separate from their neighbours in spirit, manners, and discipline; rude indeed, and illiterate, and not only discountenanced, but even condemned by the few real good men, who adhered altogether to the Romish church, condemned, because continually misrepresented. I know not a more striking proof of that great truth of the divine word, that, in the worst of times, the church shall exist, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

In the east, it is probable the church existed among the remains of the Paulicians. For in the year 1118, Alexius Comnenus, who had zealously persecuted this people in the latter end of the foregoing century, burned a supposed Manichee, who was charged with maintaining all the absurdities of Manes. We have the account from the female historian, his own daughter, Anna Comnena, who every where idolizes the character of her father.*

* Anna Comnena, b. xv.

The supposed heretic, however, it ought to be known, rejected the worship of images as idolatry;* a circumstance, which at least affords a strong presumption in favour of his Christian character. The reader will hence be led to believe it not improbable, that there were even then some relics of a church of God in the east.

It is no small consolation to the mind of a true believer, that the most disastrous as well as the most glorious scenes of the church, are predicted in Scripture. The evidence of prophecy constantly accompanies the light of history, and “behold I have told you before,” is the voice of our Saviour, which we hear in every age. In a council held at London in 1108, in the reign of Henry I. a decree was issued against clerks who should cohabit with women.† This council did not mean to give an attestation to the truth of the prophecy of St. Paul, concerning the apostacy of the latter days, one circumstance of which was the prohibition of marriage,‡ but they fulfilled the prophecy in the clearest manner. The voices of natural conscience and of common sense were, however, by no means altogether silenced during this gloomy season. Flentius, bishop of Florence,§ taught publicly, that antichrist was born, and come into the world; on which account pope Paschal II. held a council there in the year 1105, reprimanded the bishop, and enjoined him silence on that subject. Even Bernard himself inveighed so strongly against the popes and the clergy, that nothing but the obstinate prejudices of education prevented him from seeing the whole truth in this matter. It was natural for men, who reverenced the Scriptures, and who compared what they read of antichrist with

* Baron. Cent. xii.

† Baron. Cent. xii.

‡ 1 Tim. iv.

§ See Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, vol. iii. p. 167.

what they saw in the church of Rome, to express some suspicions, that the prophecy was then fulfilling, though the glare of fictitious holiness, which covered the papedom, prevented them from beholding their object with perspicuity.

Pomerania received the gospel during this century, as did also the island of Rügen in its neighbourhood. Here shone Absalom, archbishop of Lunden, by whose pious labours, at length, the gospel received an establishment in this island, which had so long baffled every attempt to evangelize it. Absalom* ought to be classed among those genuine benefactors of mankind, who were willing to spend and be spent for the good of souls. The truth made its way into Finland also.

Notwithstanding the corruptions that accompanied the gospel, such and so great is its intrinsic excellence, that, wherever it went, it carried a large measure of improvement and of happiness. The light of the sun, though shining through clouds, is preferable to midnight.

Thirteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Waldo and the Waldenses.

WE are approaching the dawn of a brighter era, and it becomes us gratefully to contemplate its commencement. Enjoying the pure light of the gospel, we ought frequently to look at the trials and the efforts of those who were the instruments of preserving for us that light.

* Mosheim, xii. Cent. 351. Cent. Magd. xii. Cent. 13.

But for the reformers, we of Protestant lands, should have been groaning under the abominations of the papacy, having no more than the glimmering reflected upon us through its darkness. May our souls be sensible of their privileges, and may we be grateful to their Divine Author.

In the latter part of the 12th century the Cathari received a great accession of members from the learned labours and godly zeal of Peter Waldo. They were peculiarly numerous in the valleys of Piedmont. Hence the name Vaudois or Vallenses was given to them, particularly to those who inhabited the valleys of Lucerne and Angrogne. A mistake arose from similarity of names, that Peter Valdo or Waldo, was the first founder of these churches. For the name Vallenses being easily changed into Waldenses, the Romanists improved this very easy and natural mistake into an argument against the antiquity of these churches, and denied that they had any existence till the appearance of Waldo. During the altercations of the papists and Protestants, it was of some consequence that this matter should be rightly stated; because the former denied that the doctrines of the latter had any existence till the days of Luther. But from a just account of the subject, it appeared that the real Protestant doctrines existed during the dark ages of the church, even long before Waldo's time; the proper founder of them being Claudio of Turin, the Christian hero of the ninth century.

About the year 1160, the doctrine of transubstantiation, which, some time afterwards, Innocent III. confirmed in a very solemn manner, was required by the court of Rome to be acknowledged by all men. A very pernicious practice of idolatry was connected with the reception of this doctrine. Men fell down before the consecrated host,

and worshipped it as God: and the novelty, absurdity, and impiety of this abomination very much struck the minds of all men, who were not dead to a sense of true religion. At this time Peter Waldo, a citizen of Lyons, appeared very courageous in opposing the innovation.

A providential event had given the first occasion to this reformer's concern for religion. Being assembled with some of his friends, and after supper conversing and refreshing himself among them, one of the company fell down dead on the ground, to the amazement of all that were present. From that moment it pleased God that Waldo should commence a serious inquirer after divine truth. This person was an opulent merchant of Lyons, and as his concern of mind increased, and a door of usefulness to the souls of men was more and more set open before him, he abandoned his mercantile occupation, distributed his wealth to the poor, and exhorted his neighbours to seek the bread of life. The poor, who flocked to him, that they might partake of his alms, received from him the best instructions which he was capable of communicating; and they reverenced the man, to whose liberality they were so much obliged, while the great and the rich both hated and despised him.

Waldo himself, however, that he might teach others effectually, needed himself to be taught; and where was instruction to be found? Men at that day might run here and there for meat, and not be satisfied. In some convents, among the many who substituted formality for power, there were particular persons who "held the *Head*," and drew holy nourishment from him. But a secular man, like Waldo, would not easily find them out, and were he to have met with some of them, their prejudiced attachment to the see of Rome would either have

prevented them from imparting to him the food which was necessary for his soul, or have led him into a course of life, by which he would, after their example, have buried his talent in a napkin. The conduct of Bernard, one of the most eminent and best of them, too plainly shows that one of these two things would have been the case. But Bernard was gone to his rest not long before this time, and seems not to have left any monastic brother behind him at all to be compared with himself. Divine Providence reserved better things for Waldo: darkened and distressed in mind and conscience, he knew that the Scriptures were given as infallible guides, and he thirsted for those sources of instruction, which at that time were in a great measure a sealed book in the Christian world. To men who understood the Latin tongue, they were accessible. But how few were these, compared with the bulk of mankind! The Latin Vulgate Bible was the only edition of the sacred book at that time in Europe; and the languages then in common use, the French and others, however mixed with the Latin, were, properly speaking, by this time separate and distinct from it. It is a certain mark of the general negligence of the clergy in those ages, that no provision was made for the ignorant in this respect, though I do not find, that there existed any penal law to forbid the reading of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue. It is certain that Waldo found means to diffuse the precious gift of the Scriptures among the people.

Whether Waldo himself entirely performed the work, or encouraged others to do it, or what is most probable, executed it himself with the assistance of others, it is certain, that the Christian world in the west was indebted to him for the first translation of the Bible into a modern

tongue, since the time that the Latin had ceased to be a living language.

As Waldo grew more acquainted with the Scriptures he discovered, that the general practice of nominal Christians was totally abhorrent from the doctrines of the New Testament: and in particular, that a number of customs, which all the world regarded with reverence, had not only no foundation in the divine oracles, but were even condemned by them. Inflamed with equal zeal and charity, he boldly condemned the reigning vices, and the arrogance of the pope. He did more: as he himself grew in the knowledge of the true faith and love of Christ, he taught his neighbours the principles of practical godliness, and encouraged them to seek salvation by Jesus Christ.

John De Beles Mayons, the archbishop of Lyons, could not but be sensible of the tendency of these proceedings, and being jealous of the honour of the corrupt system, of which he was a distinguished member, he forbade the new reformer to teach any more, on pain of excommunication, and of being proceeded against as an heretic. Waldo replied, that though he was a layman, yet he could not be silent in a matter which concerned the salvation of men. On this reply, the archbishop endeavoured to apprehend him. But such was the power of his friends, he lived concealed at Lyons for the space of three years.

Among other scriptural discoveries, the evils of the popedom struck the mind of Waldo; and Pope Alexander III. having heard of his proceedings, anathematized the reformer and his adherents, and commanded the archbishop to proceed against them with the utmost rigour.

Waldo could no longer remain in Lyons. He escaped;

his disciples followed him; and hence a dispersion took place, similar to that which arose in the primitive church on occasion of the persecution of Stephen. The effects were also similar: the doctrine of Waldo was hence more widely disseminated through Europe. He himself retired into Dauphiny, where his tenets took a deep and lasting root. Some of his people did probably join themselves to the Vaudois of Piedmont, and the new translation of the Bible, was, doubtless, a rich accession to the spiritual treasures of that people. Waldo himself, however, seems never to have been among them. Persecuted from place to place, he retired into Picardy. Success still attended his labours, and the doctrines which he preached appear to have so harmonized with those of the Vaudois, that with reason they and his people were henceforward considered as the same.

Philip Augustus of France took up arms against the Waldenses of Picardy, pulled down three hundred houses of the gentlemen who supported their party, destroyed some walled towns, and drove the inhabitants into Flanders. Not content with this, he pursued them thither, and caused many of them to be burned.

From the account of a very authentic French historian,* it appears, that Waldo fled into Germany, and at last settled in Bohemia. There he ended his days in the year 1179, or before that time. It is evident, from good records, that the churches of Dauphiny corresponded with those of Bohemia, and that these last were, on some occasions at least, supplied with pastors from Piedmont. These things show the mutual connexion of the Waldensian churches, and prove the superior antiquity of those

* Thuan. Hist sui temp. 457.

of the valleys, the severity of the persecution, and the important services of Peter Waldo.

The Waldenses were treated with as great contumely by papal as the primitive Christians were by heathen Rome. Poor men of Lyons, and dogs, were the usual terms of derision. In Provence they were called cut-purses: in Italy, because they observed not the appointed festivals, and rested from their ordinary occupations only on Sundays, they were called Insabathas; that is, regardless of Sabbaths. In Germany, they were called Gazares, a term expressive of every thing flagitiously wicked. In Flanders they were denominated Turlupins, that is, inhabitants with wolves, because they were often obliged to dwell in woods and deserts: and because they denied the consecrated Host to be God, they were accused of Arianism, as if they had denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. It was not possible for these poor sufferers to speak a word in defence or explanation of their doctrines, but malice, which discolours every thing, was sure to misrepresent it. If they maintained the independency of the temporal powers on the ecclesiastical, a doctrine now believed almost universally in Europe, they were called Manichees, as if they favoured the notion of two principles. The old odious name of Gnostic also was revived, with every other term of ancient or modern opprobrium, which might infix a stigma on the character of the sufferers, and seem to justify the barbarity with which they were treated.

Another charge brought against them was, that they denied baptism to infants. In answer to this, in their spiritual almanac, they say, "neither the time nor the place is appointed for those who must be baptized. But we do bring our children to be baptized; which they

ought to do, to whom they are nearest related; their parents, or those whom God hath inspired with such charity." If this be the case,—and the evidence of their own books appears to be unanswerable,—it seems improper to look on the Waldenses as averse to infant baptism. Yet, that some of them were regarded as professed enemies to the baptism of infants, is affirmed on respectable authority,* and it possibly might be the case with a few of them. The greater part of them are, however, vindicated in this respect by an authority from which lies no appeal, their own authentic writings. However, having been for some hundreds of years constrained to suffer their children to be baptized by the Romish priests, they were under frequent temptations to defer it, on account of the superstitious inventions annexed to that holy ordinance in those times: and very frequently on account of the absence of their own pastors, whom they called Barbs, who were travelling abroad for the service of the churches, they could not have baptism administered to their children by their ministry. The delay occasioned by these things exposed them to the reproach of their adversaries. And though many, who approved of them in all other respects, gave credit to the accusation, I cannot find any satisfactory proof, that they were, in judgment, antipædo-baptists strictly. And it is very probable that some of the supposed heretics, who have been mentioned above,† delayed the baptism of their children on the same account; because similar circumstances would naturally be attended with similar effects. On the whole, a few instances excepted, the existence of antipædo-baptism seems scarcely to have taken place in the church

* Cent. Magd. xii. 833.

† See Milner, vol. 3, p. 259.

of Christ, till a little after the beginning of the reformation, when a sect arose, whom historians commonly call the anabaptists. I lay no great stress on this subject; for the Waldenses might have been a faithful, humble, and spiritual people, as I believe they were, if they had differed from the general body of Christians on this article. But when I find persons accused as enemies to infant baptism who were not so, it seemed to be a part of historical veracity to represent things as they really were.

One charge more against them is, that they compelled their pastors to follow some trade. How satisfactory their answer! “We do not think it necessary that our pastors should work for bread. They might be better qualified to instruct us, if we could maintain them without their own labour; but our poverty has no remedy.” So they speak in letters published in 1508.*

We have hitherto rather rescued their character from infamy than delineated its real nature. They appear, on the whole, to have been most unjustly aspersed; and the reader will be enabled to form some idea of their piety and probity, from the following testimonies of their enemies:

A pontifical inquisitor† says, “heretics are known by their manners. In behaviour they are composed and modest, and no pride appears in their apparel.” Seysillius says, it much strengthens the Waldenses, that, their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians. They never swear but by compulsion, and seldom take the name of God in vain: they fulfil their promises with good faith; and, living for the most part in poverty, they profess that they at once preserve the

* Usher de Christ. Eccl. succ. & statu

† Id.

apostolical life and doctrine. Lielenstenius, a Dominican, speaking of the Waldenses of Bohemia, says, “I say that in morals and life they are good; true in words, and unanimous in brotherly love; but their faith is incorrigible and vile, as I have shown in my treatise.”

It is remarkable that Thomas Walden, who wrote against Wickliff, says, that the doctrine of Waldo was conveyed from France into England. It may not, perhaps, be thought improbable, that the English, being masters of Guienne for a long time, should have received some beams of divine truth from the followers of Waldo. By the general confession of the Romanists, indeed, the Protestants and the Waldenses were looked on as holding the same principles.

The churches of Piedmont, however, on account of their superior antiquity, were regarded as guides of the rest; insomuch, that when two pastors, who had been sent by them into Bohemia, acted with perfidy, and occasioned a grievous persecution, still the Bohemians ceased not to desire pastors from Piedmont; only they requested, that none but persons of tried characters might be sent to them for the future.

I can only give the general outlines: if the finer and more numerous lines of this scene could be circumstantially drawn, a spectacle more glorious could scarcely be exhibited to the reader. From the borders of Spain, throughout the South of France, for the most part, among and below the Alps, along the Rhine, on both sides of its course, and even to Bohemia, thousands of godly souls were seen patiently to bear persecution for the sake of Christ, against whom malice could say no evil, but what admits the most satisfactory refutation: men distinguished for every virtue, and only hated because of godliness

itself. Persecutors with a sigh owned, that, because of their virtue, they were the most dangerous enemies of the church. But of what church. Of that, which in the thirteenth century and long before had evinced itself to be antichristian. Here were not an individual or two, like Bernard, but very many real Christians, who held the real doctrines of Scripture, and carefully abstained from all the idolatry of the times. How obdurate is the heart of man by nature! Men could see and own the superior excellence of these persons, and yet could barbarously persecute them! What a blessed light is that of Scripture! By that the Waldenses saw the road to heaven, of which the wisest of their contemporaries were ignorant, who, though called Christians, made no use of the oracles of God! How marvellous are the ways of God! How faithful his promise in supporting and maintaining a church even in the darkest times! But her livery is often sackcloth, and her external bread is that of affliction, while she sojourns on earth. But let no factious partisan encourage himself in sedition by looking at the Waldenses. We have seen how obedient they were to establish governments; and that separation from a church, so corrupt as that of Rome, was with them only matter of necessity. The best and wisest in all ages have acted in the same manner, and have dreaded the evils of schism more than those of a defect in discipline. We shall now see what the Waldenses were in point of doctrine and discipline: for their virtues had an evangelical principle, and it is only to be regretted that the accounts are so very scanty on a subject worthy the attention of all who desire to understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

The leading principle of this church, which God raised

up in the dark ages to bear witness to his gospel, is that, in which all the Protestant churches agreed, namely, “that we ought to believe that the Holy Scriptures alone contain all things necessary to our salvation, and that nothing ought to be received as an article of faith but what God had revealed to us.”* Wherever this principle is not only assented to in form, but also received with the heart, it expels superstition and idolatry. The worship of one God, through the one Mediator, and by the influence of one Holy Spirit, is practised sincerely. For the dreams of purgatory, the intercession of saints, the adoration of images, dependance on relics and austerities, cannot stand before the doctrine of Scripture. Salvation by grace, through faith in Christ alone, as it is the peculiar truth and glory of the Scriptures, so it is the boast and joy of the Christian, who knows himself to be that guilty polluted creature which the same Scriptures describe. How abominable to such a one is the doctrine of indulgencies, and of commutation for offences, and the whole structure of the papal domination! The true love of God and of our neighbour, even the true holiness, which is the great end and aim of Christ’s redemption, must be subverted by these human inventions. The Waldenses were faithful to the great fundamental principle of Protestantism. Enough appears on record to prove, that they were formed by the grace of God to show forth his praise in the world; and great as the resemblance appears between them and the reformed, if we had as many writings of the former, as we have of the latter, the resemblance in all probability would appear still more striking.

* Vignaux in his *Memorials of the Waldenses*. See this principle expressed in a similar manner in the sixth article of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

"They* affirm, that there is only one Mediator, and therefore that we must not invoke the saints."

"That there is no purgatory; but that all those who are justified by Christ go into life eternal."

"They receive two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They affirm that all masses are damnable, especially those which are repeated for the dead, and that therefore they ought to be abolished; to which they add the rejection of numberless ceremonies. They deny the supremacy of the pope, especially the power which he hath usurped over the civil government; and they admit no other degrees, except those of bishops, priests and deacons. They condemn the popedom as the true Babylon, allow the marriage of the clergy, and define the true church to be those who hear and understand the word of God."

They appear to have had all the essentials of church discipline among them; and their circumstances of distress, of poverty, and of persecution, however disagreeable to flesh and blood, favoured that spirit of submission and subordination, which ever promotes a salutary exercise of discipline; through the want of which, among ourselves, church rules are too commonly treated as insignificant. A state of refinement, of wealth, of luxury, and of political speculation, was unknown to the Waldenses: how subversive such a state is of the most wholesome ecclesiastical authority, the experience of our own age demonstrates.

In a book concerning their pastors we have this account of their vocation:

"All, who are to be ordained as pastors among us, while they are yet at home, entreat us to receive them

* Vignaux.

into the ministry, and desire that we would pray to God, that they may be rendered capable of so great a charge. They are to learn by heart all the chapters of St. Matthew and St. John, all the canonical epistles, and a good part of the writings of Solomon, David, and the prophets. Afterwards, having exhibited proper testimonials of their learning and conversation, they are admitted as pastors by the imposition of hands. The junior pastors must do nothing without the license of their seniors; nor are the seniors to undertake any thing without the approbation of their colleagues, that every thing may be done among us in order. We pastors meet together once every year, to settle our affairs in a general synod. Those whom we teach afford us food and raiment with good will, and without compulsion. The money given us by the people is carried to the said general synod, is there received by the elders, and applied partly to the supply of travellers, and partly to the relief of the indigent. If a pastor among us shall fall into a gross sin, he is ejected from the community, and debarred from the function of preaching."

They unquestionably received the Apostles' Creed, and that commonly ascribed to Athanasius. They acknowledged the same canon of Scripture, which the Protestant Episcopal church does in her sixth article; and, what is very remarkable, they give the same account of the Apocryphal books, accompanied with the same remark of Jerom, which the reader will find in the same sixth article. They say, "these books teach us, that there is one God, almighty, wise and good, who in his goodness made all things. He created Adam after his own image. But through the malice of the devil, and the disobedience of Adam, sin entered into the world, and we became sin-

ners in and by Adam. That Christ is our life and truth, and peace, and righteousness, our shepherd and advocate, our sacrifice and priest, who died for the salvation of all who should believe, and also rose again for our justification”

The confession of the Bohemian Waldenses, published in the former part of the sixteenth century, is very explicit on these articles. They say, that men ought to acknowledge themselves born in sin, and to be burdened with the weight of sin; that they ought to acknowledge, that for this depravity, and for the sins springing up from this root of bitterness, utter perdition deservedly hangs over their heads, and that all should own that they can no way justify themselves by any works or endeavours, nor have any thing to trust to but Christ alone. They hold, that by faith in Christ, men are, through mercy, freely justified, and attain salvation by Christ, without human help or merit. They hold, that all confidence is to be fixed in him alone, and all our care to be cast upon him; and, that for his sake only God is pacified, and adopts us to be his children. They teach also, that no man can have this faith by his own power, will, or pleasure; that it is the gift of God, who, where it pleaseth him, worketh it in man by his Spirit.* They teach also the doctrine of good works as fruits and evidences of a lively faith.

The Waldenses in general express their firm belief, that there is no other Mediator than Jesus Christ: they speak with great respect of the Virgin Mary, as holy, humble, and full of grace; at the same time that they totally discountenance that senseless and extravagant admiration, in which she had been held for ages. They

* Moreland, p. 48.

assert, that all, who have been and shall be saved, have been elected of God before the foundation of the world.

It deserves to be noticed, that in their exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the Waldensian reformers give us the well known text in 1 John v. 7, as a proof of the doctrine of the Trinity. They were, it seems, perfectly satisfied of its authenticity, and, most probably at that time had never heard of any suggestions to the contrary.

"The Son of God, by the commandment of God the Father, and by his own free will, was lifted up upon the altar of the cross, and was crucified, and hath redeemed mankind with his own blood; which work being accomplished, he arose from the dead the third day, having diffused through the world a light everlasting, like a new sun; that is, the glory of the resurrection, and of a heavenly inheritance, which the Son of God hath promised to give to all those who serve him in faith."

On the Lord's Prayer, in a very sensible introduction, they observe, that "God, who seeth the secrets of our hearts, is more moved by a deep groan or sigh, with complaints and tears which come from the heart, than by a thousand words."

There is among the records of this people a very ancient confession of sin, which was commonly used, and which shows that they taught every person to apply to himself that hideous picture of human depravity which St. Paul delineates,* "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." Hear how they speak, "excuse myself I cannot; for thou, O Lord, hast showed me both what is good and evil. I have understood thy power; I have not been ignorant of thy wisdom; I have known thy justice; and have tasted

* Rom. iii. 10—20.

of thy goodness. Yet all the evil which I do proceeds from my own depravity. I have committed many evils from the beginning of my life; covetousness is rooted in my heart; I love riches, I seek after applause, and bear little love to those who have obliged me by their kindness. If thou do not pardon me, my soul must go down to perdition. Anger likewise reigns in my heart, and envy gnaws me; for I am naturally without charity. I am slow to do good, but industrious to do evil. I have blinded myself, and have had many evil thoughts against thee. I have cast mine eyes on vain delights, and have seldom lifted them up to thy face. I have lent an ear to empty sounds, and to many evil speakings; but to hear and understand thy laws hath been grievous and irksome to me. I have taken more pleasure in the noisome sink of sin, than in divine sweetness; I have even worshipped sin; I have endeavoured to conceal my own guilt, and to lay it upon another. My mind and body are wounded; my heart hath been delighted with evil things; with many foolish and unprofitable objects. I have turned aside into by-paths, and, by my levity, have given an ill example to others. I have slandered my neighbour, and have loved him only because of my temporal interest."

There is not, in any age, a truly humble and serious Christian, who will not acknowledge himself guilty in all these respects before God, even though his conduct has, comparatively speaking, been blameless before men. It is the want of self-knowledge which keeps men ignorant of their ill desert before God; and, in truth, nothing is so much unknown to men in general as the propensity of their own hearts. This knowledge, however, was found among the Waldenses; and hence they were a humble people, prepared to receive the gospel of Christ from the

heart, to walk in his steps, to carry his cross, and to fear sin above all other evils.

Hear what a character an ancient inquisitor gives of this people: “The heretics are known by their manners and words; for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behaviour. They avoid all appearance of pride in their dress, they neither wear rich clothes, nor are they too mean and ragged in their attire. They avoid commerce, that they may be free from falsehood and deceit: they live by manual industry, as day-labourers or mechanics; and their preachers are weavers and tailors. They seek not to amass wealth, but are content with the necessities of life. They are chaste, temperate, and sober; they abstain from anger. They hypocritically go to the church, confess, communicate, and hear sermons, to catch the preacher in his words. Their women are modest, avoid slander, foolish jesting, and levity of words, especially falsehood and oaths.”*

Their directions to pastors in visiting the sick are full of evangelical simplicity. The afflicted person is exhorted to look to Christ as the great pattern of patient sufferers, “who is the true Son of God, and yet hath been more afflicted than we all, and more tormented than any other.—Let the sick man consider with himself, that he is grievously afflicted as his Saviour was, when he suffered for us; for which thanks should be returned to God, because it hath pleased him to give this good Saviour to death for us, and at the same time mercy should be implored at his hands in the name of Jesus. And we Christians ought to have a perfect confidence and assurance, that our Father will forgive us for his goodness sake. Let the sick person commit himself wholly to the

* Allix, p. 235.

Lord. Let him do to his neighbour, as he would have his neighbour do to him, making such arrangements among his relations, that he may leave them in peace, and that there may be no suits or contentions after his death. Let him hope for salvation in Jesus Christ, and not in any other, or by any other thing, acknowledging himself a miserable sinner, that he may ask mercy of God, finding himself in such a manner culpable, that of himself he deserveth eternal death. If the pastor find the sick person alarmed and terrified with the sense of the divine displeasure against sinners, let him remind the distressed soul of those comfortable promises which our Saviour hath made to all those, who come to him, and who from the bottom of their heart, call upon him; and how God the Father hath promised forgiveness, whensover we shall ask it in the name of his Son. These are the things, in which the true preacher of the Word ought faithfully to employ himself, that he may conduct the party visited to his Saviour."

" And whereas, in former times, it hath been the custom to cause the disconsolate widow to spend much money on singers and ringers, and on persons who eat and drink, while she weeps and fasts, wronging her fatherless children; it is our duty, from motives of compassion, to the end that one loss be not added to another, to aid them with our counsel and our goods, according to the ability which God hath bestowed on us, taking care that the children be well instructed, that they may labour to maintain themselves as God has ordained, and live like Christians."

The directions, which they gave to new converts, were, to study the epistolary instructions of St. Paul, that they might know how to walk in such a manner as not to

give occasion of falling to their neighbours, and that they might not make the house of the Lord a den of thieves.

They were zealous in directing the education of children. “Despair not,” say they, “of thy child, when he is unwilling to receive correction, or if he prove not speedily good; for the labourer gathereth not the fruits of the earth, as soon as the seed is sown, but he waits till the due season. A man ought to have a careful eye over his daughters. Keep them within, and see they wander not. For Dinah the daughter of Jacob was corrupted by seeing strangers.”

In ecclesiastical correction, they were directed by our Lord’s rule, in first reproving a brother in private; secondly, in the presence of two or three brethren; and last of all, and not till other methods failed, in proceeding to excommunication. Private correction, they observe, is sufficient for faults not made known to many; but in the case of open sins, they followed the apostolical rule. *Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear. “Marriages are to be made according to the degrees of kindred permitted by God. The pope’s dispensations are of no value, nor deserve the least regard. The band of holy matrimony must not be made without the consent of the parents of both parties; for children belong to their parents.”

Against the disorders of taverns, and the mischiefs of dancing, they are exceedingly severe. Remark one sentence; “They, who deck and adorn their daughters, are like those who put dry wood to the fire, to the end that it may burn the better. A tavern is the fountain of sin and the school of Satan.” For conversing with those that are without, they give rules full of Christian sim-

plicity; and they direct their people also in Christian morals after a style and manner much superior to the spirit and taste of the thirteenth century.*

A treatise concerning antichrist, dated in 1120, before the days of Waldo, was preserved by the Waldenses of the Alps; and a brief summary of it is as follows: "He is called antichrist, because, being covered and adorned under the colour of Christ and his church, he opposes the salvation purchased by Christ, of which the faithful are partakers by faith, hope, and charity. He contradicts the truth by the wisdom of the world, and by counterfeit holiness. To make up a complete system of religious hypocrisy, all these things must concur; there must be worldly-wise men, there must be religious orders, Pharisees, ministers, doctors, the secular power, and lovers of this world. Antichrist, indeed, was conceived in the apostles' times, but he was in his infancy, unformed and imperfect. He was therefore the more easily known and ejected, being rude, raw, and wanting utterance. He had then no skill in making decretals, he wanted hypocritical ministers, and the show of religious orders. He had none of those riches, by which he might allure ministers to his service, and multiply his adherents: he wanted also the secular power, and could not compel men to serve him. But he grew to a full age, when the lovers of the world, both in church and state, did multiply and get all the power into their hands: Christ had never any enemy like to this, so able to pervert the way of truth into falsehood, insomuch that the church with her true children is trodden under foot. He robs Christ of his merits, of justification, regeneration, sanctification, and spiritual nourishment, and ascribes the

* Moreland, p. 86.

same to his own authority, to a form of words, to his own works, to saints, and to the fire of purgatory. Yet he has some decent qualities, which throw a veil over his enormities; such as an external profession of Christianity, tradition, and catalogues of episcopal succession, lying wonders, external sanctity, and certain sayings of Christ himself, the administration of the sacraments, verbal preaching against vices, and the virtuous lives of some who really live to God in Babylon, whom, however, antichrist, so far as in him lies, prevents from placing all their hope in Christ alone. These things are a cloak, with which antichrist hides his wickedness, that he may not be rejected as a pagan. Knowing these things, we depart from antichrist, according to express scriptural directions. We unite ourselves to the truth of Christ and his spouse, how small soever she appear. We describe the causes of our separation from antichrist, that if the Lord be pleased to impart the knowledge of the same truth to others, those, who receive it, together with us, may love it. But, if they be not sufficiently enlightened, they may receive help by our ministry, and be washed by the Spirit. If any one have received more abundantly than we ourselves, we desire the more humbly to be taught, and to amend our defects.—A various and endless idolatry marks the genius of antichrist, and he teaches men by that to seek for grace, which is essentially in God alone, exists meritoriously in Christ, and is communicated by faith alone through the Holy Spirit.” “Christ is our advocate: he forgives sins. He presents himself in some measure to us, before we bestir ourselves. He knocks, that we may open to him: and, to obstruct all occasions of idolatry, he sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven, and desires that every faithful soul

should have recourse to his Redeemer alone. For all the care of the faithful should be directed toward Christ, imitating him that is above. He is the gate: whosoever entereth by him shall be saved. He alone hath the prerogative to obtain whatever he requests in behalf of mankind, whom he hath reconciled by his death. To what purpose should we address ourselves to any other saint as mediator, seeing he himself is far more charitable and far more ready to succour us than any of them?"

CHAPTER II.

Persecutions.

IN 1162, two years after Waldo had begun to preach the gospel in Lyons, Lewis VII. of France, and Henry II. of England, on foot, holding the bridle of the horse of Pope Alexander VII. walking one on one side of him, the other on the other, conducted him to his habitation; exhibiting, says Baronius,* a spectacle most grateful to God, to angels, and to men! The princes of the earth, as well as the meanest persons, were now enslaved to the popedom, and were easily led to persecute the children of God with the most savage barbarity.

In 1176, some of the Waldenses, called heretics, being examined by the bishops, were convicted of heresy. They were said to receive only the New Testament, and to reject the Old, except in the testimonies quoted by our Lord and the apostles.† This charge is confuted by the whole tenor of their authentic writings, in which they quote the Old Testament authority as divine, without

* Baronius, Annals, Cent. xii.

† Baron. Cent. xii.

reserve or hesitation. Being interrogated concerning their faith, we are told that they said, "we are not bound to answer."

In 1178, the same Lewis and Henry, who had sixteen years before, in so unkingly a manner, given their "power and strength to the beast,"* hearing that the Albigenses grew in numbers, determined to attack them by the sword, but afterwards thought it more prudent to employ preachers.† They sent to them several bishops and ecclesiastics; and they employed Raymond of Toulouse and other noblemen to expel the refractory. The commissioners arriving at Toulouse, exacted, by an oath, of the Catholics there, that they should give information of the heretics whom they knew. Great numbers were hence discovered. Among these was a rich old man called Peter Moranus, who had pretended to be John the Evangelist.‡ This person, denying the bread to be the body of Christ, was condemned: his goods were confiscated: his castles, the conventicles of heretics, were thrown down. Peter abjured his heresy, and was brought naked and barefoot into the church before all the people; the bishop of Toulouse and a certain abbot beating him on each side from the entrance of the building to the steps of the altar, where the cardinal legate celebrated mass. There, being reconciled to the church, he again

* Rev. xvii. 13.

† Baron. Cent. xii.

It is evident that the term Albigenses, or rather Albienses, employed by our author, was taken from the town of Albi, where the Waldenses flourished. And, indeed, through the dominions of Raymond, earl of Toulouse, and through the south of France, including the territories of Avignon, their doctrines, at that time, spread with vast rapidity. All these were called in general, Albigenses, and, in doctrine and manners, were not at all distinct from the Waldenses.

‡ It should be recollected, that this is the account given by Baronius, a very determined enemy of the Waldenses.

abjured his heresy, anathematized heretics, and submitted to another penance, which was this, namely, after forty days to leave his country, to serve the poor at Jerusalem three years; and, during the forty days, each Sunday to go round the churches of Toulouse naked and barefoot, disciplined by rods, and to make various restitutions. It was ordered, however, that if he should return after three years from Jerusalem, then the rest of his property, till that time held in sequestration, should be restored to him. Many others abjured their heresies; but some refusing to take the oaths of subjection were excommunicated, with candles publicly lighted; and princes were ordered to expel them from their dominions. Roger, prince of the Albiensian diocese, was excommunicated.

It was reserved to Innocent the Third, than whom no pope ever possessed more ambition, to institute the Inquisition,* and the Waldenses were the first objects of its cruelty. He authorized certain monks to frame the process of that court, and to deliver the supposed heretics to the secular power. The beginning of the thirteenth century saw thousands of persons hanged or burned by these diabolical devices, whose sole crime was, that they trusted only in Jesus Christ for salvation, and renounced all the vain hopes of self-righteous idolatry and superstition. Whoever has attended closely to the subjects of the two epistles to the Colossians and the Galatians, and has penetrated the meaning of the apostle, sees the great duty of *holding the head*, and of resting for justification by faith on Jesus Christ alone, inculcated throughout them as the predominant precept of Christianity, in opposition to the rudiments of the world, to philosophy and

* Some chronologists place the commencement of the Inquisition in 1204.

vain deceit, to will-worship, to all dependance for our happiness on human works and devices of whatever kind. Such a person sees what is genuine Protestantism, as contrasted to genuine popery; and, of course, he is convinced, that the difference is not merely verbal or frivolous, but that there is a perfect opposition in the two plans; and such as admits of no coalition or union; and that therefore the true way of withstanding the devices of Satan, is to be faithful to the great doctrine of justification by the grace of Jesus Christ, through faith alone, and not by our own works or deservings.* Hence the very foundation of false religion is overthrown; hence troubled consciences obtain solid peace: and, faith, working by love, leads men into the very spirit of Christianity, while it comforts their hearts, and establishes them in every good work.

Schemes of religion so extremely opposite, being ardently pursued by both parties, could not fail to produce a violent rupture. In fact, the church of Christ and the world were seen engaged in contest. Innocent, however, first tried the methods of argument and persuasion. He sent bishops and monks, who preached in those places, where the Waldensian doctrine flourished. But their success was very inconsiderable.

I need not dwell on the insidious customs of the Inquisition: they are but too well known. From the year 1206, when it was first established, to the year 1228, the havoc made among helpless Christians was so great, that certain French bishops, in the last mentioned year, desired the monks of the Inquisition to defer a little their work of imprisonment, till the pope was advertised of the great number apprehended; numbers so great, that it

* Eleventh article of religion.

was impossible to defray the charges of their subsistence, and even to provide stone and mortar to build prisons for them. Yet so true is it, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, that in the year 1530 there were in Europe above eight hundred thousand who professed the religion of the Waldenses.

When the Albigenses saw that the design of the pope was to gain the reputation of having used gentle and reasonable methods of persuasion, they agreed among themselves, to undertake the open defence of their principles. They therefore gave the bishops to understand, that their pastors, or some of them in the name of the rest, were ready to prove their religion to be truly scriptural in an open conference, provided the conference might be conducted with propriety. They explained their ideas of propriety, by desiring that there might be moderators on both sides, who shall be vested with full authority to prevent all tumult and violence; that the conference should be held in some place, to which all parties concerned might have free and safe access; and, moreover, that some one subject should be chosen, with the common consent of the disputants, which should be steadily prosecuted, till it was fully discussed and determined; and that he, who could not maintain it by the word of God, the only decisive rule of Christians, should own himself to be confuted.

All this was something more than specious: it was perfectly equitable and unexceptionably judicious; so much so, that the bishops and monks could not with decency refuse to accept the terms. The place of conference agreed upon was Montreal near Carcassone, in the year 1206. The umpires on the one side were the

bishops of Villeneuse and Auxerre; on the other, R. de Bot, and Anthony Riviere.

Several pastors were deputed to manage the debate for the Albigenses, of whom Arnold Hot was the principal. He arrived first at the time and place appointed. A bishop named Eusus, came afterwards on the side of the papacy, accompanied by the monk Dominic, two of the pope's legates, and several other priests and monks. The points undertaken to be proved by Arnold, were, that the mass and transubstantiation were idolatrous and unscriptural; that the church of Rome was not the spouse of Christ, and that its polity was bad and unholy. Arnold sent these propositions to the bishop, who required fifteen days to answer him, which was granted. At the day appointed, the bishop appeared, bringing with him a large manuscript, which was read in the conference. Arnold desired that he might be allowed to reply by word of mouth, only entreating their patience, if he took a considerable time in answering so prolix a writing. Fair promises of a patient hearing were granted him. He discoursed for the space of four days with great fluency and readiness, and with such order, perspicuity, and strength of argument, that a powerful impression was made on the audience.

At length, Arnold desired that the bishops and monks would undertake to vindicate the mass and transubstantiation by the word of God. What they said on the occasion we are not told; but the cause of the abrupt conclusion of the conference, a matter of fact allowed on all sides, showed which party had the advantage in argument. While the two legates were disputing with Arnold at Montreal, and at the same time several other conferences were held in different places, the bishop of Ville-

neuse, the umpire of the papal party, declared, that nothing could be determined, because of the coming of the crusaders. What he asserted was too true; the papal armies advanced, and, by fire and faggot, soon decided all controversies.

Three hundred thousand pilgrims, induced by the united motives of avarice and superstition, filled the country of the Albigenses with carnage and confusion for a number of years. The reader, who is not versed in history of this kind, can scarcely conceive the scenes of baseness, perfidy, barbarity, indecency, and hypocrisy, over which Innocent presided; and which were conducted partly by his legates, and partly by the infamous earl Simon of Montfort. But let it suffice to have said this in general: it is more to our purpose to observe the spirit of the people of God in these grievous tribulations. The castle of Menerbe on the frontiers of Spain, for want of water, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering to the pope's legate. A certain abbot undertook to preach to those who were found in the castle, and to exhort them to acknowledge the pope. But they interrupted his discourse, declaring that his labour was to no purpose. Earl Simon and the legate then caused a great fire to be kindled; and they burned a hundred and forty persons of both sexes. These martyrs died in triumph, praising God that he had counted them worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ. They opposed the legate to his face, and told Simon, that on the last day, when the books should be opened, he would meet with the just judgment of God for all his cruelties. Several monks entreated them to have pity on themselves, and promised them their lives if they would submit to the popedom. But

the Christians “loved not their lives to the death:”* only three women of the company recanted.

Another castle named Termes, not far from Menerbe, in the territory of Narbonne, was taken by Simon in the year 1210. “This place,” said Simon, “is of all others the most execrable, because no mass has been sung in it for thirty years.” A remark which gives us some idea both of the stability and numbers of the Waldenses: the very worship of popery, it seems, was expelled from this place. The inhabitants made their escape by night, and avoided the merciless hands of Simon.

A single act of humanity, exercised by this general on the principles of chivalry, toward several women, whose persons he preserved from military insult and outrage, is the only one of the kind recorded of him.

But the triumphing of the wicked is short: after he had been declared sovereign of Toulouse, which he had conquered, general of the armies of the church, its son and its darling, after he had oppressed and tyrannized over the Albigenses by innumerable confiscations and exactions, he was slain in battle in the year 1218.

Secular and ecclesiastical ambition united to oppress the churches of Christ. The monk Reinerius, whom we have had occasion repeatedly to quote, acted as inquisitor in the year 1250. There is evidence of the extreme violence of persecution continued against the Albigenses, now altogether defenceless, to the year 1281. Long before this, in the year 1229, a council was held at Toulouse, one of the canons of which was, that the laity were not allowed to have the Old or New Testament in the vulgar tongue, except a psalter or the like; and it forbade men even to translate the Scriptures.

* Rev. xii. 7.

The people of God were thus, at length, for the most part, exterminated in Toulouse, and found no other resource but, by patient continuance in well-doing, to commit themselves to their God and Saviour. Antichrist, for the present, was visibly triumphant in the south-west parts of France, and the witnesses “clothed in sack-cloth,” there consoled themselves with the hope of heavenly rest, being deprived of all prospect of earthly enjoyments.

Dauphiny is a province of France, which was very full of the Waldenses, who inhabited valleys on both sides of the Alps. On the Italian side, the valley of Pregela in particular had, in our author's time, in 1618, six churches, each having its pastor, and every pastor having the care of several villages, which appertained to his church. The oldest people in them, Perrin observes, never remembered to have heard mass sung in their country. The valley itself was one of the most secure retreats of the Waldenses, being environed on all sides with mountains, into whose caverns the people were accustomed to retreat in time of persecution. Vignaux, one of their preachers, used to admire the integrity of the people, whom no dangers whatever could seduce from the faith of their ancestors. Their children were catechised with the minutest care; and their pastors not only exhorted them on the Sabbaths, but also, on the week days went to their hamlets to instruct them. With much inconvenience to themselves, these teachers climbed the steepest mountains to visit their flocks. The word of God was heard with reverence: the voice of prayer was common in private houses, as well as in the churches: Christian simplicity and zeal abounded; and plain useful learning was diligently cultivated in the schools.

A monk inquisitor, named Francis Borelli, in the year 1380, armed with a bull of Clement VII. undertook to persecute the godly Waldenses. In the space of thirteen years he delivered a hundred and fifty persons to the secular power, to be burned at Grenoble. In the valley of Fraissiniere and the neighbourhood, he apprehended eighty persons, who also were burned. The monkish inquisitors adjudged one moiety of the goods of the persons condemned to themselves, the rest to the temporal lords. What efforts may not be expected, when avarice, malice, and superstition unite in the same cause?

About the year 1400, the persecutors attacked the Waldenses of the valley of Pragela. The poor people seeing their caves possessed by their enemies, who assaulted them during the severity of the winter, retreated to one of the highest mountains of the Alps, the mothers carrying cradles, and leading by the hand, those little children who were able to walk. Many of them were murdered, others were starved to death: a hundred and eighty children were found dead in their cradles, and the greatest part of their mothers died soon after them. But why should I relate all the particulars of such a scene of infernal barbarity?

In 1460, those of the valley of Fraissiniere were persecuted by a monk of the order of Friar Minors, or Franciscans, armed with the authority of the archbishop of Ambrun. And it appears from documents preserved till the time of Perrin, that every method which fraud and calumny could invent, was practised against them.

In the valley of Loyse, four hundred little children were found suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their deceased mothers, in consequence of a great quantity of wood being placed at the entrance of the caves

and set on fire. On the whole, above three thousand persons belonging to the valley were destroyed, and this righteous people were in that place exterminated. The Waldenses of Pragela and Fraissinierc, alarmed by these sanguinary proceedings, made provision for their own safety, and expected the enemy at the passage and narrow straits of their valleys, and were in fact so well prepared to receive them, that the invaders were obliged to retreat. Some attempts were made afterwards by the Waldenses in Fraissinierc to regain their property, which had been unjustly seized by their persecutors. The favour of Lewis XII. of France, was exerted toward them; yet they could never obtain any remedy.

In Piedmont the archbishops of Turin assiduously laboured to molest the Waldenses, having been informed by the priests in those valleys, that the people made no offerings for the dead, valued not masses and absolutions, and took no care to redeem their relations from the pains of purgatory. The love of lucre, no doubt, had a principal share in promoting the persecutions; for the sums collected by the means of these and similar vanities, were immense. The princes of Piedmont, however, who were the dukes of Savoy, were very unwilling to disturb their subjects, of whose loyalty, peaceableness, industry, and probity they receive such uniform testimony. A fact, which seemed peculiarly to demonstrate their general innocence, must be noticed; their neighbours particularly prized a Piedmontese servant, and preferred the women of the valleys above all others, to nurse their children. Calumny, however, prevailed at length; and such a number of accusations against them appeared, charging them with crimes of the most monstrous nature, that the civil power permitted the papal to indulge its thirst for blood.

Dreadful cruelties were inflicted on the people of God; and these, by their constancy, revived the memory of the primitive martyrs. Among them Catelin Girard was distinguished, who, standing on the block, on which he was to be burned at Revel in the marquisate of Saluces, requested his executioners to give him two stones: which request being with difficulty obtained, the martyr, holding them in his hands, said, when I have eaten these stones, then you shall see an end of that religion, for which ye put me to death. And then he cast the stones on the ground.

The fires continued to be kindled till the year 1488, when the method of military violence was adopted by the persecutors. Albert de Capitaneis, archdeacon of Cremona, was deputed by pope Innocent VIII. to assault the sufferers with the sword. Eighteen thousand soldiers were raised for the service, besides many of the Piedmontese papists, who ran to the plunder from all parts. But the Waldenses, armed with wooden targets and crossbows, and availing themselves of the natural advantages of their situation, repulsed their enemies; the women and children on their knees entreating the Lord to protect his people, during the engagement.

Philip, duke of Savoy, having been informed, that their young children were born with black throats; that they were hairy and had four rows of teeth, he ordered some of them to be brought before him to Pignerol; where, having convinced himself by ocular demonstration that the Waldenses were not monsters, he determined to protect them from the persecution. But he seems not to have had sufficient power to execute his good intentions. The papal inquisitors daily endeavoured to apprehend these sincere followers of Christ, and the persecution

lasted till the year 1532. Then it was that the Piedmontese began openly to perform divine worship in their churches. This provoked the civil power, at length, against them to such a degree, that it concurred more vigorously with the papal measures of military violence.

The Waldenses, however, defended themselves with courage and success: the priests left the country: the mass was expelled from Piedmont; and, whereas the people had hitherto only the New Testament and some books of the Old translated into the Waldensian tongue, they now sent the whole Bible to the press; for, till 1535, they had only manuscripts, and those few in number. They procured, at Neufchatel in Switzerland, a printed Bible from one, who published the first impression of the word of God which was seen in France. They endeavoured to provide themselves also with religious books from Geneva, but their messenger was apprehended and put to death.

The persecutions were continued against this people by Francis I. king of France, with savage barbarity; and, in particular, Jeffrey, who was burned in the castle yard at Turin, made a strong impression on the minds of many, by his piety, meekness, and constancy.

About the year 1370 some of the Waldensian youths of Dauphiny sought in Calabria a new settlement, because their native country was too small for the number of the inhabitants. Finding the soil fertile, and the region thinly peopled, they applied to the proprietors of the lands, and treated with them concerning the conditions of dwelling there. The lords of the country gave them the most kind reception, agreed with them on fair and equitable terms, and assigned them parcels of lands. The new colonists soon enriched and fertilized their respec-

tive districts by superior industry: and, by probity, peaceable manners, and punctual payment of their rents, they gained the affections of their landlords, and of all their neighbours. The priests alone, who found that they did not act like others in religion, and that they contributed nothing to the support of the hierarchy by masses for the dead, or by other Romish formalities, were highly offended. They were particularly vexed to find, that certain foreign schoolmasters, who taught the children of these strangers, were held in high respect, and that they themselves received nothing from them except tithes, which were paid according to the compact with their lords. From these circumstances, the priests concluding that the strangers must be heretics, were tempted to complain of them to the pope. The lords, however, withheld them from complaining of the people. “They are just and honest,” say they, “and have enriched all the country. Even ye, priests, have received substantial emolument from their labours. The tithes alone, which ye now receive, are so much superior to those, which were formerly produced from these countries, that you may well bear with some losses on other accounts. Perhaps the country whence they came is not so much addicted to the ceremonies of the Roman church. But as they fear God, are liberal to the needy, just and beneficent to all men, it is ungenerous anxiously to scrutinize their consciences. For are they not a temperate, sober, prudent people, and in their words peculiarly decent? And does any person ever hear them utter a blasphemous expression?” The lords admiring their tenants, who were distinguished from the inhabitants all around by probity and virtue, maintained and protected them against their enemies till the year 1560.

Pope Pius IV. determined to extirpate a people who had presumed to plant Lutheranism,—so he called their religion,—so near to his seat. What follows of the history of this people is a distressful scene of persecution. Numbers of them being murdered, by two companies of soldiers, headed by the pope's agents, the rest craved mercy for themselves, their wives, and children, declaring, that if they were permitted to leave the country with a few conveniences, they would not return to it any more. But their enemies knew not how to show mercy; and the persecuted Christians at length defended themselves from their invaders, and put them to flight. The viceroy of Naples hearing of these things, appeared in person to prosecute the diabolical business of the pope; and in a little time, the Calabrian Waldenses were entirely exterminated. The most barbarous cruelties were inflicted on many: some were tortured, in order to oblige them to own, that their friends had committed the most flagitious incests; and the whole apparatus of pagan persecution was seen to be revived in the south of Italy.

A certain youth, named Samson, defended himself a long time against those, who came to apprehend him. But being wounded, he was at length taken and led to the top of a tower. Confess yourself to a priest here present, said the persecutors, before you be thrown down. I have already, says Samson, confessed myself to God. Throw him down from the tower, said the inquisitor. The next day the viceroy passing below near the said tower, saw the poor man yet alive, with all his bones broken. He kicked him with his foot on the head, saying, Is the dog yet alive? Give him to the hogs to eat. This was in the close of the sixteenth century.

The Waldenses of Provence fertilized a barren soil by

their industry, but, like their brethren elsewhere, were exposed to persecution. An attempt was made to prejudice the mind of Lewis XII. against them, about the year 1506, by such calumnies as those, with which the primitive Christians were aspersed. The king, struck with horror, directed the parliament of Provence to investigate the charges, and to punish those, who were found guilty. But afterwards, understanding that some innocent men were put to death, he sent two persons to inquire into the conduct of these people, by whose distinct information he was so thoroughly convinced of their innocence, that he swore they were better men than himself and his Catholic subjects; and he protected them during the rest of his reign. Thus the candour, humanity, and generosity of that monarch, who was deservedly looked on as the father of his people, was providentially instrumental in the defence of the Waldenses.

Some time after, these Provençal Protestants wrote a letter to the reformer Ecolampadius of Basle, which, as a monument of Christian humility and simplicity, well deserves to be transcribed. “Health to Mr. Ecolampadius. Whereas several persons have given us to understand, that He, who is able to do all things, hath replenished you with his Holy Spirit, as it conspicuously appears by the fruits; we, therefore, have recourse to you from a far country, with a steadfast hope, that the Holy Ghost will enlighten our understanding by your means, and give us the knowledge of several things, in which we are now doubtful, and which are hidden from us, because of our slothful ignorance, and remissness, to the great damage, as we fear, both of ourselves and the people, of whom we are the unworthy teachers. That you may know at once how matters stand with us, we, such

as we are, poor instructors of this small people, have undergone, for above four hundred years, most cruel persecutions, not without signal marks of the favour of Christ; for he hath interposed to deliver us, when under the harrow of severe tribulations. In this our state of weakness we come to you for advice and consolation."

They wrote in the same strain to other reformers, and were, it seems, so zealous to profit by their superior light and knowledge, that they willingly exposed themselves, by this means, to a share of the same persecutions which at that time oppressed the Lutherans,—so the reformed were then generally called,—both in France and through all Europe.

About the year 1330, Echard, a Dominican monk, an inquisitor, grievously oppressed the Waldenses of Germany. At length, after many cruelties, he urged the Waldenses to inform him of the real cause of their separation from the church of Rome, being convinced in his conscience of the justice of several of their charges. This was an opportunity not often vouchsafed to this people by their enemies, of using the weapons of Christian warfare. The event was salutary: Echard was enlightened, confessed the faith of Christ, united himself to his people; like Paul he preached the faith which once he destroyed; and, in the issue, was burned at Heidelberg, and the Christians glorified God in him.

Raynard Lollard was another convert of the same kind, at first a Franciscan and an enemy to the Waldenses. He was taken by the inquisitors after he had diligently taught the gospel, and was burned at Cologne. From him the Wickliffites in England were called Lollards, and he it was who instructed the English who resided in Guienne, in the Waldensian doctrine. The

connexion between France and England, during the whole reign of Edward III. was so great, that it is by no means improbable, that Wickliffe himself derived his first impressions of religion from Lellard. Princes and states may carry on wars and negotiations with one another; while He, who rules all things makes every event subservient to the great design of spreading the kingdom of his Son.

Flanders was also a violent scene of Waldensian persecution.

Persecutors in Flanders tormented the Christians by means of hornets, wasps, and hives of bees. The people of God, however, were strong in faith and love. They turned the Scripture into Low Dutch rhymes, for the edification of the brethren; and they gave this reason for the practice: "In Scripture there are no jests, fables, trifles, or deceits; but words of solid truth. Here and there, indeed, is an hard crust; but the marrow and sweetness of what is good and holy may easily be discovered in it." A peculiar regard for holy writ amidst ages of darkness, forms the glory of the Waldensian churches.

England, because of its insular situation, knew less of all these scenes than the Continent. But the striking narrative of the sufferers, in the time of Henry II. which has been recorded, ought to be added to the list of Waldensian persecutions. No part of Europe, in short, was exempt from the sufferings of these Christian heroes. Paris itself, the metropolis of France, saw, in 1304, a hundred and fourteen persons burned alive, who bore the flames with admirable constancy.

Thus largely did the "King of Saints"^{*} provide for

* Rev. xv. 3.

the instruction of his church, in the darkness of the middle ages. The Waldenses are the middle link, which connects the primitive Christians and fathers with the reformed; and, by their means, the proof is completely established, that salvation, by the grace of Christ, felt in the heart, and expressed in the life, by the power of the Holy Ghost, has ever existed from the time of the apostles till this day; and that it is a doctrine marked by the cross, and distinct from all that religion of mere form or convenience, or of human invention, which calls itself Christian, but which wants the Spirit of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

Corruptions.

THE corruptions of Rome are made still more glaringly manifest by the following circumstances. Pope Gregory IX. willing to revive the cause of the eastern crusades, which, through a series of disastrous events, was now much on the decline; and feeling the connexion between this cause and the credit of the popedom, by a bull directed to all Christendom invited men to assume the cross, and proceed to the Holy Land. "Notwithstanding," says he, "the ingratitude of Christians, the goodness of God is not withdrawn from them. His* providence is still actively engaged to promote the happiness of mankind: his remedies suit their temper; his prescriptions are proportioned to the disease.—The service to which they are now invited is an *effectual atone-*

* Collier's Ecc. vol. i.

ment for the miscarriages of a negligent life; the discipline of a regular penance would have discouraged many offenders so much, that they would have had no heart to venture upon it: but the *Holy war* is a compendious method of discharging men from guilt, and restoring them to the divine favour. Even if they die on their march, the intention will be taken for the deed, and many in this way may be crowned without fighting."

The Franciscans and Dominicans were employed in enlisting men into the service of the crusades by Gregory IX. the author of the impious bull mentioned above. They engaged in the business with much ardour: and as it often happened that persons, who in the warmth of zeal had taken the cross, repented afterwards, when they began to think seriously of the difficulties of the enterprise, these friars were employed to release such devotees from their vows, on the payment of a fine. It may easily be conceived, that much wealth would be amassed by this dispensing power.*

The Franciscans and Dominicans had ample buildings and princely houses.† They attended the death-beds of the rich and great, and urged them to bequeath immense legacies to their own orders. The subtle jargon of the schools infected their whole semblance of learning. However, as they appeared more knowing, and were certainly more studious than the other orders, they gained much ground in this century; and indeed till the time of the institution of the Jesuits, they were the pillars of the papacy. Persecution of heretics, so called, formed a great part of their employment. The Dominicans‡ in

* Collier, vol. i. † History of the Abbey of St. Alban's, by Newcome.

‡ These were also called Jacobins, from their settlement in St. James's street in Paris.

particular were the founders of the Inquisition. These last came into England about the year 1221, and first appeared at Oxford. The Franciscans were first settled at Canterbury in 1234. They both cultivated the Aristotelian philosophy, and being the confidential agents of the pope, they, under various pretences, exacted large sums of money through the kingdom, and fleeced even the abbots of the monasteries.

A remarkable instance of papal tyranny, exercised through their means in this century, will show the abject slavery and superstition under which England groaned. In 1247, Innocent IV. gave a commission to John the Franciscan, as follows: "We charge you, that if the major part of the English prelates should make answer, that they are exempt from foreign jurisdiction, you demand a greater sum, and compel them, by ecclesiastical censures, to withdraw their appeals, any privilege or indulgence notwithstanding."

This was the famous "non obstante clause," by which the pope, in the plenitude of his dominion, assumed to himself the same dispensing power in the church, which king James II. did long after in the state. But the punishment of the former for his temerity and arrogance followed not so soon as in the latter. For God had put into the hearts of princes and statesmen to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God should be fulfilled.* And thus the wickedness of men in neglecting his gospel was justly punished.

So shameless were the popes at this time in their exactions, and so secure was their hold on the abject superstition of mankind, that they grossly defrauded even

* Rev. xvii. 17.

the Franciscans themselves, and were not afraid of the consequences. Men, who received not the testimony of Jesus Christ, and refused submission to his easy yoke, were induced to kiss the iron rod of an Italian tyrant.

The greater part of mankind throughout Europe at that time were given up to Pharisaism. We have seen, however, that the Waldenses could find peace and relief of conscience, and the expectation of heaven through Jesus Christ alone, by faith; and hence, were enabled to despise the whole popedom with all its appendages; while others, who trembled in conscience for their sins, and knew not the holy wisdom of resting on Christ alone for salvation, might swell with indignation at the wickedness of the court of Rome, yet not dare to emancipate themselves from its bonds.

At this time, during the prevalence of the Aristotelian philosophy, the doctrine of “grace of congruity” was in high repute: in other words, justification by men’s own works was insisted on: and while some decent show of respect was paid in *words* to the merits of Christ, the real meritorious objects, on which men were taught to place their hope, were some performances, by which they might, in a lower sense, *deserve* grace, and purchase the application of it to themselves.* Thus, a religion prevailed, which accommodated all sorts of sinners. Those of a more decent cast were taught to expect the Divine favour by their own works, which deserved grace of congruity; and the most scandalous transgressors, by the doctrine of commutation for offences, might still obtain forgiveness: the exercise of munificence toward the hierarchy was sure to cover all crimes; but the humble and the contrite alone, who felt what sin is, and sighed

* Thirteenth article of the Protestant Episcopal church.

for a remedy, found no relief to consciences, which could not admit the delusive refreshments provided by the papacy. These, either mourned in secret, and poured out their souls to that God, who says to his creatures, "seek and ye shall find," or if they united themselves in a body of faithful people, maintained the character of those "of whom the world was not worthy," and suffered the extremities of persecution, under the name of Waldenses.

On the subject of the propagation of the gospel, scarce any thing occurs in this age. The godly spirit of missionaries, which had been the glory of the declining church, was by this time exhausted; so extensively had the papal corruptions prevailed. The only accession to the Christian name in Europe seems to have been the conversion, as it is called, of the Prussians, Lithuanians, and some adjoining provinces.

Prussia was one of the last regions of the north, which bowed under the yoke of the popedom. The ignorance, brutality, and ferocity of the inhabitants, were uncommonly great. The Teutonic knights, after they had lost their possessions in Palestine, took the cross against the Prussians, and, after a long and bloody war, forced them to receive the name of Christ; but I know no evidences of piety, either in the missionaries or in the proselytes. The destruction, however, of the old idolatry, and the introduction of something of Christianity, would eventually, at least, prove a blessing to this people.

In the east, Othman was proclaimed sultan, in 1299, and founded a new empire. The people afterwards, as well as the emperor, were called after his name. The mixed multitude, of which his people was composed, were the remains of four sultanies which had for some

time subsisted in the neighbourhood of the river Euphrates. Thus the four angels, which were bound in Euphrates, were loosed, and under the name of Turks succeeded the Saracens both in the propagation of Mahometanism, and in diffusing the horrors of war.* Providence had destined them to scourge the people of Europe for their idolatry and flagitiousness; and Europe still repented not.

CHAPTER IV.

Eminent Men.

ARSENIUS, bishop of Constantinople, deserves attention. After that Constantinople was taken by the French and Venetians, the seat of the Greek empire had been transferred to Nice in Bithynia, of which metropolis, under the reign of Theodorus Lascaris, Arsenius was appointed bishop. He was renowned for piety and simplicity, and had lived a monastic life near Apollonia. Theodorus, a little before his death, constituted him one of the guardians of his son John, an infant in the sixth year of his age. But the integrity and virtue of the bishop were no security against the ambition and perfidy of the times. Michael Palaeologus usurped the sovereignty; and Arsenius at length, with reluctance, overpowered by the influence of the nobility, consented to place the diadem on his head, with this express condition, that he should resign the empire to the royal infant when he should come to maturity.

* Rev. ix.—Newton, 3d vol. Prophecies, page 116.

Arsenius, after he had made this concession, had the mortification to find his pupil treated with perfect disregard; and, probably, repenting of what he had done, he retired from his see to a monastery. Some time after, by a sudden revolution, Palaeologus recovered Constantinople from the Latins; but amidst all his successes he found it necessary to his reputation to recall the bishop, and he fixed him in the Metropolitan see. So great was the ascendancy of the character of a virtuous prelate over the politics of an unprincipled usurper, though covered with secular glory! Palaeologus, however, still dreaded the youth, whom he had so deeply injured, and to prevent him from recovering the throne, he had recourse to the barbarous policy of putting out his eyes. Arsenius hearing this, excommunicated the emperor, who then made some pretences of repentance. But the bishop refused to admit him into the church; and Palaeologus had the baseness to accuse him of certain crimes before an assembly of priests. Arsenius was convened before the venal assembly, condemned and banished to a small island of the Propontis. But, conscious of his integrity, he bore his sufferings with serenity and composure, and, requesting that an account might be taken of the treasures of the church, he showed that three pieces of gold, which he had earned by transcribing Psalms, were the whole of his property. This same emperor, who had the meanness, by false accusation, to expel Arsenius from his see, still confessed, how much wickedness stands in awe of virtue, by soliciting him to repeal his ecclesiastical censures. The deprived prelate, however, who never had been fond of sacerdotal dignity, remained content with his obscurity, and, to his last breath,

refused the request of the usurper, who still retained the wages of his iniquity.*

Seval, archbishop of York, wrote to pope Alexander IV. against his violent and oppressive conduct, and exhorted him to follow Peter,—to feed, not to devour, the sheep of Christ. The particular occasion of this letter was, that the pope had intruded a person named Jordan into the deanery of York.† The courage and integrity of Seval, enraged the pope, who, on some pretence, excommunicated him: he still however persisted, and withstood the intrusion of unworthy clergymen. The Romanists harassed him with their utmost malevolence; but he was honoured by the people. He died in 1258, in the fourth year of his archbishopric, of which he seems to have kept possession till his decease.

William de St. Amour, doctor of the Sorbonne, and professor of divinity in the university of Paris, was one of the greatest ornaments of Christianity, which appeared in the Roman communion in this century. He had his name from St. Amour in Franche Compte, the place of his nativity. The mendicant orders seldom met with a more vigorous and able adversary. The Dominicans in particular seemed desirous to engross all the power and influence of the university to themselves, while the doctors, resisting their unjust encroachments, excluded them from their society. In the year 1255, the debate was brought before pope Alexander IV. who, with intolerable arrogance, ordered the university not only to restore the Dominicans to their former station, but also to grant them as many professorships, as they should require.

The doctors of the university of Paris now loudly

* Cent. Magd. 461. Nicephones.

† Cent. Magd. xiii. p. 550.

joined in the cry of the secular clergy against the invasions of the mendicants; and indeed the papal power at this time ruled with absolute dominion. No pastor of a church could maintain any due authority over the laity, if a Franciscan or Dominican appeared in his parish, to sell indulgences, and to receive confessions; and the most learned body of men at that time in Europe, were now subject to the government of those agents of pope-dom. The magistrates of Paris, at first, were disposed to protect the university; but the terror of the papal edicts reduced them at length to silence; and not only the Dominicans, but also the Franciscans, assumed whatever power they pleased in that famous seminary, and knew no other restrictions, except what the Roman tyrant imposed upon them.

The genius and spirit of St. Amour were remarkably distinguished in this controversy. He wrote several treatises against the mendicant orders, and particularly a book published in the year 1255, concerning the perils of the latter days. Persuaded as he was, that St. Paul's prophecy of the latter times* was fulfilling in the abominations of the friars, he laid down thirty-nine marks of false teachers.

A few years before the unrighteous decision of the pope in favour of the friars, a fanatical book, under the title of "Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel," was published by a Franciscan, which, by exalting Francis above Jesus Christ, and arrogating to his order the glory of reforming mankind by a new gospel substituted in the room of that of Christ, attempted to exalt that mendicant tribe to the height of divine estimation in the eyes of mankind. The universal ferment excited by this im-

* 2 Tim. iii. 1.

pious book, obliged Alexander IV. to suppress it in the year 1255, and he ordered it to be burnt in secret, willing to spare the reputation of the mendicants. But the university of Paris, which, in the same year, received that grievous injury from the pontiff, which has been mentioned, insisted upon a public condemnation of the book, and Alexander, mighty as he was in power, was constrained, for once, to give way to the feelings of mankind; and he publicly committed the Franciscan's performance to the flames. The next year, however, he revenged himself on St. Amour, by ordering his book on the perils of the latter days to be also committed to the flames, and by banishing him out of France.

John Scot, bishop of Dunkeld, died in the year 1202. He was an Englishman, who had been archdeacon of St. Andrews, and thence was preferred to this see.* He was conspicuous in that corrupt age for pastoral vigilance and a conscientious conduct. The county of Argyle was part of his diocese, and, in that county, the people understood only the Irish tongue. Scot, unwilling to receive emoluments from a people, whose souls he could not edify, wrote to Pope Clement III. desiring him to constitute Argyle a separate see, and to confer the bishopric on Evaldus his chaplain, who was well qualified for the purpose, and could speak Irish. "How," says he, "can I give a comfortable account to the Judge of the world at the last day, if I pretend to teach those, who cannot understand me? The revenues suffice for two bishops, if we are content with a competency, and are not prodigal of the patrimony of Christ. It is better to lessen the charge, and increase the number of labourers in the Lord's vineyard." His whole request was granted,

* Collier, vol. i. page 411.

but the election appears not to have been made till the year 1200. Clement the Third died in 1191. Sentiments such as these would have done honour to the purest ages. It seemed worth while to give some illustration to the opinion of the Waldenses, “ who professed that there were pious men, who lived in Babylon;” and John Scot deserves to be regarded as a practical teacher of bishops and pastors in all ages.

Francis and Dominic, the founders of the two orders of friars so distinguished in this century, were eminent, but for superstition. Francis was born at Assisium, in the ecclesiastical state, and was disinherited by his father, who was disgusted at his enthusiasm. In 1209,* he founded his order, which was but too successful in the world. His practices of devotion were monstrous, and he seems ever to have been the prey of a whimsical imagination. Pride and deceit are not uncommonly connected with a temper like his, and he gave a memorable instance of both. It is certain that he was impressed with five wounds on his body resembling the wounds of Christ crucified. It is certain also, that he pretended to have received the impressions as a miraculous favour from heaven. Francis sought for glory among men by his follies and absurdities, and he found the genius of the age so adapted to his own, that he gained immense admiration and applause. He died in 1226, in the forty-fifth year of his age.† Posterity saw his order splendid in secular greatness, though under the mask of poverty; and we have already recounted the dreams of one of his disciples, who was no mean imitator of his master.‡

* Alban Butler.

† Alban Butler, vol. x.—Cave, vol. i. page 704.

‡ Viz. the author of “Introduction to the Everlasting Gospel.” See the bottom of p. 95.

Dominic was a Spaniard, born in the year 1170. In fictitious miracles and monstrous austerities, he resembled Francis.* He seems to have shown no one evidence of genuine humility, or of evangelical piety. In religious pride he lived; and, it is much to be feared, he died in the same temper and in the greatest ignorance. For in his last hours he promised his brethren, that he would never forget them, when he was gone to God. To Dominic belongs the glory of completing the scheme of *mechanical* devotion. He directed men to recite fifteen decades of Hail Mary, &c. and one pater-noster before each decad. Thus men were taught to repeat a hundred and fifty times the angel's salutation of the Virgin, interlarded with a number of pater-nosters, and to believe that this practice would be as acceptable as the recital of the hundred and fifty Psalms. I suppose very zealous devotees would go through all this work at one time: perhaps others, less laborious, might perform it at successive intervals.—But is this the spirit of *grace and supplication*† promised to the Christian church? Is this the spirit of adoption, whereby men cry Abba, Father? What is it but the spirit of bondage and miserable superstition, the religion of the lips, a self-righteous drudgery of so much devotional work, with a view to purchase the remission of sins, and to ease the consciences of men, who lived without either understanding the doctrines, or practising the precepts of Scripture? Observe hence, with how much propriety the Waldenses, as we have seen, taught men the true nature of prayer; and, what a dreadful vacuum of all true piety was now the portion of nominal Christians, who had departed from the grace of Christ Jesus!

* Butler, vol. viii.

† Zech. xii. 10.

This century saw also a pope, who deserves to be commemorated in the annals of the church of Christ. Peter Celestine* was born in Apulia, about the year 1215, and lived as a hermit in a little cell. He was admitted into holy orders; but after that, he lived five years in a cave on Mount Morroni, near Sulmona. He was molested with internal temptations, which his confessor told him were a stratagem of the enemy, that would not hurt him, if he despised it. He founded a monastery at Mount Morroni, in 1274. The see of Rome having been vacant two years and three months, Celestine was unanimously chosen pope on account of the fame of his sanctity. The archbishop of Lyons,† presenting him with the instrument of his election, conjured him to submit to the vocation. Peter, in astonishment, prostrated himself on the ground; and, after he had continued in prayer a considerable time, he rose up, and fearing to oppose the will of God, he consented to his election, and took the name of Celestine V.

Since the days of the first Gregory, no pope had ever assumed the pontifical dignity with more purity of intention. But he had not Gregory's talents for business and government; and the Roman see was immensely more corrupt in the thirteenth than it was in the sixth century.—Celestine soon became sensible of his incapacity: he was lost, as in a wilderness. He attempted to reform abuses, to retrench the luxury of the clergy, to do, in short, what he found totally impracticable.

He committed mistakes, and exposed himself to the ridicule of the scornful. His conscience was kept on the rack through a variety of scruples, from which he could not extricate himself; and, from his ignorance of

* Butler, Vol. V.

† Vertot's Knights of Malta, Vol. II.

the world, and of canon-law, he began to think he had done wrong in accepting the office. He spent much of his time in retirement: nor was he easy there, because his conscience told him, that he ought to be discharging the pastoral office. Overcome with anxiety, he asked cardinal Cajetan, whether he might not abdicate? It was answered, yes. Celestine gladly embraced the opportunity of assuming again the character of brother Peter, after he had been distressed with the phantom of dignity for four or five months. He abdicated in 1294. The last act of his pontificate was worthy of the sincerity of his character. He made a constitution, that the pontiff might be allowed to abdicate, if he pleased.*—It is remarkable, that no pope, since that time, has taken the benefit of this constitution.

That same Cajetan, who had, in effect, encouraged his resignation, contrived to be elected his successor, and took the name of Boniface VIII.

Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, was an active, zealous man, who laboured hard to reform abuses and to instruct the people, but who was evidently in the dark. He saw the gross ignorance and dissolute manners of the secular clergy, and endeavoured to correct them, but the hypocrisy of the Dominicans and Franciscans escaped his penetration.

Such were the methods by which the prince of darkness seems to have prolonged the reign of Antichrist. The orders of ancient times, having filled up their season in supporting the *man of sin* by a specious appearance of holiness, when this was gone, other orders arose, who undertook the same task, and defended the system of iniquity by a severer course of life and manners.

* Platina.

The work of the Holy Spirit in religion is diversified with an endless variety of operations. The instance before us deserves attention. The holy soul of Robert Grosseteste, which was favoured with so much discernment, as just to understand and receive the essentials of godliness, and no more, could not endure with patience the manifold corruptions of the times. He took pains in his diocese to reform various gross abuses, among which was the practice of clergymen acting plays, and maintaining connexion with Jews. The friars were still his favourites: and he rebuked the rectors and vicars of his diocese, because they neglected to hear them preach, and because they discouraged the people from attending and confessing to them. His devoted attachment to the popedom appears hence in a striking light, and still more so in some other transactions, which it is not necessary to particularize. He continued to patronize the friars. These were his most intimate companions: with these he used to hold conferences on the Scriptures; and at one time he had thoughts of entering into the Franciscan order himself. But however defective he was in doctrine, he was exceedingly strict in his views of morality: and, like all reformers of the merely active class who labour to promote external good conduct, with low and inadequate ideas of Christian principle, he excited great offence and disgust, and produced very little solid benefit to mankind.

Events, however, occurred, which in some measure unfolded to the eyes of the bishop the real character of the friars. In 1247, two English Franciscans were sent into England with credentials to extort money for the pope. They applied to the prelates and abbots, but seem, at this time at least, to have met with little suc-

cess. Grosseteste was amazed at the insolence and pompous appearance of the friars, who assured him that they had the pope's bull, and who earnestly demanded six thousand marks for the contribution of the diocese of Lincoln: "Friars," answered he, "with all reverence to his holiness be it spoken, the demand is as dishonourable, as it is impracticable. The whole body of the clergy and people are concerned in it equally with me. For me then to give a definite answer in an instant to such a demand, before the sense of the kingdom is taken upon it, would be rash and absurd." The native good sense of the bishop suggested this answer; but the true Anti-christian character of the pope was as yet unknown to Grosseteste.—The blood of our Saviour was about the same time pretended to be brought into England, and he had the weakness to vindicate the delusion.

The bishop continued still to exert himself with the most upright intentions for the good of the church. But, it was his usual infelicity to "labour in the fire for very vanity,"* because he had no distinct perception of the fundamental truths of Christianity. The value of solid and perspicuous views of evangelical truth was never more forcibly exhibited than in this case. Most bishops or pastors, who have been possessed of this advantage, though inferior to Grosseteste in magnanimity, industry, and activity, have yet, if truly pious, far exceeded him in promoting the real good of the church.

In 1248, he obtained, at a great expense, from Innocent IV. letters to empower him to reform the religious orders. If he had understood at that time the real character of Antichrist, he would have foreseen the vanity of all attempts to reform the church, which were grounded

* Habak. ii. 13.

on papal authority. The rectitude however of his own mind was strikingly apparent in the transaction. He saw with grief the waste of large revenues made by the monastic orders, and being supported by the pope, as he thought, he determined to take into his own hand the rents of the religious houses, most probably with a design to institute and ordain vicarages in his diocese, and to provide for the more general instruction of the people. But the monks appealed to the pope; and Grosseteste, in his old age, was obliged to travel to Lyons, where Innocent resided. Roman venality was now at its height, the pope determined the cause against the bishop. Grieved and astonished at so unexpected a decision, Grosseteste said to Innocent, "I relied on your letters and promises, but am entirely disappointed." What is that to you, answered the pope, you have done your part, and we are disposed to favour them: *is your eye evil, because I am good?* With such shameless effrontery can wicked men trifle with scriptural passages. The bishop, in a low tone, but so as to be heard, said with indignation, O money, how great is thy power, especially at the court of Rome! The remark was bold and indignant, but perfectly just. It behoved Innocent to give some answer; and he used the common method of wicked men in such cases, namely, to retort the accusation. "You English," said he, "are always grinding and impoverishing one another. How many religious men, persons of prayer and hospitality, are you striving to depress, that you may sacrifice to your own tyranny and avarice!"— So spake the most unprincipled of robbers to a bishop, whose unspotted integrity was allowed by all the world.

All that the bishop could do was to leave his testimony at the court of Rome; and he delivered three copies of a

long sermon, one copy to the pope, the other two copies to two of the cardinals. In this discourse he sharply enveighs against the flagitious practices of the court of Rome, particularly the appropriation of churches to religious houses, the appeals of the religious to the pope, and the scandalous clause in the bulls of *non obstante*, which was the great engine of the pope's dispensing power. He observes, that the Son of God submitted to a most ignominious death for the redemption of human souls, which, without mercy, were delivered to wolves and bears. His uprightness and magnanimity were evidenced by this step, but no good effect appeared. To explain and enforce the doctrines of the Gospel, and to prove the whole structure of the papacy perfectly inconsistent with those doctrines, would have been a far more likely method of promoting the edification of the church; but to this task the light and knowledge of the bishop were unequal. He was for some time so dejected with the disappointment which he had met with, that he formed intentions of resigning his bishopric. But, recollecting what ravages of the church might be the consequence of such a step, he felt it his duty to remain in his office, and to do all the good, which the infelicity of the times would permit.

The bishop often preached to the people in the course of his perambulation through his diocese; and he required the neighbouring clergy to attend the sermons. He earnestly exhorted them to be laborious in ministering to their flocks: and the lazy Italians, who, by virtue of the pope's letters, had been intruded into opulent benefices, and who neither understood the language of the people, nor wished to instruct them, were the objects of his detestation. He would often with indignation cast the papal bulls out of his hands, and absolutely refuse to

comply with them, saying, that he should be the friend of Satan, if he should commit the care of souls to foreigners. *Innocent*, however, persisting in his plan, peremptorily ordered him to admit an Italian, perfectly ignorant of the English language, to a very rich benefice in the diocese of Lincoln, and Grosseteste, refusing to obey, was suspended. Whether the sentence of suspension was formally repealed, or not, does not appear. Certain it is, that the bishop continued to exercise his episcopal functions.

In January, 1253, *Innocent* was desirous of preferring his nephew, an Italian youth, in the cathedral of Lincoln: and for this purpose, he, by letter, directed the bishop of the diocese to give him the first canonry that should be vacant. This was to be done by *provision*; for that was the decent term employed by the pontiff when he undertook to provide a successor to a benefice beforehand, under pretence of correcting the abuse of long vacancies. *Innocent* seems to have been determined in this instance to intimidate the bishop into submission. He declared, that any other disposal of the canonry should be null and void; and that he would excommunicate every one who should dare to disobey his injunction. He wrote to two Italians, his agents in England, ordering them to ensure and complete the appointment, with his usual clause of *non obstante*; a clause pregnant with the most intolerable abuses; for it set aside all statutes and customs, and obliged them to give way to the present humour of the pope.*

Grosseteste, resolute in his disobedience, wrote an *epistle* on this occasion, which has made his name immortal. As he advanced in years, he saw more clearly

* *Fascic. rer. Vol. II. 399.*

the corruptions of the popedom, which, however, he still looked on as of divine authority. But if we set aside this remnant of the prejudices of education, he argues altogether on Protestant principles. Some extracts of the epistle may deserve the reader's attention.* "I am not disobedient to the Apostolical precepts.—I am bound by the divine command to obey them. Our Saviour Christ saith, whosoever is not with me, is against me.—Our lord the pope appears to be his type and representative. It is impossible then that the sanctity of the apostolical See can be repugnant to the authority of Jesus Christ. The *non obstante* clause overflows with uncertainty, fraud, and deceit, and strikes at the root of all confidence between man and man. Next to the sin of Antichrist, which shall be in the latter time, nothing can be more contrary to the doctrine of Christ, than to destroy men's souls, by defrauding them of the benefit of the pastoral office. Those, who serve their own carnal desires by means of the milk and pool of the sheep of Christ, and do not minister the pastoral office to the salvation of the flock, are guilty of destroying souls. Two enormous evils are in this way committed. In one respect they sin directly against God himself, who is essentially good; in another against the image of God in man, which, by the reception of grace, is partaker of the divine nature.—For the holy apostolical See to be accessory to so great wickedness, would be a horrible abuse of the fulness of power, an entire separation from the glorious kingdom of Christ, and a proximity to the two princes of darkness.† No man, faithful to the said See, can, with an unspotted conscience, obey such mandates,

* See Fox, Vol. I. p. 365. and M. Faris, p. 870. Fascic. rer. Vol. II. 400.

† He seems to mean the Devil and Antichrist.

even if they were seconded by the high order of angels themselves; on the contrary, every faithful Christian ought to oppose them with all his might. It is therefore in perfect consistence with my duty of obedience, that I withstand these enormities, so abominable to the Lord Jesus Christ, so repugnant to the holiness of the apostolical See, and so contrary to the unity of the Catholic faith. I say then, this See cannot act but to edification; but your *provisions* are to destruction. The holy See neither can nor ought to attempt any such thing; for flesh and blood, and not the Heavenly Father, hath revealed such doctrines."

Innocent, on receiving the positive denial, accompanied with such warm remonstrances, was incensed beyond measure: and "Who," said he, "is this old dotard, who dares to judge my actions? By Peter and Paul, if I were not restrained by my generosity, I would make him an example and a spectacle to all mankind. Is not the king of England my vassal, and my slave? and, if I gave the word, would he not throw him into prison, and load him with infamy and disgrace?" In so low a light did the bishop of Rome behold the monarch of England! But king John had reduced his kingdom into a state of subjection to the pope; and the same vassalage continued all the days of his pusillanimous successor. The cardinals, however, who saw the danger which the pope incurred by his arrogance and temerity, endeavoured to moderate his resentment. Giles, in particular, a Spanish cardinal, said,* "It is not expedient for you to proceed against the bishop in that violent manner. For what he saith is certainly true, nor can we with decency condemn him. He is a holy man, more so than we our-

* Fox, Vol. I. p. 366. Pegge, p. 248.

selves are; a man of excellent genius, and of the best morals; no prelate in Christendom is thought to excel him. By this time, it is possible, that the truths expressed in this epistle are divulged among many; and they will stir up numbers against us. The clergy, both of France and England, know the character of the man, nor is it possible to cast any stigma upon him. He is believed to be a great philosopher, an accomplished scholar in Latin and Greek literature, zealous in the administration of justice, a reader of theology in the schools, a popular preacher, a lover of chastity, and an enemy of simony." Others joined with Giles in the same sentiments. On the whole, the cardinals advised the pope to connive at these transactions, lest some tumult might arise in the church, for they said, it was an evident truth, that a revolt from the church of Rome would one day take place in Christendom. It seems there were even then some discerning spirits, who could foresee, that so unrighteous a domination would in time be brought to a close. Yet the prevalence of ambition and avarice induced them to support their domination, though they were convinced of its iniquity.

But the fury of Innocent was not to be allayed. He pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Grosseteste; and nominated Albert, one of his nuncios, to the bishopric of Lincoln. The bishop appealed to the tribunal of Christ, and paid no regard to the decree. What the cardinals foresaw, came to pass; the pope's commands were universally neglected; and the bishop continued in quiet possession of his dignity.

In the latter end of the summer of the same year, 1253, he was seized with a mortal disease at his palace at Buckden; and he sent for friar John de St. Giles, to converse

with him on the state of the church. He blamed Giles and his brethren the Dominicans, and also the Franciscans, because, though their orders were founded in voluntary poverty, they did not rebuke the vices of the great. "I am convinced," said he, "that both the pope, unless he amend his errors, and the friars, except they endeavour to restrain him, will be deservedly exposed to everlasting death."

The following abridgment of part of one of the sermons by this intrepid man, shows that he was by no means ignorant of that which is essential to salvation. "Poverty in spirit is wrought in the heart of the elect by the Holy Spirit. Its foundation, he tells us, is laid in real humility, which disposes a man to feel, that he has nothing, except what he has received from above. But this is not all; for humility in this view belonged to Adam before he fell. But the humility of a *sinner* has a still deeper root. The humble man not only sees that he has nothing in himself, but he is also stripped of all desire to possess in himself the springs of self-exaltation. Condemned in himself, and corrupt before God, he despairs of help from his own powers, and in seeking he finds HIM, who is the true life, wisdom, and health, who is all in all, even the Incarnate Son of God, who descended into our vale of sin and misery, that he might raise us from their depths. By leaning on *him* alone, every true Christian rises into true life, and peace and joy. He lives in *his* life, he sees light in *his* light, he is invigorated with *his* warmth, and he grows in *his* strength, and leaning upon the Beloved, his soul ascends upwards. The lower he sinks in humility, the higher he rises toward God. He is sensible that he not only is nothing in himself, but that he has also lost what he had gratuitously

received, has precipitated himself into misery, and so subjected himself to the slavery of the devil; and lastly, that he has no internal resources for recovery. Thus he is induced to place his whole dependance on the Lord; to abhor himself, and always to prefer others, and “to take the lowest seat” as his own proper place.—The humble soul is called on by our author, solicitously to examine himself, whether he really demonstrates in his tempers and practice this grace of humility; and to beware lest, even if he do find some evidences of it in his soul, he be inflated with the discovery, because he ought to know, that it is from the Lord alone that he is what he is; and that he ought no more to boast of himself than the shining colours in the glass should glory in that splendour, which they derive entirely from the solar rays. He observes, that the temptations to self-complacency are the effect of Satanic injections; and that it behoves him, who would be found unfeignedly humble, to see whether he has the genuine marks of humility in practice; whether, for instance, he can bear to be rebuked by an inferior, whether he is not rendered insolent by honours, whether he is not inflated by praise, whether among equals he is the first to labour, and the last to exalt himself, whether he can render blessings for curses, and good for evil. By such methods of self-examination he is to check the ebullitions of vain-glory, with which the tempter is apt to inspire those, who seem to have made some proficiency in grace. If that proficiency be real, let them take care never to conceive of it as something separate from Christ: *he* alone dwelling in them by his Spirit produces all that is good, and to him alone the praise belongs.”

Thomas Aquinas, called the angelical doctor, filled the Christian world in this century with the renown of his

name. He was a Dominican, who, by his comments on four books of Peter Lombard, master of the sentences, and, particularly, by his expositions of Aristotle, made himself more famous than most men of that time, on account of his skill in scholastic divinity. His penetration and genius were of the first order; but he excelled in that subtle and abstruse kind of learning only, which was better calculated to strike the imagination, than to improve the understanding. He maintained what is commonly called the doctrine of free-will, though he largely quoted Augustine, and retailed many of his pious and devotional sentiments. His Aristotelian subtleties enabled him to give a specious colour to the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which in him found a vehement defender. The new festival of the body of Christ was, by this divine, adorned with an idolatrous ritual, which strengthened the fashionable superstitions. He was the great supporter of the doctrine of supererogation, which, at the same time that it established the most pernicious views of self-righteousness, by leaving the disposal of the superfluous treasure of the merits of saints to the discretion of the papal see, added one strong link to the chain, which dragged the nations into ecclesiastical slavery. Nor were his voluminous writings much calculated to instruct mankind. For he supposed, that whatever sense any passage of Scripture could possibly admit, in grammatical construction, it was the real sense intended by the Holy Spirit: whence the imaginations of every sportive genius were regarded as of divine authority. And thus the Scriptures were perverted and exposed to the ridicule of profane minds. Nor were they rescued from this miserable abuse, till the æra of the reformation. His

sentiments on the all important doctrine of justification, were deplorably corrupt; and that “good works deserve grace of congruity,”* was one of his favourite axioms. His notions of the nature of repentance were egregiously trifling. On the other hand, there are in his writings, and particularly in the account of his discourses during his last sickness, traces of great devotion, and a strain of piety very similar to that of Augustine. But I confess, that, interlarded as they are with Romish idolatry, and an unbounded attachment to the pope as the infallible guide of the church, I feel no inclination to transcribe them; because I am thoroughly convinced of the frauds by which the Dominicans supported the popedom; and because some glare of solemn devotion seemed necessary to be employed by the agents of that See, in order to maintain the reputation of a system intolerably corrupt.

Fourteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Corruptions.—Wickliff.

WE are beginning to approach the dawn of a brighter day, when God said concerning part of the Western Church, Let there be light.

The same darkness and superstition, the same vice and immorality were upheld by Rome in this as in the last century.

* See Article XIII. of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Boniface VIII. filled the Christian world with the noise and turbulence of his ambition. He followed the steps of Hildebrand, and attempted to be equally despotic in civil and ecclesiastical matters. He it was, who forbade the clergy to pay any thing to princes without his permission.* He also instituted a jubilee, which was to be renewed every hundred years, by which he granted plenary indulgences to all strangers, who should visit the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome.† This unprincipled pontiff died in extreme misery in 1303, in the ninth year of his papacy.

The schism which afterwards took place in the popedom was providentially a blessing to mankind. While, for the space of fifty years, the church had two or three heads at the same time; and, while each of the contending popes was anathematizing his competitors, the reverence of mankind for the popedom itself was insensibly diminished; and the labours of those, whom God raised up to propagate divine truth, began to be more seriously regarded by men of conscience and probity.

The morning star of the reformation appeared in England. Wickliff was born, about the year 1324, at a village near Richmond in Yorkshire. He was admitted a student at Queen's College, Oxford, but soon removed to Merton College, which was at that time esteemed one of the most famous seminaries of learning in Europe. In the long list of men of note and eminence belonging to this College, we observe the names of William Occam, called the venerable Inceptor; and of Thomas Bradwardine, called the Profound Doctor.

* Du Pin.

† The successors of Boniface, finding that the Jubilee augmented the revenue of the Roman church, fixed its return to every twenty-fifth year.

Our renowned reformer soon became master of all the niceties of the school-divinity. He seems to have reigned without a rival in the public disputations, which were then in high repute. The Aristotelian logic was at its height; and Wickliff, in opposing error, made use of the same weapons, which his adversaries employed in maintaining it. Such were his labours on the week-days, proving to the learned the doctrine concerning which he intended to preach; and on the Sundays he addressed the common people on the points which he had proved before. He always descended to particulars: He attacked the vices of the friars, and many of the prevailing abuses in religion. On the question of the real presence in the Eucharist, Wickliff has been considered as remarkably clear. In this matter the reader will be better enabled to judge for himself, when certain authentic documents, tending to elucidate this early reformer's opinion of the nature of the Sacrament, shall have been submitted to his consideration.

Wickliff's defence of the University of Oxford, against the encroachments of the Mendicant friars, seems to have been one of the first things which brought him into public notice.

This religious order not only pretended to a distinct jurisdiction from that of the University, but took every opportunity of enticing the students into their convents, insomuch that parents feared to send their children to the respective colleges, lest they should be kidnapped by the friars. We are informed that, owing to this cause, the number of students, from having been thirty thousand, was reduced to about six thousand, in the year 1357.

The zeal and ability of Wickliff manifested itself on

this occasion. He composed and published several spirited treatises, *against able beggary*, *against idle beggary*, and *on the poverty of Christ*. The consequence of these laudable exertions was his advancement to the mastership of Balliol College; and four years after he was chosen warden of Canterbury Hall.

From this office he was ejected, with circumstances of great injustice, by Langham, archbishop of Canterbury. Wickliff appealed to the pope, who for the space of three years artfully suspended his decision. In the mean time Wickliff, regardless of consequences, continued his attacks on the insatiable ambition, tyranny, and avarice of the ruling ecclesiastics, as also on the idleness, debauchery, and hypocrisy of the friars. Then these things were not done in a corner or by halves; nor did there want informers to carry the news to Rome. Accordingly, nobody was surprised to hear of the confirmation of the ejection of so obnoxious a person as Wickliff. The pope's definitive sentence to that effect arrived at Oxford in 1370, to the great satisfaction of all the monastic orders, whose dignity and interest were intimately connected with the question of Wickliff's right to hold his office.

The pope and his cardinals feared him, and minutely observed his proceedings; and on the other hand, we find that the first parliament of England held under king Richard II. entertained so high an opinion of his integrity and knowledge, that in a case of the utmost emergency, and on a very nice and delicate question, they applied to him for the sanction of his judgment and authority. The question was, "Whether, for the defence of the kingdom, that treasure which the lord pope demanded on pain of censures, might not be lawfully detained." The affirmative answer of the casuist was un-

doubtedly foreseen; but still the application of the king and parliament to a man who had been persecuted by the pope and the archbishop of Canterbury, proves beyond contradiction the high estimation in which he was held. It proves also, that, though deprived of his wardenship, and surrounded by exasperated friars, and narrowly watched by the rulers of the church, he must have been supported at this time by worldly friends of the greatest weight and consequence. It could not therefore easily happen, that a man in the splendid situation of Wickliff should remain long without an ample maintenance. Accordingly, it appears, that in 1374 he was presented by Edward III. to the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, and afterwards in 1375, was confirmed in the prebend of Auste in the collegiate church of Westbury. The duke of Lancaster is supposed to have been the chief friend of Wickliff, in obtaining for him the royal patronage. Many persons indeed considered the reformer as in the high road to some dignified preferment; but there is no account of any such offer being made to him.

Wickliff was now become independent. He had a great many admirers, some powerful friends, and a host of bitter enemies. He was profoundly learned; uncommonly eloquent; and, to complete the character, he was inflamed with a zeal for truth, he abhorred hypocrisy, was hostile to every species of vice, and was himself a man of unexceptionable morals. This was precisely the man who, one might predict, would be likely to fall without mercy on proud popes and idle friars.

The following is a short specimen of the manner in which Wickliff sometimes treated the pope. He called him *Antichrist*, the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the

most cursed of clippers and purse-kervers. He averred, that the pope and his collectors drew out of the land poor men's livelihood, to the amount of many thousand marks a year: and added, that though the realm had a huge hill of gold in it, and no other man took thereof except this proud worldly priest's collector, yet in process of time this hill would be levelled.

His attacks on the friars are innumerable. They draw, said he, children from Christ's religion by hypocrisy; they tell them that men of their order shall never go to hell. They praise their own rotten habit more than the worshipful body of our Lord Jesus Christ. They teach lords and ladies, that if they die in Francis's habit, the virtue of it will preserve them from hell. St. Paul laboured with his own hands; and it is the commandment of Christ, to give alms to poor, feeble, crooked, blind, and bed-ridden men; but it is leaving this commandment, to give alms to such hypocrites as the begging friars, who feign themselves holy and needy, when in fact they are strong in body, and possess overmuch riches, as well as great houses, precious cloths, jewels and other valuable things.

It was not to be expected that the Romish clergy should tamely submit to reiterated flagellations of this kind. They forthwith selected, from Wickliff's public lectures and sermons, nineteen articles of complaint and accusation, and despatched them to Rome.

The pope was so completely alive to the business, that he sent no fewer than five bulls to England on this occasion. Three of them were directed to the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London. In the first he orders these prelates to apprehend the rector of Lutterworth, and imprison him, provided they found him guilty

of the heresy with which he was charged. In the second, he enjoins them, if they cannot find him, to fix up public citations in Oxford and in other places, for his personal appearance before the pope within the space of three months. In the third, he commands them to acquaint the king and his sons with the heresy of Wickliff, and to require their assistance for its effectual extirpation.

A fourth bull was addressed to the king himself, desiring his royal help and patronage in the prosecution of the heretic. And lastly, a fifth was despatched to the university of Oxford, in which the pope laments the sloth and laziness of the chancellor and heads of the university in permitting tares to spring up among the pure wheat. Wickliff's doctrines, he said, would subvert both church and state. They ought to forbid the preaching of such tenets, and assist the bishops in their endeavours to bring the offender to punishment.

It is not too much to say, that, both by the university of Oxford, and by the government of the country, these bulls were treated with the utmost contempt. The university for a long time were disposed wholly to reject with disgrace the pontifical injunctions; and when after much deliberation they had received the bull, they refused to be active in giving to it the smallest degree of effect.

The regency and parliament of England manifested their disapprobation of the persecution of Wickliff, in a manner which must have mortified the haughty pontiff exceedingly. For it was at this moment that they chose to honour this celebrated reformer with their confidence, as aforementioned.

The archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of Lon-

don, however, did not hesitate to execute the pope's commands. They cited Wickliff to appear before them at St. Paul's in London, on the thirtieth day after the notice; and this interval of a month, was by him wisely employed in taking precautions for his safety. To be brief, he saw no way of evading the present storm of persecution, but by putting himself at once under the protection of the duke of Lancaster, who had long known him, and entertained a high opinion of his learning and integrity, and who was no great admirer either of the monks or of the prelates.

This duke, well known by the name of John of Gaunt, not only advised Wickliff to obey the citation; but also in person, together with Henry Percy, lord marshal of England, accompanied him to St. Paul's. But the conduct of these great personages in the council, I fear, added no real honour to the cause of Wickliff. Sudbury, the archbishop, was a moderate man, for the times in which he lived; but Courtney, the bishop of London, was an intemperate bigot, no doubt; yet that circumstance will not justify the duke for declaring in court, that "rather than take at his hands what the bishop had said to him, he would drag him by the hair of his head out of the church." The bystanders heard these words, and were so enraged, that they cried aloud "they would rather lose their lives than suffer their bishop to be so contumuously treated." The court was compelled to break up in tumult and confusion; and it would have given real pleasure to a lover of Christian reformation, if he could have discovered any proof that Wickliff protested against the disorderly and insolent behaviour of his patrons. But this does not appear. Nor is it more than historical justice to say, that the deportment of the archbishop and

bishop seems to have been more unexceptionable than that of Wickliff and his friends in this transaction.

Wickliff having escaped, in the manner that has been mentioned, those severities which his persecutors, the pope and prelates, had no doubt intended to inflict, paid little regard to the strict charge which they are said to have given him, to be silent in future respecting all the subjects which had given so much offence. He continued in the year 1377, during the minority of Richard the Second, to preach and instruct the people with unabated zeal and courage.*

This perseverance in the good cause induced the English prelates, now encouraged by the decline of the duke of Lancaster's power after the death of king Edward III. to make another attempt at carrying into execution the tyrannical designs of the Roman pontiff.

The heretic was not disobedient to their second citation; for in 1378 we find him before the same papal delegates, assembled on the present occasion, not in St. Paul's, but in the more private archiepiscopal church at Lambeth. However, many of the citizens of London, who revered Wickliff, forced themselves, together with a multitude of common people, into the chapel, where they spoke in behalf of the prisoner, and exceedingly terrified his judges. Moreover the Queen dowager, widow of the Black Prince, ordered Sir L. Clifford to go and peremptorily forbid them to proceed to any definitive sentence. Here the papal advocate Walsingham loses all patience. "The bishops," says he, "who had professed themselves determined to do their duty in spite of threats or promises, and even at the hazard of their lives, became so intimidated during the examination of the

* Fox, p. 491.

apostate, that their speeches were as soft as oil, to the public loss of their dignity, and the damage of the whole church. And when Clifford pompously delivered his message, they were so overcome with fear, that you would have thought them to be as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus," continues the historian, "this false teacher, this complete hypocrite, evaded the hand of justice; and could no more be called before the same prelates, because their commission expired by the death of the pope, Gregory XI.*

But it must not be here dissembled, that our reformer, though evidently still protected by the *great*, did not rest his safety entirely on their authority and interference. He delivered into the court a solemn protest, and an explanatory qualification of several of his positions which had been deemed erroneous or heretical.

Politics was the rock on which this great and good man split; and in this case it clearly appeared, that the work of God is not to be carried on by the "arm of flesh."

After the last mentioned conflict with the university of Oxford, Wickliff appears to have been, in the main, delivered from persecution; and to have been still supported, in some degree, by the secular power, and by individuals of distinction, though he was induced, I fear, as the price of that protection, to make such sacrifices as are inconsistent with a direct and open sincerity. He had no trouble from his superiors, at least none that deserves any particular detail, though he certainly continued to the end of his days, in the unremitting exercise of ze-

* Fuller's observation on this event is as follows. The bishops were struck with a panic fear. . . . And the person of this John Wickliff was saved as was once the doctrine of his godly namesake; "*They feared the people, for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed.*" Mark xi. 32.

lous pastoral labours in his parish church of Lutterworth; though he persevered in attacking the abuses of popery by his writings against the mendicants, against transubstantiation, and against indulgences; and though he produced a translation of the Bible from the Latin into the English tongue. This work alone sufficed to render his name immortal. The value of it was unspeakable; and his unwearied pains to propagate the genuine doctrines of revelation among mankind, indicated the steady zeal with which he was endowed; while the rage, with which the hierarchy was inflamed against a work so undeniably seasonable, demonstrated, that the ecclesiastical rulers hated the light, and would not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reproved.*

Wickliff died in peace at Lutterworth, of the palsy, in the year 1387. In the year 1410, his works were burned at Oxford; and in 1428, his remains were dug out of his grave and burned, and his ashes thrown into the river of Lutterworth. The number of his volumes committed to the flames by order of Subimco,* archbishop of Prague, amounted to about two hundred. His labours indeed appear to have been immense; and beyond all doubt, he was in that dark age a prodigy of knowledge.

Little more need be said of the state of the church in this century. In the east the profession of Christianity still pervaded that contracted empire of the Greeks, of which Constantinople was the metropolis. But no Christian records are come down to us of any thing like the primitive gospel. Even the profession of Christianity, which had existed in China, was extirpated through the jealousy of the reigning powers; and the famous Tamerlane, the Tartar, cruelly persecuted all who bore the

* John iii. ver. 20.

† Fox, p. 509

Christian name, being persuaded, as a Mahometan, that it was highly meritorious to destroy them. Thus even the form of godliness declined in Asia: the power of it, alas! had vanished long before. Nor were the attempts, which were made in Europe to renew the Crusades, by means of indulgences, calculated to revive the light of the gospel in the east, even if they had succeeded. The Holy Land had been lost in 1291; and an army was collected in 1363, under the auspices of pope Urban V. commanded by John, king of France, that same monarch, who had been taken prisoner by Edward the Black Prince, at the battle of Poictiers. But John departed this life, and Urban's hopes from the crusade were blasted.

In the mean time the boundaries of Christianity had been gradually extended in Europe.* Jagello, duke of Lithuania, was now almost the only pagan prince in that quarter of the world. And he, influenced by secular views, became a Christian in name and profession, and by this means acquired the crown of Poland. The Teutonic knights continued also the military methods of obliging the Prussians and Livonians to profess the gospel, and completed in this century, what they had begun in the last.

We are glad to confine our attention chiefly to the progress of reformation.

* Mosheim, vol. i, p. 713.

Fifteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Lord Cobham.—The Lollards.

HENRY IV. of England, and Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, impelled by the church of Rome, commenced a furious prosecution against the Lollards—a term given in derision to the followers of Wickliff. William Sawtre was the first man who was burnt in England for opposing the abominations of popery. He was a clergyman in London, who openly taught the doctrines of Wickliff. Glorying in the cross of Christ, and strengthened by divine grace, he suffered the flames of martyrdom in the year of our Lord, fourteen hundred.*

In the year 1413, died Henry IV.—His successor, Henry V. trod in his steps, and countenanced Arundel, in his plans of extirpating the Lollards, and of supporting the existing hierarchy by penal coercions. In the first year of the new king's reign, this archbishop collected in St. Paul's church at London, a universal synod of all the bishops and clergy of England. The principal object of the assembly was to repress the growing sect; and, as sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, had on all occasions discovered a partiality for these reformers, the resentment of the archbishop and of the whole body of the clergy, was particularly levelled at this nobleman. Certainly, at that time, no man in England was more obnoxious to the ecclesiastics. For he made no secret

* Wilkins, Convoc. p. 254—260.

of his opinions. He had very much distinguished himself in opposing the abuses of popery. At a great expense, he had collected, transcribed, and dispersed the works of Wickliff among the common people without reserve; and it was well known that he maintained a great number of itinerant preachers in many parts of the country, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, Rochester, London and Hereford.*

But Lord Cobham was a favourite both of the king and of the people; and therefore to effect his destruction was an undertaking that required much caution. The archbishop however was in earnest, and he concerted his measures with prudence.

His first step was to procure the royal mandate for sending commissioners to Oxford, whose business should be to examine and report the progress of heresy. These commissioners are, by Mr. Fox, not improperly called “the twelve inquisitors of heresies.” The issue of their inquiries proved highly ungrateful to the hierarchy. They found Oxford overrun with heretics: they were, indeed, respectfully received by the rulers of the university, but the opinions of Wickliff had made their way among the junior students; and the talents and integrity of their master were held in high esteem and admiration by his disciples. This information, with many other minute particulars, Arundel laid before the grand convocation, who, after long debates, determined, that, without delay, the Lord Cobham should be prosecuted as a heretic. Him they considered as the great offender: to his influence they ascribed the growth of heresy: he was not only, they said, an avowed heretic himself, but, by stipends encouraged scholars from Oxford, to propagate

* Fox, p. 635. Walden cont. Wiclev. Goodwin's Hen. V.

his opinions, many of which were in direct opposition to the sentiments of the holy church of Rome; and lastly, he employed the disciples of Wickliff in preaching, though they had not obtained the licenses of their respective bishops for that purpose. With great solemnity a copy of each of Wickliff's works was publicly burnt, by the enraged archbishop, in the presence of the nobility, clergy, and people: and it happened that one of the books burnt on this occasion, had belonged to Lord Cobham. This circumstance tended much to confirm the assembly in their belief that that nobleman was a great encourager of the Lollards.*

At the moment when the convocation seemed almost in a flame, and were vowing vengeance against Lord Cobham, some of the more cool and discreet members are said to have suggested the propriety of sounding how the young king would relish the measures they had in view, before they should proceed any farther. Arundel instantly saw the wisdom of this advice, and he resolved to follow it.

For the purpose of giving weight to his proceedings, this artful primate, at the head of a great number of dignified ecclesiastics, complained most grievously to Henry, of the heretical practices of his favourite servant Lord Cobham, and intreated his majesty to consent to the prosecution of so incorrigible an offender.

The affections of the king appear to have been, in some measure, already alienated from this unfortunate nobleman: Mr. Fox observes,† that he gently listened to those “blood-thirsty prelates, and far otherwise than became his princely dignity.” But there is a circumstance, which seems to have escaped the notice of this diligent

* Fox, p. 636. Collier, p. 632. Wilkins *Concilia*, p. 352. † Fox, *ibid.*

searcher into ancient records. Through the management of the archbishop, the king's mind was previously impressed with strong suspicions of Lord Cobham's heresy and enmity to the church. That very book above mentioned, which was said to belong to this excellent man, and which the convocation condemned to the flames, was read aloud before the king, the bishops and the temporal peers of the realm: and the fragment of the account of these proceedings informs us, that Henry was exceedingly shocked at the recital; and declared that, in his life, he never heard such horrid heresy.* However, in consideration of the high birth, military rank, and good services of sir John Oldcastle, the king enjoined the convocation to deal favourably with him, and to desist from all further process for some days: he wished to restore him to the unity of the church without rigour or disgrace; and he promised that he himself, in the mean time, would send privately for the honourable knight, and endeavour to persuade him to renounce his errors.

The king kept his promise, and is said to have used every argument he could think of, to convince him of the high offence of separating from the church; and at last, to have pathetically exhorted him to retract and submit, as an obedient child to his holy mother. The answer of the knight is very expressive of the frank and open intrepidity which distinguished his character. " You I am always most ready to obey," said he, " because you are the appointed minister of God, and bear the sword for the punishment of evil doers. But, as to the pope and his spiritual dominion, I owe them no obedience, nor will I pay them any; for as sure as God's word is true, to me it is fully evident, that the pope of Rome is

* Fragmentum Convoc. Cantuar. Arundel.

the great antichrist, foretold in Holy Writ, the son of perdition, the open adversary of God, and the abomination standing in the holy place.” The extreme ignorance of Henry in matters of religion, by no means disposed him to relish such an answer as this: he immediately turned away from him in visible displeasure, and gave up the disciple of Wickliff to the malice of his enemies.*

Arundel, supported by the sovereign power, sent a citation to the castle of Cowling, where Lord Cobham then resided. But feudal ideas were at that time no less fashionable than those of ecclesiastical domination. The high spirited nobleman availed himself of his privileges, and refused admission to the messenger. The archbishop then cited him,† by letters affixed to the great gates of the cathedral of Rochester; but Lord Cobham still disregarded the mandate. Arundel, in a rage, excommunicated him for contumacy, and demanded the aid of the civil power to apprehend him.

Cobham, alarmed at length at the approaching storm, put in writing a confession of his faith, delivered it to the king, and intreated his majesty to judge for himself, whether he had merited all this rough treatment. The king coldly ordered the written confession to be delivered to the archbishop. Lord Cobham then offered to bring a hundred knights, who would bear testimony to the innocence of his life and opinions. When these expedients had failed, he assumed a higher strain, and begged that he might be permitted, as was usual in less matters, to vindicate his innocence by the law of arms. He said he was ready, “in the quarrel of his faith,” to fight for life

* Fox, p. 636. Goodwin, Henry V.

† Citatio Arund. Wilkins, p. 329.

or death, with any man living, the king and the lords of his council being excepted.

Nothing can be said by way of extenuating so gross an absurdity, except that he had been educated in the military habits of the fourteenth century. And such was the wretched state of society in the reign of Henry V. whose history we are accustomed to read with so much pride and admiration, that no method of defence remained for this Christian hero, but what was as contrary to all ideas of justice and equity, as that by which he was persecuted. In the issue, Cobham was arrested by the king's express order, and lodged in the tower of London. The very zealous and honest Mr. Fox,* gives the following account of his first examination.

On the day appointed, Thomas Arundel, the archbishop, "sitting in Caiaphas' room, in the chapter-house at St. Paul's," with the bishops of London and Winchester, sir Robert Morley brought personally before him Lord Cobham, and left him there for the time. Sir, said the primate, you stand here, both detected of heresies, and also excommunicated for contumacy. Notwithstanding, we have, as yet, neither shown ourselves unwilling to give you absolution, nor yet do to this hour, provided you would meekly ask for it.

Lord Cobham took no notice of this offer, but desired permission to read an account of his faith, which had long been settled, and which he intended to stand to. He then took out of his bosom a certain writing respecting the articles whereof he was accused, and when he had read it, he delivered the same to the archbishop.

The contents of the paper were, in substance, these:

* Pages 638 and 639.

1. That the most worshipful sacrament of the altar is Christ's body in the form of bread.
2. That every man, who would be saved, must forsake sin, and do penance for sins already committed, with true and very sincere contrition.
3. That images might be allowable to represent and give men lively ideas of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the martyrdom and good lives of saints; but, that if any man gave that worship to dead images which was due only to God, or put such hope or trust in the help of them as he should do in God, he became a grievous idolater.
4. That the matter of pilgrimages might be settled in few words. A man may spend all his days in pilgrimages, and lose his soul at last: but he, that knows the holy commandments of God, and keepeth them to the end, shall be saved, though he never visited the shrines of saints, as men now do in their pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, and other places.

Then the archbishop informed the prisoner, that, though there were many good things contained in his paper, he had not been sufficiently explicit respecting several other articles of belief: and that upon these also his opinion would be expected. As a direction to his faith, he promised to send him, in writing, the clear determinations of the church; and he warned him very particularly, to attend to this point; namely, whether, in the sacrament of the altar, the material bread did, or did not, remain, after the words of consecration.

The gross superstition and unscriptural notions of the church at that time, are strikingly exhibited in this authentic determination of the primate and clergy, which,

according to promise, was sent to the Lord Cobham in the Tower

1. The faith and determination of the holy church, touching the blissful sacrament of the altar, is this, that after the sacramental words be once spoken by a priest in his Mass, “the material bread, that was before bread, is turned into Christ’s very body; and the material wine, that was before wine, is turned into Christ’s very blood.” And so there remaineth, thenceforth, neither material bread, nor material wine, which were there before the sacramental words were spoken.

2. Every Christian man living here bodily on earth, ought to confess to a priest ordained by the church, if he can come to him.

3 Christ ordained St. Peter to be his vicar here on earth, whose See is the holy church of Rome: and he granted that the same power, which he gave to Peter, should succeed to all Peter’s successors; whom we now call popes of Rome;—and whom Christian men ought to obey after the laws of the church of Rome.

4. Lastly, Holy Church hath determined, that it is meritorious to a Christian man to go on a pilgrimage to holy places; and there to worship holy reliques, and images of saints, apostles, martyrs, and confessors, approved by the church of Rome.

On Monday, the day appointed for the next examination, Arundel accosted Lord Cobham with an appearance of great mildness, and put him in mind, that, on the preceding Saturday, he had informed him, he was “accursed for contumacy and disobedience to the holy church;” and had expected he would at that time have meekly requested absolution. The archbishop then declared, that even now it was not too late to make the

same request, provided it was made in due form, as the church had ordained.*

"I never yet trespassed against *you*," said this intrepid servant of God; "and therefore I do not feel the want of *your* absolution." He then kneeled down on the pavement; and lifting up his hands to heaven, he said, "I confess myself here unto thee, my eternal living God, that I have been a grievous sinner: how often in my frail youth have I offended thee by ungoverned passions, pride, concupiscence, intemperance! How often have I been drawn into horrible sin by anger, and how many of my fellow-creatures have I injured from this cause: Good Lord, I humbly ask thee mercy: here I need absolution."

With tears in his eyes, he then stood up, and with a loud voice cried out, "Lo! these are your guides, good people. Take notice; for the violation of God's holy law and his great commandments they never cursed me; but, for their own arbitrary appointments and traditions, they most cruelly treat me and other men. Let them, however, remember, that Christ's denunciations against the Pharisees shall all be fulfilled."

The dignity of his manner, and the vehemence of his expression, threw the court into some confusion. After the primate had recovered himself, he proceeded to examine the prisoner respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Do you believe, that after the words of consecration there remains any *material* bread?" "The Scriptures," said Cobham, "make no mention of *material* bread; I believe, that Christ's body remains in the *form* of bread. In the sacrament there is both Christ's body and the bread: the bread is the thing that we see

* Fox, p. 639. Wilkins, p. 356.

with our eyes; but the body of Christ is hid, and only to be seen by faith."* Upon which, with one voice, they cried, Heresy! heresy! One of the bishops, in particular, said vehemently, "That it was a foul heresy to call it bread." Cobham answered smartly, "St. Paul, the apostle, was as wise a man as you, and perhaps as good a Christian; and yet he calls it *bread*. The bread, saith he, that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? To be short with you; I believe the scriptures most cordially, but I have no belief in your lordly laws and idle determinations; ye are no part of Christ's holy church, as your deeds do plainly show." Doctor Walden, the prior of the Carmelites, and Wickliff's great enemy, now lost all patience, and exclaimed, "What rash and desperate people are these followers of Wickliff!"

"Before God and man," replied Cobham, "I solemnly here profess, that till I knew Wickliff, whose judgment ye so highly disdain, I never abstained from sin; but after I became acquainted with that virtuous man and his despised doctrines, it hath been otherwise with me; so much grace could I never find in all your pompous instructions."

"It were hard," said Walden, "that in an age of so many learned instructors, you should have had no grace to amend your life, till you heard the devil preach."

"Your fathers," said Cobham, "the old Pharisees, ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub, and his doctrines to the devil. Go on; and, like them, ascribe every good thing to the devil. Go on, and pronounce every man a heretic, who rebukes your vicious lives. Pray, what

* The learned reader cannot fail to observe, that both Wickliff and his followers, seem sometimes to lean to the notion of consubstantiation.

warrant have you from Scripture, for this very act you are now about? Where is it written in all God's law, that you may thus sit in judgment upon the life of man? Hold—perhaps you will quote Annas and Caiaphas, who sat upon Christ and his apostles!"

"Yes, sir," said one of the doctors of law, "and Christ too, for he judged *Judas*."

"I never heard that he did," said Lord Cobham. "Judas judged himself, and thereupon went out and hanged himself. Indeed Christ pronounced a wo against him, for his covetousness, as he does still against you, who follow Judas' steps."

At the conclusion of this long and iniquitous trial, the behaviour of Lord Cobham was perfectly consistent with the tempers he had exhibited during the course of it. There remained the same undaunted courage and resolution, and the same Christian serenity and resignation. Some of the last questions which were put to him, respected the worship of the *cross*; and his answers prove that neither the acuteness of his genius was blunted, nor the solidity of his judgment impaired.

One of the friars asked him, whether he was ready to worship the cross upon which Christ died.

Where is it? said Lord Cobham.

But suppose it was here at this moment? said the friar.

A wise man indeed, said Cobham, to put me such a question; and yet he himself does not know where the thing is! But, tell me, I pray, what sort of worship do I owe to it?

One of the conclave answered; such worship as St. Paul speaks of, when he says, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Right, replied Cobham, and stretched out his arms; *that* is the true and the very cross, far better than your cross of wood.

Sir, said the bishop of London, you know very well that Christ died upon a *material* cross.

True, said Cobham; and I know also that our salvation did not come by that material *cross*, but by him who died thereupon. Further, I know well that St. Paul rejoiced in no other cross, but in Christ's passion and death *only*, and in his own sufferings and persecutions, for the same truth which Christ had died for before.*

Mr. Fox's account of these transactions, collected from ancient manuscripts, does not, in general, differ materially from the archbishop's own registers of the proceedings of the convocation. But there are some circumstances noted by Mr. Fox, which we may well suppose to have been designedly omitted in the registers last mentioned. For example, Mr. Fox informs us that the court were so amazed at the spirit and resolution of the Lord Cobham, as well as at the quickness and pertinence of his answers, that they were reduced to a stand, "their wits and sophistry so failed them that day."

From Arundel's own reports it is sufficiently clear, that it was the custom of that artful primate to make, on these occasions, a great external show of lenity and kindness to the prisoners, at the very moment in which he was exercising towards them the most unrelenting barbarity. In the case of William Sawtre, when the archbishop degraded that faithful clergyman, pronounced him an incorrigible heretic, and delivered him to the secular power, he then, with the most consummate hypocrisy, requested the mayor and sheriffs of London, to

* Fox, p. 642. Convoc. prælat. Wilkins, p. 356.

treat their prisoner *kindly*,* though he well knew they would dare to show him no other kindness, than that of burning him to ashes.

So in the trial of Lord Cobham, nothing could exceed the mild and affable deportment of Arundel during the course of the examinations. The registers of Lambeth Palace inform us, that the archbishop repeatedly made use of the most “gentle, modest, and sweet terms,” in addressing the prisoner; that with mournful looks he entreated him to return into the bosom of the church; and that after he had found all his endeavours in vain, he was compelled with the bitterest sorrow to proceed to a definitive sentence.

“The day,” said Arundel, “passes away fast; we must come to a conclusion.” He then, for the last time, desired Lord Cobham, to weigh well the dilemma in which he stood: “You must either submit,” said he, “to the ordinances of the church, or abide the dangerous consequences.”

Lord Cobham then said expressly before the whole court, “My faith is fixed, do with me what you please.”

The primate, without further delay, judged, and pronounced, Sir John Oldcastle, the Lord Cobham, to be an incorrigible, pernicious, and detestable heretic; and having condemned him as such, he delivered him to the secular jurisdiction.†

Lord Cobham, with a most cheerful countenance, said, “Though ye condemn my body, which is but a wretched thing, yet I am well assured ye can do no harm to my soul, any more than could Satan to the soul of Job. He, that created it, will of his infinite mercy save it. Of this

* Wilkins’ Concil. p. 260. Fox, p. 589.

† Rymer, vol. ix. p. 61—66. Fox, p. 642 &c.

I have no manner of doubt. And in regard to the articles of my belief, I will, *by the grace of the eternal God*, stand to them, even to my very death.” He then turned to the people, and stretching out his hands, cried with a very loud voice, “ Good Christian people! for God’s love, be well aware of these men; else, they will beguile you, and lead you blindfold into hell with themselves.” Having said these words, he fell down upon his knees, and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, he prayed for his enemies in the following words: “ Lord God Eternal! I beseech thee of thy great mercy to forgive my persecutors, if it be thy blessed will!”

He was then sent back to the Tower, under the care of Sir Robert Morley.

Though the ecclesiastical judges of Lord Cobham, by condemning him as a heretic, and delivering him to the secular power for the execution of their sentence, appear to have done their utmost to complete the destruction of the man whom they feared and hated, there is yet reason to believe that both the king and the archbishop remained in some perplexity respecting this business. In religious concerns, this able monarch seems to have entirely resigned his understanding to the direction of the clergy; and therefore we need not wonder that he was highly provoked with Lord Cobham for his opposition to the church, and still more for his incurable obstinacy, in adhering to heretical sentiments, after that his sovereign had personally condescended to persuade him to recant. Yet, after all, it is not improbable that such a prince as Henry V. should still retain some esteem for the character of the prisoner in the Tower, who on many occasions had formerly distinguished himself by his valour and military talents. Though the memory of Henry is by no

means free from the imputation of cruelty, it must at least be admitted, that the present situation of Cobham was likely to soften animosity, and to revive in the king's mind any latent affection for his favourite. Even Walsingham, a bigoted papist, and bitter enemy of the Lollards, though in many respects a very useful historian, says, that Cobham, "for his integrity, was dearly beloved by the king."*

This same ancient historian informs us, that the archbishop in person went to the king, and requested his majesty to postpone, for the space of fifty days, the punishment of Lord Cobham.† If this be true, the motives of Arundel can be no great mystery. The persecution of this virtuous knight was a most unpopular step. His rank and character, and his zeal for the doctrines of Wickliff, had pointed him out to the primate as a proper victim of ecclesiastical severity; but his condemnation involved, in a general odium, the rulers of the church who had been his judges. It was necessary, therefore, to temporize a little; and before the whole sect of the Lollards were to be terrified by the public execution of a person so highly esteemed as Lord Cobham, it was thought expedient to employ a few weeks in lessening his credit among the people by a variety of scandalous aspersions. Mr. Fox assures us, that his adversaries scrupled not to publish a recantation in his name; and that Lord Cobham directed a paper to be posted up in his own defence, and in contradiction to the slander.

But, whether the lenity of the king, or the politic caution of the clergy, was the true cause of the delay, it is certain, that Lord Cobham was not put to death imme-

* Regi propter probitatem charus et acceptus. Walsingham, Henry V.

† Page 385.

diate after being condemned for a heretic. He remained some weeks in the Tower, and at length by unknown means made his escape: so that it is now impossible to say, whether the clergy would ultimately have pressed the sovereign to proceed to extremities in this instance, or, whether Henry could have been induced to commit to the flames, for heresy, a favourite of such exalted rank and high reputation. For as yet, there had not been any instance of a nobleman suffering in that ignominious manner:

After Lord Cobham had escaped out of the Tower, he is said to have taken the advantage of a dark night, evaded pursuit, and arrived safe in Wales, where he concealed himself more than four years.* If he had remained in prison, he would have effectually prevented the calumny, with which the papists have endeavoured to load his memory; nevertheless, when we reflect on the intrepid spirit of the man, his unshaken resolution, and the cruel, unjust treatment he met with, we cannot wonder at his eagerness to fly from those flames, which his persecutors ardently longed to kindle. It seems as easy to comprehend Lord Cobham's motives for wishing to escape, as it is difficult to censure them.

The clergy were not a little mortified to find, that this grand heretic and destined victim, had slipped out of their hands; and their uneasiness was increased, by observing that the king discovered no anxiety to have Lord Cobham retaken. Soon after this event, however, a very remarkable transaction afforded them every advantage they could wish, to gratify their resentment against the *noble chief* of the Lollards. These peaceable and truly Christian subjects had been accustomed to assemble in

* Bale.—Gilpin.

companies for the purposes of devotion; but the bishops represented their meetings as of a seditious tendency, and they found no great difficulty in obtaining a royal proclamation* for suppressing the conventicles of persons who were supposed to be ill inclined to the government. Historians have observed, that “jealousy was the ruling foible of the house of Lancaster;” and though Henry V. was naturally of a noble and magnanimous temper, he could never forget that he was an usurper: his suspicions of the evil designs of the Lollards increased to a high degree: he thought it necessary to watch them, as his greatest enemies; and he appears to have listened to every calumny, which the zeal and hatred of the hierarchy could invent or propagate against the unfortunate followers of Wickliff.

The royal proclamation, however, did not put an end to the assemblies of the Lollards. Like the primitive Christians, they met in *smaller* companies, and more privately, and often in the dead of night. St. Giles's Fields, then a thicket, was a place of frequent resort on these occasions. And here a number of them assembled in the evening of January the sixth, 1414; with an intention, as was usual, of continuing together to a very late hour.

The king was then at Eltham, a few miles from London. He received intelligence, that Lord Cobham, at the head of twenty thousand of his party, was stationed in St. Giles's Fields, for the purpose of seizing the person of the king, putting their persecutors to the sword, and making himself the regent of the realm.

The mind of Henry, we have seen, had been prepared, by the diligent and artful representations of the clergy,

* Rymer, vol. ix.

to receive any impressions against the Lollards, which might tend to fix upon that persecuted sect the charges of seditious or treasonable practices. To his previous suspicions, therefore, as well as to the gallantry of his temper, we are to ascribe the extraordinary resolution, which the king took on this occasion. He suddenly armed the few soldiers he could muster, put himself at their head, and marched to the place. He attacked the Lollards, and soon put them into confusion. About twenty were killed, and sixty taken.* Among these was one Beverly, their preacher, who with two others, Sir Roger Acton, and John Brown, was afterwards put to death. The king marched on, but found no more bodies of men. He thought he had surprised only the advanced guard; whereas he had routed the whole army!

It has been supposed that, in process of time, the king disbelieved the report of any actual conspiracy in this transaction: and it must be confessed, that when we reflect on the great understanding and military skill of this prince, it seems extraordinary, that he should not at the first have reflected, that the very marshalling of such a number of soldiers, and the furnishing of them with necessaries, could never have been managed with secrecy. He appears, however, to have given sufficient credit to the calumny to answer all the designs of the ecclesiastical rulers. He became thoroughly incensed against the Lollards, and particularly against the Lord Cobham. A bill of attainder against that unfortunate nobleman passed the commons, through the royal influence:† the king set a price of a thousand marks upon his head, and promised a perpetual exemption from taxes to any town, that should secure him.‡

* Rapin, Henry V.

† Gilpin.

‡ Rapin.—Rymer.

It was to be expected that these strong measures, aided by the active zeal and unrelenting hatred of his enemies, should be effective to the discovery of Lord Cobham: and, it is matter of some surprise, how he was able, for several years, to elude the vigilance of the many, who narrowly watched him. Wales was his asylum; and he is supposed to have frequently changed the scene of his retreat. Through the diligence of Lord Powis, and his dependants, he was at length discovered and taken. It was on the tenth of October, 1413, that Lord Cobham was, by Arundel, condemned as a heretic and sent to the Tower. The affair of St. Giles's happened on the evening of the sixth of January, 1414; and it was not till nearly the end of the year 1417, that this persecuted Christian was apprehended and brought to London.

His fate was soon determined. He was dragged into St. Giles's Fields with all the insult and barbarity of enraged superstition; and there, both as a traitor and a heretic, he was suspended alive in chains, upon a gallows, and burnt to death.

This excellent man, by a slight degree of dissimulation, might have softened his adversaries, and have escaped a troublesome persecution and a cruel death. But, sincerity is essential to a true servant of Jesus Christ; and Lord Cobham died, as he had lived, in the faith and hope of the Gospel; and bearing, to the end, a noble testimony to its genuine doctrines; and “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”*

Henry Chicheley, now archbishop of Canterbury, continued at the head of that See, from February, 1414, to April, 1443.† This man deserves to be called the fire-

* Heb. xiv. 25.

† Biograph. Britan.—Henry's Hist. book v.

brand of the age in which he lived. To subserve the purposes of his own pride and tyranny, he engaged king Henry in his famous contest with France, by which a prodigious carnage was made of the human race, and the most dreadful miseries were brought upon both kingdoms. But Henry was a soldier, and understood the art of war, though perfectly ignorant of religion; and that ardour of spirit, which, in youth, had spent itself in vicious excesses, was now employed, under the management of Chicheley, in desolating France, by one of the most unjust wars ever waged by ambition, and in furnishing for vulgar minds matter of declamation on the valour of the English nation. While this scene was carrying on in France, the archbishop at home, partly by exile, partly by forced abjurations, and partly by the flames, domineered over the Lollards; and almost effaced the vestiges of godliness in the kingdom.

This was one of the most gloomy seasons, which the church ever experienced. The doctrines of Wickliff, indeed, had travelled into Bohemia; but, as we shall afterwards see, the fires of persecution were also lighted up in that country, at the same time that in England, no quarter was given to any professors of the pure religion of Christ. Even the duke of Bedford, the brother of the king,* one of the wisest men of his age, thought it no dishonour to be the minister of Chicheley's cruelties. A chaplain of Lord Cobham, through terror of punishment, was induced to recant his creed: the strictest search was made after Lollards and their books; and while a few souls, dispersed through various parts, sighed in secret, and, detesting the reigning idolatry, worshipped God in spirit and in truth, they yet found no *human* con-

* Fox, page 729.

solation or support whatever. The principal use to be made of these scenes, is to excite a spirit of thankfulness for the superior privileges of the times in which we live.

The diocese of Kent, was particularly exposed to the bloody activity of Chicheley. Whole families were obliged to relinquish their places of abode, for the sake of the gospel.

In the midst of these tragedies, and in the year 1422, died Henry V. whose military greatness is known to most readers. His vast capacity and talents for government, have been also justly celebrated. But what is man, without the genuine fear of God? This monarch, in the former part of his life, was remarkable for dissipation and extravagance of conduct; in the latter, he became the slave of the popedom; and for that reason, was called the *prince of priests*. Voluptuousness, ambition, superstition, each in their turn, had the ascendant in this extraordinary character. Such, however, is the dazzling nature of personal bravery and of prosperity, that even the ignorance and folly of the bigot, and the barbarities of the persecutor, are lost or forgotten amidst the enterprises of the hero and the successes of the conqueror. Reason and justice lift up their voice in vain. The battle of Agincourt throws a delusive splendour around the name of this victorious king.

The persecution of the Lollards continued during the minority of Henry VI. William Taylor, a priest, was burnt, because he had asserted, that every prayer which is a petition for some supernatural gift, is to be directed only to God.* The four orders of friars were directed by the archbishop to examine him; and they convicted

* Fox, p. 749.

him of heresy, for asserting a maxim, which peculiarly distinguishes true religion from idolatry.

Not to dwell on the cases of many persons of less note, who suffered much vexation in this calamitous period of the church, it may be proper to mention William White, who, by reading, writing, and preaching,* exerted himself in Norfolk so vigorously, that he was condemned to the stake in 1424. His holy life and blameless manners had rendered him highly venerable in that country. He attempted to speak to the people before his execution, but was prevented. It is remarkable, that his widow, following her husband's footsteps in purity of life and in zeal for the gospel, confirmed many persons in evangelical truth; on which account she was exposed to much trouble from the bishop of Norwich.

Nor did the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, which filled the whole kingdom with confusion, put an end to the persecution of the Lollards. A person, named John Gooze, was burnt at Tower-hill, in the reign of Edward IV. in the year 1473.† This victim was delivered to one of the sheriffs, with an order to have him executed in the afternoon. The officer, compassionating the case of his prisoner, took him to his own house, and endeavoured to prevail on him to retract. But the martyr, after listening to a long exhortation, desired him to forbear: and then, in strong terms, requested something to eat, declaring he was become very hungry: the sheriff complied with his request. “I eat now a good dinner,” said the man very cheerfully, “for I shall have a brisk storm to pass through before supper.” After he had dined, he gave thanks to God, and desired

* Fox, p. 752.

† Ibid. p. 814.

to be led to the place, where he should give up his soul to his Creator and Redeemer.

The civil contests, with which the kingdom were convulsed, were at length terminated by the union of the two houses of York and Lancaster, at the accession of Henry VII. But the church of God continued still an unremitting object of persecution. The sufferings of the Lollards were even greater during the established governments of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. than they had been during the civil wars. Neither age nor sex were spared. Mr. Fox has collected, from the registers of the diocese of Lincoln, for the year 1521, a most shocking catalogue, both of the accusers and of the victims, who suffered under the grievous and cruel persecution of bishop Langland, the king's confessor. He has also, with singular industry, recorded the particular names of many, who, through fear of a painful death, renounced their faith during the memorable persecution of that same year. Upon these unfortunate persons, various penances, and many very severe and ignominious punishments, were inflicted. Several, who were found to have abjured before, were condemned for relapse, and committed to the flames.

A concise account of a person named John Brown, of Ashford, in Kent, shall conclude this distressing detail of the sufferings of the Lollards.

This martyr suffered in the year 1511, under the persecution of William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury. He was discovered to be a heretic, as follows.* A slight altercation had taken place between him and a priest, as they were both passing down to Gravesend, in the common barge. The priest perceived symptoms of heresy;

* Fox, p. 551.

and immediately upon landing, lodged, with the archbishop, an information against Brown. The man was suddenly apprehended by two of the archbishop's servants, who, by means of assistants, placed him on his own horse, bound his feet under the horse's belly, and carried him to Canterbury, where he remained in confinement forty days; during which time neither his wife, nor any of his friends, could receive the smallest intimation concerning him.

At length he was brought to Ashford, the town where he lived, and placed in the stocks. It was now almost night; but, one of his own female domestics, in passing by the place, happened to become acquainted with his situation, and she instantly carried home to her mistress the afflicting news. His mournful wife sat near her husband all the night, and heard him relate the melancholy story of every thing that had happened to him. The treatment this good man had met with, from Warham, the archbishop of Canterbury, and from Fisher,* bishop of Rochester, was infamous in the extreme. With unparalleled barbarity, they had directed his bare feet to be

* Fisher was born at Beverley in Yorkshire, in 1459. He was educated at Cambridge, and became master, or president of Queen's College in that University. He was made bishop of Rochester in 1504. It was during the time of his presidency that Erasmus came to study at Cambridge, and took up his residence at Queen's College. This prelate was beheaded, by Henry VIII. in 1535, for denying the king's supremacy, and for speaking with freedom in behalf of the queen. The pope was so pleased with his conduct, that, even while Fisher was confined in the Tower and attainted of high treason, he made him a cardinal, and sent him the proper hat belonging to that dignity. Henry was so much provoked, that he would not permit the hat to be brought into the kingdom: he also sent Cromwell to sound bishop Fisher, whether he intended to accept it. "Yes," said Fisher. The king then exclaimed with an oath, "Well, let the pope send him the hat when he pleases, he shall wear it on his shoulders, for I will leave him never a head to set it on." The tyrant was as good as his word.—Erasmus speaks of Fisher in strong terms of commendation.

placed upon hot burning coals; and to be kept there, till they were burnt to the bones. Notwithstanding all this, Brown would not deny his faith, but patiently endured the pain, and continued immovable, fighting manfully the “good fight.” To his wife he then said, “The bishops, good Elizabeth, have burnt my feet, till I cannot set them on the ground: they have done so to make me deny my Lord; but, I thank God, they will never be able to make me do that: for, if I should deny *him* in this world, he would deny me hereafter. Therefore, I pray thee, continue, as thou hast begun, and bring up thy children in the fear of God. Thy husband is to be consumed at the stake to-morrow.”

He was burnt, on Whitsun-even, lifting up his hands, and uttering the most fervent prayers, particularly the words of the psalmist, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.”*

Such were the sanguinary methods by which the prelates of England attempted to extirpate Lollardism and heresy. And they so far succeeded, that the few disciples of Wickliff, who still remained alive, seem to have been afterwards confounded with the favourers of the *grand reformation*: but, in their main object of strengthening the Roman Catholic religion, they utterly failed. The burning of heretics, was found to be not the way to extinguish heresy. On the contrary, both in England and on the Continent, such detestable cruelty increased the compassion of the people for the sufferers, excited their indignation against the persecutors, and roused a spirit of inquiry and of opposition to the existing hierarchy, which at length, under the direction of a kind, over-

* Mr. Fox tells us, he had this account from Brown's own daughter.

ruling Providence, proved fatal both to papal corruptions of sound doctrine, and also to papal usurpation of dominion.

When the human mind has been thus fatigued and disgusted with a review of the cruelties of popish persecutors, it is disposed to pronounce the Roman religion wholly a pretence, and all the ecclesiastical judges and rulers of those times, barbarous hypocrites and deceivers. "It is impossible," we are apt to say, "but that natural conscience should have informed them they were doing wrong, in committing to the flames, for slight differences of opinion, so many innocent victims; nay, often, persons of the most exemplary life and conversation." However, a more cool and sedate reflection may convince us, that though, in all ages, there have existed wicked men of great ability, who have shown themselves ever ready to sacrifice principle and conscience to their ambition and avarice, and even to wade through much blood in support of their darling objects, yet *all* tormentors of the human race have not been precisely of this class. These are of the first magnitude, and we suppose them to have had their eyes open. But there are others, who knew not what they did,* and towards such, therefore, though we are never to palliate their faults, much less to defend their enormities, yet are we bound to exercise an equitable discrimination. The reader will understand me to have in view, those deluded votaries, who have had the misfortune to be taught, and the weakness to believe, that the favour of God is to be obtained, chiefly by paying a scrupulous regard to external forms and observances.

* Luke xxiii. 34.

CHAPTER II.

John Huss, and Jerom of Prague.

IN the year 1414, met the council of Constance. Its objects were various and of high importance.* The necessity of the times had called aloud for an assembly of this kind. Ecclesiastical corruptions had increased to an intolerable magnitude; and Christendom had been distracted, nearly forty years, by a schism in the popedom. To settle this dispute, and restore peace to the church, was the most urgent concern of the council. Three pretenders to the chair of St Peter, severally, laid claim to infallibility. The very nature of their struggle was subversive of the authority to which each of them made pretensions; and “of their vain contest there seemed no end.” The princes, statesmen, and rulers of the church, in those times, wanted not discernment to see the danger to which the whole ecclesiastical system was exposed by these contentions; but it seems never to have come into the minds of them, or of any of the members of the council, to examine the foundation on which the popedom itself was erected. *That*, on all sides, was looked on as sacred and inviolable, though allowed to be burdened and incumbered with innumerable abuses.

However, they deposed the three existing popes, and chose a fresh successor of St. Peter, Martin V.; and we are to remark a providential benefit, which arose from the accomplishment of this first object of the council;

* L'Enfant's History of the Council of Constance.—It is foreign to my design to follow this author through the details of his very accurate and circumstantial narration. The affairs, however, of John Huss and of Jerom, deserve a minute attention.

namely, that while *they* had their eye only on the restoration of the unity of the Roman See, they were led to decree the superiority of councils over popes. Thus a deep wound was given to the tyrannical hierarchy, which proved of considerable service to those real reformers, who arose about a hundred years after the council of Constance.

I say real reformers; for, I cannot give this venerable name to the members of that assembly. That there needed a reformation of the church in all its component parts, and that church discipline ought to be re-established, these were ideas, indeed, which lay within their competence; and the members of this council universally confessed, that reformation and discipline ought to be prosecuted with vigour. But they brought not to the council the materials, which only could qualify them for such a work. In general, the best individuals among them were merely moralists; had some “zeal for God, but not according to knowledge;” and knew no higher principles than the voice of natural conscience, the dictates of common sense, and some information concerning the preceptive part of Christianity. Their system of religion was letter, not spirit; law, not gospel. They had some degree of insight into the distemper of human nature, little or none into the remedy. To promote the recovery of depraved mankind, they knew no methods but those of moral suasion, upon principles merely natural. The original depravity of man, salvation through the atonement of a Redeemer, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, were doctrines, the use and efficacy of which they did not understand: yet, these are the only effectual instruments for the reformation either of a corrupted church, or of a corrupted individual, though they

are, by the world, generally suspected to be productive of enthusiasm, and are also too often professed by men of counterfeit religion.

How could it be expected that popes and cardinals, bishops and clergy, would enact, and, what is still more, would execute, laws, which bore hard on their own pride, their sloth, and their love of gain? Or, that the laity, noble or vulgar, would submit to strict rules of church discipline? Nothing but the principle of divine love in the heart could effect these things; and divine love is learnt only in the school of Christ, and under the fostering influence of Scripture doctrine, connected with spiritual discernment.* I need not put the reader in mind, how ignorant in general, in regard to these things, men were in the fifteenth century. And hence we are no more to wonder at the failure of the attempts of the council of Constance, than at the inefficacy of the complaints, made from age to age, of the wickedness of men, both by philosophers of old and by nominal Christians in our own times, while those who complain, and even endeavour to effect reforms, are destitute of real Christian perceptions, and regard no other light than that of mere nature. Thus the institution of mere laws, however good, "can never give life;"† "the motions of sin by the law work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death."‡ If even the best characters, among the prodigious congregation at Constance, thus failed, through ignorance of the true method of relieving human evils, we need not be surprised, that those who were actuated by bad motives, should contribute nothing towards a real reformation. The consequence was, that the prevailing abuses remained in the church in full force. The coun-

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Gal. iii.

‡ Rom. vii

cil managed to restore unity to the popedom, which was indeed a very difficult point; but they found it more easy to procure consent to the deposition of wicked popes, than to compel the clergy to divest themselves of that avarice, ambition, and sensuality, which were the grand sources of the existing ecclesiastical disorders.* However, *that* which men attempted in vain by methods merely human, God himself, about a century afterwards, effected, by the foolishness of preaching,† and by his own spirit of grace.

The knights of the Teutonic order, at this time ranged through all their own neighbourhood with fire and sword, under the pretence of converting infidels, and had been justly complained of by the king of Poland; yet this council supported them in their enormities; nor would they even condemn a libel written by a monk, who had exhorted all Christians to murder that monarch, and to massacre the Poles. John Petit, a friar, had publicly vindicated the assassination, committed by the duke of Burgundy's order on the duke of Orleans, brother to the king of France. It may seem incredible, but it is true, that the king of France, who prosecuted this friar before the council of Constance, could not procure his condemnation. All the dignified orders in Europe, there assembled together, had not sufficient spirit and integrity to punish crimes of the most atrocious nature. Yet they could burn without mercy those whom they deemed heretics, though men of real godliness. This part of the conduct of the assembly, particularly deserves our attention; and still more so, if we keep constantly in mind who the members were that composed it. Italy, France, Germany, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, England, Den-

* L'Enfant.

† 1 Cor. i.

mark, Sweden were represented by deputies: four electors were present, namely, those of Mentz, and Saxony, the elector of Palatine, and the burgrave of Nuremberg, who there received the electoral cap; besides envoys from the other electors: the emperor Sigismund was never absent, unless employed in the express business of the council. Many other German princes were present, besides the clergy, among whom were twenty archbishops, nearly one hundred and fifty bishops, about one hundred and fifty other dignitaries, and more than two hundred doctors.

John Huss had been summoned to the council, to answer for himself, though already excommunicated at Rome. He obtained, however, a safe conduct* from the emperor, who, in conjunction with his brother Wenceslaus, king of Bohemia, had committed him to the care of several Bohemian lords, particularly of John de Chlum. These travelled with him to Constance, where they arrived six days after the pope.

John Huss was born in Bohemia, in 1373. He was of mean parentage, but was raised to eminence by his superior genius and industry. All the authors of that time acknowledged, that he was a man of capacity and eloquence, and highly esteemed for the probity and decency of his manners. This is the testimony of the famous *Æneas Sylvius*, afterwards pope of Rome. But the letters of Huss, written from Constance, which he especially requested might never be published, afford a still more striking attestation to his character. He was appointed rector of the university of Prague, which was

* A safe conduct here means an engagement in writing that he should be allowed to pass and repass without molestation. The very words of it were, “*omni prorsus impedimento remoto; stare, morari & redire, liberè permittatis sibi & suis.*”

then in a very flourishing state. His character was no less eminent in the church than in the academy: He was nominated preacher of Bethlehem in the year 1400; and was in the same year made confessor to Sophia of Bavaria, the wife of Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, a princess who highly esteemed John Huss, and was a personage of great merit: how far she was affected by the doctrine which he preached, it is not easy to ascertain; but there is no doubt that, after his condemnation, she was obliged, by the order of the emperor Sigismund, to retire to Presburg.

In 1405 Huss preached in the chapel of Bethlehem with great celebrity. Some of Wickliff's works had been brought into Bohemia by a Bohemian gentleman named Faulfisch, when he returned from Oxford. Hence, and probably by other modes of conveyance, the evangelical views of the English reformer were introduced into that country. It is not easy to determine the point of time, when John Huss received a favourable impression of the works of Wickliff. At first he is said to have held them in detestation. The effect of prejudice indeed on a serious mind, against a person who has been condemned for heresy, was not easily to be overcome; and it is not impossible, but that Luther's account of his own first reception of the works of Huss might resemble the celebrated Bohemian's reception of the works of Wickliff. "When I studied at Erford," says that truly great man, "I found in the library of the convent, a book entitled, 'The Sermons of John Huss.' I was anxious to know the doctrines of that arch-heretic. My astonishment in the reading of them was incredible. What, thought I, could move the council to burn so great a man, so able and judicious an expositor of Scripture!"

But then the name of Huss was held in abomination: if I mentioned him with honour, I imagined the sky would fall, and the sun be darkened; I therefore shut the book with indignation. But I comforted myself with the thought, that perhaps he had written this before he fell into heresy!" Such were the juvenile reflections of that renowned reformer.

But it is not in the power of prejudice to prevent the progress of the Divine counsels, and the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Notwithstanding the opposition of prejudice, habit, and natural corruptions, Huss was gradually convinced of the power and excellency of evangelical doctrine. It was not necessary that he should see all things in the same light as other reformers; but there are certain truths, in which all, who are taught of God, in every age, do and must agree; and certain points of experience also in religion, in which it is even impossible for them to differ. The doctrinal knowledge of the Bohemian reformer was indeed always very limited and defective; but the little fundamental light which, through grace, he attained, was directed to the best practical purposes. He preached loudly against the abuses of the Romish church, and particularly against the impostures of false miracles, which then abounded. And about the same year, 1405, he also preached in a synod at Prague, in the archbishop's presence, with amazing freedom against the vices of the clergy.

It was impossible, that a man who rendered himself so obnoxious to the hierarchy, should escape the aspersions of calumny: accordingly we find, that in the latter part of the year 1408, and the beginning of 1409, a clamour was raised against him on the following occasion.* Gre-

* Page 29, L'Enfant.

gory XII. one of the three popes, whose schism gave rise to the council of Constance, was received by Bohemia. But when measures were proposed for calling a general council to compose the schism, Huss engaged the university to support those measures, and exhorted all Bohemia to the same purpose. The archbishop of Prague, who was attached to Gregory, opposed Huss, called him a schismatic, and forbade him to exercise the pastoral functions in his diocese. About the same time, on occasion of a dispute between the natives and the foreigners who belonged to the university, Huss having supported the former, and gained his point, the Germans in disgust retired from Prague. This circumstance enabled the Bohemian teacher to speak more publicly according to the views of Wickliff. The archbishop of Prague committed the books of the latter to the flames in 1410. But the progress of his opinions was rather accelerated than retarded by this step.

The troubles of John Huss were now multiplied. He was excommunicated at Rome. He had sent his proctors thither, to answer for him; but they were committed to prison,* after having remained there to no purpose a year and a half. Huss, after his excommunication, had no other remedy, but to appeal to Almighty God in very solemn terms. In his appeal, which was charged on him as a crime, among many other things, he says, " Almighty God, the one only essence in three persons, is the first and last refuge of those who are oppressed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very Man, being desirous to redeem, from eternal damnation, his children, elected before the foundation of the world, has given, by suffering a bloody and ignominious death, this excellent ex-

* L'Enfant, page 33.

ample to his disciples, to commit their cause to the judgment of God." He continued still to preach on subjects, which he deemed seasonable and useful. In one sermon he treated of the uses of the commemoration of the saints, among which, he reckons meditation on the misery of man, subject to death for sin; and on the death which Jesus Christ suffered for our sin. In this same sermon, while he zealously opposes the abuses of the times, he discovers that he himself was not yet entirely clear of the popish notion of purgatory. "In praying devoutly for the dead," says he, "we procure relief to the saints in purgatory." It is sufficiently plain, however, that he could not lay much stress on the prayers of the living for the dead; for he also says expressly, "that there is no mention of such a practice in the Holy Scriptures; and, that neither the prophets nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, nor the saints that followed close after, taught prayer for the dead." "I verily believe," continues Huss, "this custom was introduced by the avarice of priests, who don't trouble themselves to exhort the people to live well, as did the prophets, Jesus Christ, and the apostles; but take great care to exhort them to make rich offerings, in hopes of happiness and a speedy delivery from purgatory."

At length John Huss was forbidden to preach at Prague any more. All that he could then do was to instruct his countrymen by writings. Being summoned, as we have seen, to Constance, he obeyed; and before his departure, offered to give an account of his faith in the presence of a provincial synod at Prague, but was not able to obtain an audience. In this and some other particulars, he appears to have acted with great frankness and sincerity; and, though his mind strongly for-

boded that which happened in the issue, his resolution to appear at the general council was constant and unmoved. By a letter,* which he wrote to a friend, immediately before he left Prague, he intreats him, on the outside of it, not to open the letter, till he should have had certain news of his death. And among other things, he says, " You know, wo is me!—before my priesthood I freely and frequently played at chess, neglected my time, and often unhappily provoked others and myself into blameable heat of temper by that game." About the same time he wrote a letter to his flock, in terms which showed how much their spiritual advantage lay at his heart. He exhorted them to steadfastness in the doctrine which he had taught them; prayed for grace that he himself might persevere, and not betray the gospel by cowardice; and he begged them also to pray, that he might either glorify God by martyrdom, or return to Prague with an unblemished conscience, and with more vigour than ever to extirpate the doctrine of antichrist. He expressed himself to be very uncertain of the event; but spake like one resigned to the Divine will, and joyful to die for the cause of Christ. In the course of his journey to Constance, he acted the same open part, and every where declared his readiness to be heard by all mankind. Such was the character and conduct of Huss, who arrived at Constance six days after the pontiff John XXIII.

On the succeeding day, he gave notice of his arrival to the pope, through his friend John de Chlum, who at the same time implored for him the protection of his holiness. This pope himself was then in much fear on his own account, and it behoved him not, in his present circumstances, to exercise the fulness of papal domination.

* L'Enfant, p. 40.

He therefore answered courteously; declared that he would use all his power to prevent any injustice being* done to him while at Constance; and he took off his excommunication.

John Huss appears to have expected that he should have been allowed to preach before the council; for he had prepared for that purpose, sermons, which are inserted among his works.

Those who look only at the surface of religion, might be tempted to think, that the council in general was influenced by the Spirit of God. In all their public sessions they sang an anthem, and then they prayed kneeling.† After having remained some time in this posture, a deacon called out to them to rise; and the president, with a loud voice, addressed himself to the Holy Ghost in a collect, which, in very solemn and explicit terms, supplicated his effectual influence, that, notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, which filled them with dread, he would deign to descend into their hearts, to direct them, to dictate their decrees, and to execute them himself, and also to preserve their minds from corrupt passions, and not suffer them, through ignorance or selfishness, to swerve from justice and truth. The ideas, and perhaps the very words, of the prayer, were taken from better times, when the operations of the Holy Ghost were not only professed, but *felt*, in Christian assemblies. The formalities of true religion often remain a long time, after the spirit of it has been almost extinguished. It is not easy to say how much wickedness may be united with religious formalities. The rulers and great men of the Jewish nation, in the time of Christ, were remarkable examples of the hypocrisy here alluded to; and those,

* L'Enfant, p. 43.

† L'Enfant, p. 50..

who are acquainted with the history of their flagitious conduct, will not be surprised to hear of similar instances. Both the emperor Sigismund and his consort Barba attended the religious ceremonies of this council, and both were infamous for lewdness.*

Sigismund in a deacon's habit read the gospel, while the pope celebrated mass!

Huss was soon deprived of his liberty, in the following manner. He was accused by Paletz, professor of divinity at Prague, and by Causis, a pastor of one of the parishes of the same city. These men caused bills to be posted up against him in Constance, as an excommunicated heretic. When Huss complained, the pope replied, "What can I do in the case? your own countrymen† have done it." The bishops of Augsburg and of Trent were directed to summon him to appear before John XXIII. "I had expected," said Huss, "to give an account of myself before the general council, and not before the pope and his cardinals; however, I am willing to lay down my life, rather than to betray the truth." He set out therefore without delay, accompanied by his generous friend John de Chlum. On his arrival at the pope's palace, he was committed to prison. Chlum made loud complaints to the pope, but in vain. Eight articles were exhibited against Huss by Causis; and the pope appointed commissioners to try him. The vexations and insults, to which he was exposed, were endless: and there was this peculiar injustice practised against him, that he was accused of being more inimical to the doctrines of the church of Rome, than he really was. Whatever

* *Æneas Sylvius, Hist.*

† Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. John xviii. 35.

Wickliff maintained, Huss was accused of maintaining: nor were his own express declarations respected, particularly in regard to transubstantiation, a doctrine, which he certainly believed, and on which he wrote his thoughts while under confinement at Constance. Such, however, was the strength of mind with which he was endowed, that during the same period, he wrote also several tracts on subjects of practical godliness, which were sent to Prague by friends whom he had at Constance. With great clearness he vindicated himself against the charge of heresy; but, his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies: moreover, all those, whom the faithfulness of his pastoral services in Bohemia had provoked, now found an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him.

The generous count de Chlum, grieved and incensed at the imprisonment of Huss, wrote to Sigismund on this subject. That prince immediately sent express orders to his ambassadors, to cause him to be set at liberty, and even to break the gates of the prison in case of resistance. We naturally expect to hear, in the next place, of the prisoner's enlargement; for, independently of this application of count de Chlum, the honour of Sigismund himself, who had positively promised a safe conduct to Huss, seemed to require it. But notwithstanding all this, the unfortunate Bohemian teacher was not released! The crooked arts and intrigues both of the pope and of the emperor, were too powerful for the sincerity and open dealings of Huss: and, he soon found, that to commit himself to Him, that judgeth righteously, was his only expedient. In the mean time, the doctors, in their preachings, exclaimed most pathetically against the prevailing evils and abuses, and exhorted the council to re-

form the church with vigour. Its growing corruptions and enormities were by them exposed in the strongest colours. Wickliff himself, or Huss, could scarcely have spoken in a more pointed or in a severer manner. But these *innovators*, we find, were not permitted to censure, with impunity, even the most shameful practices. The explanation is, *their* attachment to the See of Rome itself was doubted; whereas the divines just mentioned, preached by order of their superiors, and constantly took particular care, in the midst of their keenest animadversions, to express an unequivocal respect to the popedom in general.

In the beginning of the year 1415, the commissioners for examining Huss, found themselves impeded by the emperor's grant of a safe conduct; and they scrupled not, at once to intreat that prince to violate his most solemn engagement. To be brief; Sigismund was at length persuaded, that his conscience ought not to be burdened in this matter; but that he was excused from keeping faith with a man accused of heresy; and that to acquiesce in the desires of the venerable council, was the proper line of conduct for an obedient and "good son of the church."* Such was the language of the Romanists. A direct breach of faith is, however, so strong a violation of the law *written in the heart* of man, that it was not easy even for the most able defender of a bad cause, to vindicate actions of this kind. Laboured apologies have been published, to soften the transactions before us.† But to what purpose is it to multiply words, in order to misrepresent a plain fact, which may be told

* Nauclerus.

† Maimburg's Hist. of the Western Schism, Part II.—Varilla's Hist. of Wickliff, Part I.

in very few lines? The authority of Sigismund extended over the empire; *he*, by virtue of that authority, required all his subjects, to suffer Huss to pass and repass secure; and, for the honour of his Imperial Majesty, if need be, to provide him with good passports.* Constance was an imperial city: from this city he was not allowed to repass, but was detained in prison, till he was unjustly burnt by the order of the council. Was this for the honour of his imperial majesty?

The perfidious character of Sigismund indeed was well known. It appears from one of the letters of John Huss, that, before his departure, he had been told by some persons, that the emperor would betray him. But, this servant of God, in honour of his master, ventured every thing for the cause of divine truth.

Before the death of their countryman, the Bohemian nobility, enraged at the perfidy of Sigismund, repeatedly remonstrated, by letters, against his proceedings: but all to no purpose. At the solicitation of Paletz, Huss was confined in the Dominican convent, where he became dangerously sick, through the bad air and other inconveniences of a noisome dungeon.

But suffering is not the peculiar lot of godly men: wickedness has, also, its hardships and its inconveniences. That same John XXIII. who had most unrighteously persecuted Huss, gradually found himself in so disagreeable a situation at Constance, partly from the accusations of his enemies, to the justice of which his own conscience could not but assent, and partly from the intrigues and manœuvres of Sigismund and the majority of the council, that he determined to depart, in secret, from the assembly. Four nations were represented at Constance, name-

* L'Enfant, p. 61. See the words in Latin, p. 149, the note.

ly, the Italians, the Germans, the French, and the English. The last of these had proposed even to arrest the pope; and, though this proposal did not take effect, there seemed a general agreement in the four nations to oblige him to resign his authority. The other two anti-popes, Benedict XIII. who was chiefly owned in Spain, and Gregory XII. who had some partizans in Italy, were also pressed to resign; but, like John XXIII. they were determined to preserve the shadow of power as long as possible. The three popes seemed to vie with one another in equivocation, artifice and disingenuity. However, Benedict and Gregory were not present at Constance, but sent thither their respective legates, during the sessions. At this moment, when the council seemed not a little embarrassed what course they should take, William Fillastre, a cardinal and a French divine, composed a memorial, which was highly acceptable both to the emperor and to the nations. He even advanced a sentiment, which, at last, very much prevailed in the assembly, and was actually reduced to practice; namely, that a "general council was authorized to depose even a lawful pope." This, as we have already observed, was the most beneficial effect of the council of Constance. The wisdom of Divine Providence weakened the strength of antichrist by the measures of a council, which, in the main, was destitute both of piety and probity.

It is a remarkable instance of the love of power, in men who have been habituated to it, that John XXIII. even in the decline of his authority, was glad to signalize the relics of his pontificate by the canonization of Bridget, a Swedish woman, which took place in this same year, 1415.

After numberless intrigues, in which the pope and the

emperor seemed to strive which should exceed the other in dissimulation, the former fled from the council to Schaffhausen; whence he wrote to the emperor, a letter couched in the most respectful terms. Schaffhausen, it should be observed, was a city belonging to Frederick, duke of Austria, who had promised to defend pope John.

By this step, the designs of those, who really intended to put an end to the schism, seemed to be quashed entirely. Among these was the emperor himself, in whose conduct, scandalous and hypocritical as it was in the extreme, one object is yet plainly discernible, a sincere desire of restoring the unity of the hierarchy. He assured the council, on the day after the departure of pope John, that he would defend their authority to the last drop of his blood. He observed, that there were many antichrists in the world, who sought their own interest, not that of Jesus Christ: he inveighed against the conduct of John; he exposed his tyranny, simony, chicanery, and insincerity, and exhorted them to judge him according to his deserts. Thus, while the members of this assembly agreed in persecuting the church of God, and still detained in prison the excellent John Huss, they were involved in extreme difficulties, and scarcely knew how to support the system of idolatry, and secular formality of religion, to which they were in general attached. The doctrine of the superiority of a council, started by Fillastre, was, however, maintained and pressed at this time in an elaborate discourse of John Gerson, chancellor of the university of Paris, who was looked upon as the soul of the assembly, and who, in fact, was one of the greatest men in that age, in erudition and knowledge. He admits the pope to be Christ's vicar on earth; but asserts that his power is limited, and ought to be restrained by cer-

tain rules and laws for the edification of the church, to which the authority of the pope, and all other persons ought to be devoted. Gerson seems to have disregarded the authority of Scripture, which knows nothing of such a vicar of Christ: common sense, however, and the experience of the necessity of some restrictions of the papal power, appear to have suggested to this great man several salutary arguments and propositions. Nor is this the only instance in which we may see, that even mere natural principles, without the aid of revelation, can proceed to a *certain length* in correcting the enormous abuses of a corrupt church.

While the imperial and papal parties were thus contending, the commissioners endeavoured to oblige John Huss to retract, but in vain. Though infirm, and harassed, during his confinement in prison, with a variety of vexations, he answered to every particular inquiry and objection; at the same time, always desiring to be heard by the council itself. The pope's officers hitherto guarded him; but these being gone to their master, he was delivered to the bishop of Constance, and was afterwards carried to the fortress of Gottleben. In his letters to his friends, he commends the pope's officers, for their gentle treatment, and expresses his fears of worse usage in his new circumstances.

It was one of those remarkable instances of the conduct of Divine Providence, with which the history of the council of Constance abounds, that John XXIII. himself, the unrighteous persecutor of Huss, was soon after brought as a prisoner to the same castle of Gottleben, and lodged in the same place with the victim of his cruelty. For Sigismund, determined to support the authority of the council, took such measures as effectually

quashed the power of Frederick, duke of Austria, reduced him to surrender at discretion, and obliged him to abandon the cause of the pope. Whence this pontiff, who at first had presided at the council, after having been driven to the necessity of fleeing from place to place, was at length confined at Gottleben, which was within half a league of Constance. Seldom has there been a case, which more remarkably showed, that, in external things, the same events often attend the righteous and the wicked. The real difference of condition between the pope and the martyr was *internal*, and ought to be measured by the different frame of their *minds*. The one was harassed with all the pangs of disappointed ambition, and had neither the knowledge nor the disposition to console himself with the *divine promises*; the latter “in patience possessed his spirit, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.”

John XXIII. was, at length, solemnly deposed, and was also rendered incapable of being re-elected. The same sentence was issued against Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII. The conduct of these three men, particularly of the first, had been so infamous, that all the world applauded these determinations of the council. In general, the members of this assembly were influenced by superstitious, selfish, worldly motives; but this decision is among the very few important instances in which they merit commendation.

While, contrary to every principle of justice, honour, and humanity, the Bohemian reformer was still detained in confinement, and still in vain solicited a fair hearing of his cause, there was exhibited at this council another striking example of the same spirit of persecution.

Jerom of Prague arrived at Constance. He was a

master of arts, but had neither the clerical nor the monastic character. He is universally allowed to have been a man of very superior talents. He had adhered to John Huss, and very vigorously seconded all his endeavours to promote a reformation in Bohemia. He had travelled into England for the sake of his studies, and had thence brought the books of Wickliff into his own country.* When Huss was setting out from Prague, Jerom had exhorted him to maintain with steadfastness the doctrines which he had preached; and had promised that he would himself go to Constance to support him, if he should hear that he was oppressed. Huss, in one of his letters, expressly desired a friend to prevent Jerom's performance of this promise, lest he should meet with the same treatment as he himself had experienced. But Jerom had the generosity to disregard the intreaties of Huss, and came directly to Constance. Hearing, however, that Huss was not allowed a fair examination, and that some secret machination was carrying on against himself, he retired to Uberlingen, whence he wrote to the emperor, to request a safe conduct. Sigismund refused to grant his petition. Upon which Jerom published a paper, declaring it to be his desire to answer any charges of heresy that could possibly be brought against him. And for the purpose of executing so laudable an intention, he begged, in the name of God, to have a safe conduct granted to him. "If," says he, "I am put in prison, and violence is used against me before I am convicted, the council will manifest to the whole world their injustice by such a proceeding." The publication of this writing produced no satisfactory answer; and Jerom finding it impossible to be of any service to his friend Huss, resolved to re-

* Camerar. Histor. Narr.

turn to his own country. After his departure from Constance, he was summoned to appear before the council; and a *safe conduct or passport* was despatched to him, which promised him, indeed, all manner of security, but it contained such a *salvo to justice* and the *interests of the faith*, as rendered it, in effect, a mere nullity: and as to the citation for his appearance, Jerom protested, on his first examination, that it had never reached his hands.

To omit a long detail of uninteresting particulars, this persecuted reformer was arrested at Hirsaw on his return to Bohemia, and led in chains to Constance.

He was immediately brought before a general congregation, which seems, on this occasion, to have assembled for the express purpose of insulting, ensnaring, and brow-beating their virtuous prisoner. A bishop questioned him concerning his precipitate flight from Überlingen, and his non-obedience to the citation. "Because," answered Jerom, "I was not allowed a safe conduct; notwithstanding, however, if I had known of the citation, I would have returned instantly, though I had been actually on the confines of Bohemia." Upon this answer, there arose such a clamour in the assembly, that no one could be heard distinctly: every mouth opened at once, against Jerom; and the impartial spectator saw rather the representation of the baiting of a wild beast, than of a wise assembly investigating truth, and dispensing justice. When order was restored, Gerson, who had formerly known Jerom in France, and who discovered much acrimony towards *both* the Bohemian reformers, reproached him for having formerly given much offence to the university of Paris, by introducing several erroneous propositions. With great spirit Jerom answered, that it was hard to have opinions objected to him, of so

long a date; and that, moreover, the disputationes of young students were never to be considered as strict disquisitions of truth. "As I was admitted master of arts," said he, "I used the liberty of discussion, allowed to philosophers; nor was I then charged with any error: I am still ready to maintain what I advanced at that time, if I am allowed; and also to retract, if I be convicted of mistake."

This was not the only instance in which Jerom had occasion to show his promptitude in answering calumnies. He was repeatedly attacked in a similar style; for a persecuted follower of Christ is looked on, by the world, as lawful game. The governors of the universities of Cologne and of Heidelberg made heavy complaints of the heresies which the prisoner had maintained in those places respectively. "You vented several errors in our university," said a doctor from Cologne. "Be pleased to name one," answered Jerom. The accuser was instantly stopped in his career, and pleaded that his memory failed him. "You advanced most impious heresies among us," said a divine from Heidelberg; "I remember one particularly, concerning the Trinity. You declared that it resembled water, snow, and ice." Jerom avowed, that he still persisted in his opinions, but was ready to retract with humility and with pleasure, when he should be convinced of an error. However, no opportunity was allowed either for explanation or defence: all was confusion and uproar: voices burst out from every quarter, "away with him, away with him; to the fire, to the fire."

Jerom stood astonished at the gross indecency of this scene; and as soon as he could, in any degree, be heard, he looked round the assembly with a steady and most

significant countenance, and cried aloud, “since nothing but my blood will satisfy you, I am resigned to the will of God.” With sufficient adroitness, if the passage had but been quoted in support of a better cause, the archbishop of Saltzburg replied, “No, Jerom, God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live.”

After this tumultuous examination, Jerom was delivered to the officers of the city, and immediately carried to a dungeon. Some hours afterward, Wallenrod, archbishop of Riga, caused him to be conveyed privately to St. Paul’s church, where he was bound to a post, and his hands were chained to his neck. In this posture he remained ten days, and was fed with bread and water only. His friends, all this time, knew not what was become of him; till at length one of them received notice of his pitiable situation from the keeper of the prison, and procured him better nourishment. But notwithstanding this, the various hardships he had undergone, brought upon him a dangerous illness, in the course of which Jerom pressed the council to allow him a confessor. With difficulty he at length obtained his request: and, through the means of his confessor, the poor heretic procured some small mitigation of his sufferings from bonds and other cruel treatment. But he remained in prison till his execution.

CHAPTER III.

John Huss, and Jerom of Prague, continued.

THE enemies of Huss laboured night and day for his destruction. His health and strength were decayed by

the rigour of confinement. The great men of Bohemia, repeatedly insisted on justice being done to their countrymen. But justice was a stranger at Constance: the emperor himself had perfidiously given up this faithful servant of God to the malice of his enemies; and the council, as if conscious of the difficulty of condemning him openly, had recourse to the despicable means of attempting, by repeated insults and vexations, to shake his constancy, and render a public trial unnecessary. He was frequently examined in private. An air of violence and of menace was employed on those occasions, of which we may form some idea from one of the letters of Huss. "Causis," says he, "was there, holding a paper in his hand, and stirring up the bishop of Constantinople to oblige me to answer distinctly to each article it contained. Every day he is brewing some mischief or other. God, for my sins, has permitted *him and Paletz* to rise up against me. Causis examines all my letters and words with the air of an inquisitor, and Paletz has written down all the conversation which we have had together for many years. I have this day suffered great vexation."

The approbation of a good conscience, and the comforting presence of the Spirit of God, appear to have supported this holy man in all his sufferings. He gave his adversaries no advantage over him either through warmth or timidity; he refused to give answers in private; he reserved himself to the public trial which he had always solicited; he retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and he possessed his soul in patience and resignation.

The unrighteous views of the council being thus far baffled, he was conducted to Constance, lodged in the

Franciscan monastery, and loaded with chains; in which condition he remained till the day of his condemnation.

His first hearing before the council was attended with so much confusion through the intemperate rage of his enemies, that nothing could be concluded. In the second, in which the emperor was present, for the purpose of preserving order, Huss was accused of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation. Some Englishmen, who knew what Wickliff held on that point, and who were ready to take for granted, that Huss dissented in no article from their countryman, pressed him vehemently on the subject. It appeared, however, that the Bohemian teacher followed the church of Rome on this important doctrine; and the sincerity of his creed, though a mistaken one, appears from his treatise on the body of Christ.

John de Chlum, however, was not to be dismayed by the power and multitude of the adversaries of Huss: he supported the insulted victim of their fury with courage and constancy. In his third hearing, John Huss answered the inquiries made to him concerning articles of supposed heresy, which were extracted from his own works. He answered severally to the questions with much clearness and candour, owning, denying, or explaining, as occasions required. He was vehemently pressed to retract his errors, to own the justice of the accusations, and to submit to the decrees of the council. But neither promises nor menaces moved him. “To abjure,” said he, “is to renounce an error that hath been held. But, as in many of those articles, errors are laid to my charge which I never thought of, how can I renounce them by oath? As to those articles, which I own to be mine, I will renounce them with all my heart, if any man will

teach me sounder doctrines than what I have advanced." His conscientious integrity, however, availed him not. The court demanded a universal retraction; and nothing short of that could procure him their favour. The tedious malignity of the third day's examination oppressed at length both the mind and body of Huss; and the more so, because he had passed the preceding night sleepless, through pain of the toothach. For some days before, he had also been afflicted with the gravel, and was, in other respects, in a weak state of health. At the close of the examination he was carried back to prison, whither John de Chlum followed him. "Oh, what a comfort," said he, "was it to me, to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were, had forsaken!" In the same letter, in which he mentions this, he begs the prayers of his friend, because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Such is the treatment, which the dearest and most faithful servants of God are frequently called upon to endure from an evil world. After the departure of Huss, Sigismund, with the most unrelenting barbarity, expressed himself against him, as a heretic worthy of the flames. On the next day a form of retraction was sent to this persecuted prisoner, which, though it was penned in equivocal and ambiguous terms, plainly appeared, on the whole, to imply a confession of guilt. Huss therefore refused to sign it; and added, that he would rather be cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, than give offence to his pious neighbours by acknowledging that to be true, which they knew to be false; that he had preached patience and constancy to others, and that

he was willing to show an example of these graces, and hoped by divine assistance to be enabled to do so.

The integrity of the Bohemian martyr was severely tried by the solicitations of several persons. But divine grace had given him the virtue of sincerity to a very eminent degree, so that the very least equivocation was abominable in his eyes. Even his enemy Paletz, inwardly reverencing his virtue, took pains to induce him to retract. “Put yourselves in my place,” said Huss; “what would you do, if you were required to retract certain errors, which you were sure you never held.” “I own, it is a hard case,” answered Paletz, with tears in his eyes. It is not improbable, that this man had never meant actually to expose his countryman to the flames: and it is extremely probable that he had never before considered the dilemma to which the spirit of persecution must reduce a person of real integrity, namely, either to perjure himself, or to be consumed in the flames. One of the doctors, who visited Huss, said to him, “If the council should tell you, that you have but one eye, though you have really two, you would be obliged to agree with the council.” “While God keeps me in my senses,” replied Huss, “I would not say such a thing against my conscience, on the intreaty or command of the whole world.”

This holy personage foreseeing his end to be near, redeemed* the little time which was left to him, by writing letters, which were publicly read at Prague, in his chapel at Bethlehem, the once delightful scene of his ministry. One of these letters may be considered as a farewell sermon addressed to his flock. He intreats them to adhere solely to the word of God, and not to fol-

* Ephes. v. 16.

low himself, if they have observed any thing in him not agreeable to it; and he particularly begs them to pardon him, where he had been guilty of any levity in discourse or behaviour. He begs them to be grateful to John de Chlum, and another nobleman, who had been faithful to him in his sufferings. He adds, that he hears no news of Jerom, except that he was a prisoner like himself, waiting for the sentence of death; and he concludes with an earnest prayer, that the gospel of Christ may be always preached to them in his dear chapel of Bethlehem. His firmness was that of a Christian, not of a stoic; founded in humility, not in pride. He experienced some attacks of the fears of death, but soon recovered his courage. "I am far," said he, "from the strength and zeal of the Apostle Peter. Jesus Christ has not given me his talents: besides I have more violent conflicts, and a greater number of shocks to sustain. I say, therefore, that, placing all my confidence in Jesus Christ, I am determined, when I hear my sentence, to continue steadfast in the truth, even to the death, as the saints and you shall help me." Thus modestly does he write to a friend; and it is from his private epistolary correspondence, that the most genuine features of his character may be drawn. John Huss appears indeed to have been one of those of whom "the world was not worthy;"* and of no mere man could it ever be said with more propriety, that the world hated him, because he testified of it, that its works were evil. Undoubtedly, his open rebukes of sin, both by his public preaching and writings, and by the uniform purity and innocence of his manners, had inflamed the tempers of the great men of the age, both in church and state; yet, it was

* Heb. xi. 38.

scarcely to be expected, that the council of Constance should, even upon their own principles, proceed, without the least proof of heresy, to condemn to the flames, the most upright of men, because he refused to acknowledge that to be true which he believed to be false; or that this same council should justify the deceit and perfidy of their imperial president. Their conduct, therefore, is to be considered as a striking proof, not only of the general depravity of human nature, but also of the general wickedness and hypocrisy of the Roman church at that time.

The council settled beforehand after what manner he was to be treated, in case he should retract.* He was to have been degraded from the priesthood, and to be for ever shut up between four walls. This was the only reward which the unfeeling tyrants had intended to bestow on him, in the event of his wounding his conscience to gratify them. To lay the whole weight of blame on the popes, on account of the enormities of the Roman church, is to view that church superficially. It was generally and systematically corrupt: it had recently deposed three popes: it was, at present, without a pope; and yet could be guilty of crimes, not less heinous than some of the worst which the popes ever committed.

The council, so Huss wrote the night before his death, exhorted him to renounce every one of the articles, which had been extracted from his books; but he absolutely refused to accede to so unreasonable a requisition, except they could, from the Scriptures, *prove* his doctrines to be erroneous, as they asserted them to be. It may be proper to have mentioned this circumstance here by way of anticipation, to obviate a misrepresentation

* L'Enfant, p. 363, vol. i.

which was studiously made concerning John Huss, as if he had *promised* to retract. On the contrary, it appears that he persisted to the last in the defence of his innocence with *unshaken integrity*.

While the council was preparing the formalities of his condemnation, they enacted a decree to forbid the reception of the communion in both kinds; and assigned no other reason for it, except their regard to the doctrine of transubstantiation; at the same time they owned, that *in the primitive church, this sacrament in both kinds was received by the believers.** Thus the triumph of the Roman church seemed to be complete. She dared to own, that she contradicted primitive Christianity, and she dared to enact, that those, who refused to obey *her* institutions, though confessedly contrary to those of the primitive church, ought to be treated as heretics! What is this but open, undisguised opposition to the commands of Jesus Christ? And what other name but that of anti-christ, can so well express the corrupt and presumptuous domination of the Romish hierarchy?

But there is a voice in natural conscience, which it is not in the power of Satan easily to silence. Sigismund, inwardly ashamed of his baseness and perfidy towards Huss, wished to save the life of that good man, though he saw that, according to the wicked policy of the council, this was not to be done, except the prisoner could be induced to forswear himself. Many persons, to second the views of the emperor, endeavoured to overcome the constancy of Huss: even the council sent several deputations to him for that purpose. One of this martyr's letters throws some light on these transactions.† “Palletz,” says he, “attempts to persuade me, that I ought

* L'Enfant, p. 386, vol. i.

† Ibid. p. 397.

to abjure, because of the great advantage which will accrue to me from it. I told him, that to be condemned and burned was not so scandalous, as to be guilty of falsehood." He speaks thus of his other accuser, Causis: "That poor man has been often with the deputies before the prison. I heard him say to the guards, If it please God, we shall shortly burn this heretic, who has cost me so many florins in persecuting him."

He wrote about the same time to a preacher of his acquaintance, concerning the decree of the council lately mentioned: They have condemned the communion of the cup with regard to the laity, as an error, and have condemned of heresy every one who violates their decree, though they have nothing but custom to oppose to an institution of Jesus Christ."

The council now ordered the works of Huss to be burnt; on occasion of which circumstance, he writes to his friends, "That he was not discouraged on this account; that Jeremiah's books met with the same treatment;* nevertheless the Jews suffered the calamities, which that faithful prophet had foretold. Consider, that they have condemned the pope, their god upon earth, for his crimes, particularly for selling indulgences, bishoprics, and the like. But in this they are his accomplices. The bishop of Litomissel, who is at the council, went twice to buy the archbishopric of Prague, but others outbad him. They follow this traffic even at Constance, where one sells and another buys a benefice."

At length he received another solemn deputation, in which were two cardinals and some prelates, who tried their utmost to induce him to recant. Huss, however,

* Jerem. xxxvi.

persisted in his integrity, and announced his resolution in terms of great vehemence and solemnity. Having withstood one more attempt of the emperor to shake his resolution, he was thus accosted by his friend John de Chlum. "I am a person of no learning, my dear Huss, and unfit to advise so learned a person as you. If you are convinced of any error, I venture, however, to advise you to retract it; if not, to endure whatever punishments shall be inflicted on you, rather than to do violence to your conscience!" An instance this of common sense and artless honesty, which deserves to be contrasted with the subtlety and intriguing spirit of the council. Huss answered with tears, that he called God to witness, how ready he was to retract sincerely and upon oath, the moment he was convinced of an error by the testimony of Holy Scripture. One of the prelates observed, "For my part, I am not so presumptuous as to prefer my private opinion to that of the whole council." "Let the meanest member of that council," replied Huss, "convince me of a mistake, and I am perfectly disposed to obey their injunctions." Some of the bishops observed, "See, how obstinate he is in his errors."

He was now presented before the council in the presence of the emperor, the princes of the empire, and of an incredible concourse of people. The bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from those words of St. Paul, "That the body of sin might be destroyed."^{*} With the grossest ignorance or the most virulent and indecent malice he perverted the words to the purpose of the council: "Destroy heresies and errors," said he, "but chiefly that obstinate heretic," pointing to the prisoner. While they were reading the articles extracted or pretended to be

* Rom. vi.

extracted from his works, Huss was beginning to answer to each distinctly, but was told that he might answer to them all at the same time, and was ordered at present to be silent. He expostulated against the unreasonableness of this injunction in vain. Lifting up his hands to heaven, he begged the prelates in God's name to indulge him with the freedom of speech, that he might justify himself before the people; "after which," said he, "you may dispose of me, as you shall think fit." But the prelates persisting in their refusal,* he kneeled down, and with uplifted eyes and hands, and with a loud voice, he recommended his cause to the Judge of all the earth. Being accused in the article of the sacrament, of having maintained that the material bread remains after consecration, he loudly declared, that he had never believed or taught so. Nothing could be more iniquitous than this charge, which he had fully refuted on his former examination. But the council was determined to burn him as a heretic, and it behoved them to exhibit, at any rate, some show of proving his heretical opinions. A still more shameless accusation was introduced: it was said, "A certain doctor bears witness, that Huss gave out, that he should become the fourth person in the Trinity." "What is the name of that doctor?" replied the prisoner, protesting against the charge as a flagrant calumny, and making an orthodox confession of his faith on the subject of the Trinity. Nevertheless, the bishop, who had read the accusation, refused to mention the doctor's name. Being again upbraided with his appeal to Jesus Christ, "Behold," said he, with his hands lifted up toward heaven, "most gracious Saviour, how the council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed

* Page 421, L'Enfant.

and practised, when, overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed, we may have recourse to the judgment of God. Yes, continued he, turning toward the assembly, I have maintained and do still maintain, that an appeal made to Jesus Christ is most just and right, because He can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be overreached by any artifice.—I came voluntarily to this council, under the public faith of the emperor here present.” In pronouncing these last words, he looked earnestly at Sigismund, who blushed at the sudden and unexpected rebuke.*

Sentence was now pronounced against both John Huss and his books; and he was ordered to be degraded. The bishops clothed him with the priest’s garments, and put a chalice into his hands. While they were thus employed, he said, that “the Jews put a white garment on our Lord Jesus Christ, to mock him, when Herod delivered him to Pilate;” and he made reflections of the same kind on each of the sacerdotal ornaments. When he was fully appareled, the prelates once more exhorted him to retract; and to this exhortation he replied with his usual firmness. They then caused him to come down from the stool, on which he stood, and pronounced these words, “O cursed Judas, who having forsaken the council of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ.” But God was with the martyr, who cried aloud, “I trust, in the mercy of God, I shall drink of it

* We are told, that when Charles V. was solicited at the diet of Worms to arrest Luther, notwithstanding the safe conduct which he had granted him, he replied, “I should not choose to blush with my predecessor Sigismund.”—Op. Hus. tom. ii.

this very day in his kingdom." Then they stripped him of all his vestments, one after another, uttering a curse on stripping him of each. Having completed his degradation by the addition of some other ridiculous insults not worthy of a distinct relation, they put a paper coronet on his head, on which they had painted three devils, with this inscription, *arch-heretic*, and said, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "I am glad," said the martyr, "to wear this crown of ignominy for the love of Him, who wore a crown of thorns."

When the painted paper was placed upon his head, one of the bishops said, "Now we commit thy soul to the devil." "But I," said Huss, "commit my spirit into thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ; unto thee I commend my spirit which thou hast redeemed."* The council now ordered this sentence to be pronounced, namely, "The holy synod of Constance declares, that John Huss ought to be given up to the secular power, and does accordingly so give him up, considering that the church of God has no more to do with him."

Sigismund committed the execution of Huss to the elector Palatine. The martyr, walking amidst his guards, declared his innocence to the people. When he came near the place of execution, he kneeled and prayed with such fervour, that some of the people said aloud, "What this man has done before, we know not; but now we hear him offer up most excellent prayers to God." The elector Palatine prevented him from speaking to the people, and ordered him to be burned. "Lord Jesus," said Huss aloud, "I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake, and I pray thee to forgive all my enemies." His paper crown falling from off his head, the soldiers

* Fox, *Acts, &c.* vol. i. p. 709.

put it* on again, saying, that it must be burnt with the devils, whom he had served. His neck was fastened to the stake, and the wood was piled about him. The elector advanced, to exhort him once more on the often repeated subject of retraction. “What I have written and taught,”—these were the words of Huss,—“was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin; and I do gladly seal, what I have written and taught, with my blood.” The elector withdrawing, the fire was kindled, and Huss was soon suffocated, having called on God as long as he could speak.

Many other circumstances of the cruel indignity with which he was treated, it is not necessary to relate. It is more to our purpose to observe what *Æneas Sylvius*, a Roman Catholic historian, records of John Huss and of Jerom of Prague. “They went,” says he, “to the stake, as to a banquet; not a word fell from them, which discovered the least timidity; they sung hymns in the flames, to the last gasp, without ceasing.”

The council, with Sigismund at their head, still preserved the most solemn forms of religion, though their conduct continued to be destitute of humility, justice, and humanity. Gerson preached a sermon concerning the reformation of the church, the object of which seems to have been, to transfer to the general council, that despotic power, which had been supposed, on divine authority, to rest with the pope. In the mean time, Jerom of Prague was repeatedly examined; and he continued to sustain the rigour of his confinement with patience and constancy.

Toward the latter end of the same year, 1415, a letter

* Page 429, L'Enfant.

was sent to the council from Bohemia, signed by about sixty principal persons, barons, noblemen, and others of Bohemia,* an extract of which is as follows: "We know not from what motive ye have condemned John Huss, bachelor of divinity, and preacher of the gospel. Ye have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We wrote in his vindication, to Sigismund, king of the Romans. This apology of ours ought to have been communicated to your congregations; but we have been told that ye burnt it in contempt of us. We protest therefore, with the heart as well as with the lips, that John Huss was a man very honest, just, and orthodox; that for many years he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners; that during all those years he explained, to us and to our subjects, the gospel and the books of the Old and New Testament, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the church; and that he has left writings behind him in which he constantly abhors all heresy. He taught us also to detest every thing heretical. In his discourses he constantly exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and his own life exhibited to us a distinguished example of these virtues. After all the inquiry which we have made, we can find no blame attached to the doctrine or to the life of the said John Huss; but on the contrary every thing pious, laudable, and worthy of a true pastor. Ye have not only disgraced us by his condemnation, but have also unmercifully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death, Jerom of Prague, a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have condemned unconvicted. Notwithstanding all that hath passed, we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of

* L'Enfant, p. 506, vol. i.

the gospel of Christ, and of his faithful preachers." This letter was unanimously approved in an assembly of Bohemian lords, held at Prague.

John de Trocznow, chamberlain to Wenceslaus king of Bohemia, known by the name of Zisca, or the one-eyed, was one of the Bohemian noblemen, who highly resented the base conduct of the council. Wenceslaus asking him one day what he was musing upon, I was thinking, said he, on the affront offered to our kingdom by the death of John Huss. "It is out of your power or mine to revenge it," said the king; "but if you know which way to do it, exert yourself." From that time Zisca meditated those military projects, for which he was afterwards so famous in history.

The council, startled at the expostulations of the Bohemian lords, yet being still determined to maintain their own unjust authority; at length, partly by promises, and partly by threatenings, induced Jerom of Prague to retract his sentiments. To carry this point, they appear to have used their utmost efforts: and it is not difficult to comprehend their motives. They were anxious to avoid the infamy which would unavoidably be connected with their execution of another great and good man. Jerom's retraction was at first ambiguous and equivocal, afterwards explicit and circumstantial. He anathematized the articles both of Wickliff and of Huss, and declared that he believed every thing which the council believed. He even added, that if in future any doctrine should escape from him contrary to his recantation, he would submit to everlasting punishment! Thus was disgraced before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior parts, and of great learning and fortitude. Reader! this is an

event, memorable in the annals of human imbecility. Consider diligently the instruction it affords. The power and the mercy of God, in owning his fallen servant, and in afterwards restoring and supporting him, were magnified, in this instance, in a very striking manner.

Jerom, notwithstanding his retraction, was remanded to prison, where, however, we find he was allowed a little more liberty than before.*

There were those, who, not content with the unhappy retraction of Jerom, insisted upon his being tried a second time; and Gerson himself, with his usual zeal against heresy, was not ashamed to use his utmost efforts in promoting this most iniquitous measure.

The council actually proceeded to examine Jerom again upon the articles formerly exhibited against him, and also upon fresh articles, collected in Bohemia by certain Carmelite friars, and now for the first time brought forward. The prisoner refused to be sworn, because they denied him the liberty of defence.

Then it was that this great man, whom a long series of afflictions and cruel persecution, and above all, the consciousness of his late prevarication, had brought into the lowest distress, began to exhibit that strength of mind, that force of genius and eloquence, and that integrity and fortitude, which will be the admiration of all ages. How bitterly he had repented, and mourned over his fall, and with what exercises of soul he had been disciplined in secret, the intelligent Christian may easily conceive, though we have no particular account on record. We know, indeed, that after he had acted against his conscience, he retired from the council with a heavy heart. His chains had been taken from him,

* L'Enfant, p. 513, vol. i.

but the load was transferred from his body to his mind; and the caresses of those about him served only to mock his sorrow. The anguish of his own reflections rendered his prison a more gloomy solitude than he had ever found it before. Jerom, however, was not an apostate; and the God whom he served, had compassion on the infirmities of his nature, and did not desert him in his humiliation. No, he made his latter end to be blessed and glorious.

"How unjust is it," exclaimed this Christian hero, "that ye will not hear me! Ye have confined me three hundred and forty days in several prisons, where I have been cramped with irons, almost poisoned with dirt and stench, and pinched with the want of all necessaries. During this time ye always gave to my enemies a hearing, but refused to hear me so much as a single hour. I wonder not, that since ye have indulged them with so long and so favourable an audience, they should have had the address to persuade you, that I am a heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor of the clergy, and a villain. Thus prejudiced, ye have judged me unheard, and ye still refuse to hear me. Remember, however, that ye are but men: and as such ye are fallible, and may suffer others to impose on you. It is said, that all learning and all wisdom is collected in this council. The more then does it behove you to take heed that ye act not rashly, lest ye should be found to act unjustly. I know that it is the design of this council to inflict sentence of death upon me. But when all is done, I am an object of small importance, who must die sooner or later. Therefore what I say is more for your sakes than my own. It ill becomes the wisdom of so many great men to pass an unjust decree against me, and by

this to establish a precedent for consequences much more pernicious than my death can be." The council was so far moved by his reasonings, that they resolved, after he had answered to the articles, to grant him liberty of speech. All the articles were read to him, one after another; and his answers were delivered with an acuteness and dexterity, which astonished the court. When he was upbraided with the grossest calumnies, he stood up, with extended hands, and in a sorrowful tone cried out, "Which way, fathers, shall I turn, whom shall I call upon for help, or to bear witness to my innocence? Shall I make my address to you? But my persecutors have entirely alienated your minds from me, by saying that I am myself a persecutor of my judges. If ye give them credit, I have nothing to hope for." But, it being impossible to bring the affair to an issue at that time, because of the number of the accusations, the court was adjourned to another day.*

The former examination took place on May 23d, 1416, and he was called again before the council, according to adjournment, on the 26th of the same month. On that day the remaining articles were read to him. After he had answered all the charges, owning some, denying others, and cleared up the rest, he was told, that though he had been convicted of heresy by proofs and witnesses most unexceptionable, yet they gave him liberty to speak, so that he might defend himself or retract; only, if he persisted in his errors, he must expect judgment without mercy.

Jerom, having gained this liberty of speech, though with much difficulty and opposition, determined to avail himself of the opportunity. He began with invoking the

* Page 596, L'Enfant.

grace of God so to govern his heart and his lips that he might advance nothing but what should conduce to the salvation of his soul. "I am not ignorant," continued he, "that many excellent men have been borne down by false witnesses, and unjustly condemned." He proved this from various instances adduced both from sacred and profane history. "Moses," said he, "was often scandalized by his brethren; Joseph was sold through envy, and afterwards imprisoned upon false reports. Isaiah, Daniel, and almost all the prophets were unjustly persecuted. And was not John the Baptist, Jesus Christ himself, and most of his apostles, put to death as ungodly, seditious persons? In other books, as well as the Bible, we have similar instances. Socrates was most unjustly condemned by his countrymen; he might indeed have saved his life by doing violence to his conscience, but he preferred death to a disingenuous recantation. Plato, Anaxagoras, Zeno, and many others, were maltreated in various ways."—"It is a shameful thing," continued Jerom, "for one priest to be condemned unjustly by another; but the height of iniquity is, when this is done by a council, and a college of priests." He gave so probable an account of the reasons of the malice of his adversaries, that for some moments he seemed to have convinced his judges. "I came here of my own accord," said he, "to justify myself, which a man conscious of guilt would scarcely have done. Those who know the course of my life and studies, know that my time has been spent in exercises and works of a very different tendency from any thing wicked or heretical. As to my sentiments, the most learned men of all times have had different opinions concerning religion; they disputed about it, not to combat the truth, but to illustrate it. St.

Augustine, and his contemporary St. Jerome, were not always of the same opinion, yet were not on that account accused of heresy. I shall make no apology for my sentiments, because I am not conscious of maintaining any error; nor shall I retract, because it becomes not me to retract the false accusations of my enemies." He then extolled John Huss, vindicated the innocence of that holy martyr, and declared that he was ready to suffer after his example. "This pastor," said he, "by finding fault with the abuses of the clergy, and the pride of the prelates, did not act against the church of God." He declared that he hoped one day to see his accusers, and to call them to judgment before the tribunal of the sovereign Judge of the world. He accused the council of an act of high injustice in trying him a second time on the same indictment, and declared that he should never acknowledge the authority of the new commissioners, but should look on them as judges* sitting in the chair of pestilence. "I came," said he, "to Constance to defend John Huss, because I had advised him to go thither, and had promised to come to his assistance, in case he should be oppressed. Nor am I ashamed here to make public confession of my own cowardice. I confess, and tremble while I think of it, that through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented against my conscience to the condemnation of the doctrine of Wickliff and Huss." He then declared that he disowned his recantation, as the greatest crime of which he had ever been guilty; and that he was determined to his last breath to adhere to the principles of those two men, which were as sound and pure, as their lives were holy and blameless. He excepted indeed Wickliff's opinion of the sa-

* Page 583, L'Enfant.

crament, and declared his agreement with the Roman church in the article of transubstantiation. Having concluded his speech, he was carried back to prison, and was there visited by several persons, who hoped to reclaim him, but in vain.

On May 30th, Jerom being brought again before the council, the bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from these words, "He upbraideth them with their unbelief and hardness of heart."* He exhorted the prisoner not to show himself incorrigible, as he had hitherto done. He paid some tribute of praise to his extraordinary abilities, and at the same time extolled the lenity and generosity with which he had been treated by the council. The reader, now in possession of the facts, might smile at this gross flattery, if the subject were less grave and less affecting. Jerom, raising himself on a bench, undertook to confute the preacher. He declared again, that he had done nothing in his whole life, of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation; that he revoked it from his very soul, as also the letter which he had been induced to write on that subject to the Bohemians; that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood by making that recantation; and that he esteemed John Huss a holy man. At the same time he declared, that he knew no heresy to which Huss was attached, unless they should call by that name his open disapprobation of the vices of the clergy; and that if after this declaration credit should still be given to the false witness borne against him, he should consider the fathers of the council themselves, as unworthy of all belief. "This pious man," said Jerom, alluding to John Huss, "could not bear to see the revenues of the church, which were principally designed for

* Mark xvi. 14.

the maintenance of the poor, and for works of liberality, spent in debauchery with women, in feasts, hounds, furniture, gaudy apparel, and other expenses, unworthy of Christianity.”

The firmness, eloquence, and zeal of Jerom, sensibly affected the council. They proposed to him once more to retract. But he replied, “Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly; but after my death I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall never die. I appeal to the sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence ye must appear to answer me.” After sentence had been pronounced against him, he was delivered to the secular power. He was treated with scorn and insult, similar to that which his friend Huss had experienced. He put the mitre with his own hands on his head,* saying that he was glad to wear it for the sake of Him, who was crowned with one of thorns. As he went to execution, he sung the apostles’ creed, and the hymns of the church, with a loud voice and a cheerful countenance. He kneeled at the stake, and prayed. Being then bound, he raised his voice, and sung a paschal hymn then much in vogue in the church.†

Hail! happy day, and ever be adored,
When hell was conquered by great heaven’s Lord.

The executioner approaching to the pile behind his back, lest Jerom should see him, “Come forward,” said the martyr to him, “and put fire to it before my face.”‡ He continued alive in the flames a full quarter of an hour. And there is the most unanimous testimony given by all writers, Hussite and Roman Catholic, to the he-

* L’Enfant, vol. i. p. 591.

† Salve, festa dies, toto venerabilis ævo, Qua Deus infernum vicit, et astræ tenens.

‡ L’Enfant, vol. i. p. 599.

roic courage and fortitude with which he sustained the torment. When he was much scorched with the fury of the fire, and almost smothered in its flame, he was heard to cry out, "O Lord God, have mercy on me! have mercy on me!" And a little afterward, "Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth." By and bye, the wind parted the flames, and exhibited his body full of large blisters, a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; yet even then his lips are said to have continued still moving, as if his mind was actuated by intense devotion.

Among other valuable purposes to which the council of Constance was rendered subservient under Divine Providence, this was not of the least importance, that the wickedness of the ecclesiastical system, then prevalent in Europe, was demonstrated before all the world. All the knowledge and ability, which Europe could afford, was collected at Constance; yet the able and learned fathers of this council were so far from reforming the evils of what they called the church, that they proved it to be antichrist more certainly than ever. It could no longer be said, that the particular character of such or such popes was the cause of the crimes of the clergy; the whole of the then clerical establishment concurred in support of iniquity.

I have already taken notice of the confession, which, in the sermon preached at Constance, they themselves made, of the extreme wickedness of the church. Another remarkable instance of the same kind occurred on Whitsunday, the seventh of June, a very little time after the death of Jerom. A doctor preached a sermon from these words: "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." "Instead of the seven gifts," says the preacher, "which God granted to the apostles, I fear that the devil keeps

his pentecost in the hearts of most of the clergy, and that he has inspired them with the seven contrary vices.” He then gave a catalogue of those vices.

But let not malicious infidelity exult in these incontrovertible proofs of the corrupt state of the church. One of the essential doctrines of Christianity, namely, original sin, or the native depravity of man, as an apostate creature, is strongly illustrated by the general wickedness of merely nominal Christians. In the Roman church the real gospel itself was then neither understood, nor preached, nor valued. Hence the natural wickedness of mankind met with no resistance: even the papists could see that the whole ecclesiastical system was vicious in its head and members, yet they trifled respecting sins with the most scandalous levity, and persecuted to death those very persons, who earnestly opposed the corruption of the times.

All this, however, affords no just ground of triumph to the infidel. The mere nominal Christian is, in a scriptural sense, an unbeliever as well as himself; and while neither of these characters *overcome the world*, because he has not true *faith*,* it is abundantly evident, and I trust it has appeared so from the course of this history, that where real Christianity is understood, and received, there sincerity, and all genuine virtues, do actually thrive and adorn the Gospel.

Among the valuable lessons to be learnt from the history of the council of Constance, this is one; namely, Those who really mean to serve God and his Christ, and to profit mankind in religion, whether they be pastors or synods, must begin, if the people be in a state of ignorance, with explaining the written word of God; they

* 1 John v. 4, 5.

must plainly set forth the essential doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, and then erect the whole structure of their reformation upon those doctrines.

How void the council was of all true knowledge of the scripture doctrines of salvation, will appear from the bull, by which the pope dissolved that assembly. An extract of it is as follows: "Martin, bishop, servant of the servants of God, at the request of the sacred council, we dismiss it. Moreover, by the authority of Almighty God, and of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and by our own authority, we grant to all the members of the council plenary absolution of all their sins once in their lives, so that every one of them, within two months after the notification of this privilege has come to his knowledge, may enjoy the benefit of the said absolution in form. We also grant them the same privilege in the moment of death; and we extend it to the domestics, as well as to the masters, on condition, that from the day of the notification, both the one and the other fast every Friday, during a whole year, for the absolution granted to them while alive; and another year for the absolution in the moment of death, unless there be some lawful impediment, in which case they shall do other works of piety. And after the second year they shall be obliged to fast on Fridays during life, or to do some other acts of piety, on pain of incurring the displeasure of Almighty God and of the blessed Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul."

Martin V. by making agreements with the nations separately, found means to defeat all attempts after anything that might deserve the name of a general and effectual reformation. But though this new pontiff seemed reluctant and dilatory in correcting abuses, he soon dis-

covered a disposition sufficiently active in supporting his own authority.

He persecuted the Hussites most vigorously. These were divided into two bodies, the Calixtines,* who differed from the church of Rome only in the affair of the new communion in both kinds; and the Taborites, who are thought to have much resembled the Waldenses. A greater encomium, the circumstances of those times being fully considered, could scarcely be passed upon them. But it is difficult to reconcile this encomium with the accounts of their military ferocity. Most probably, wheat was mixed with the tares; and while one part of the people lived the life of “the faith of the Son of God,”† the other could produce few marks of zeal in the cause of religion, except those which were of a bloody and violent kind.

CHAPTER IV.

A Brief Review of the Fifteenth Century.

THE most remarkable events, which distinguish this period in general history, appear to have been directed by Divine Providence with a particular subserviency to the reformation. Only in this view they will deserve the notice of the historian of the church of Christ. In the year 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turkish emperor Mahomet II. From the year 1299, when the four angels were loosed, which had been bound in the river Euphrates,* that is to say, when four Turkish sulties were established in the east, the Turks had gra-

* From calix, the cup.

† Gal. xi. 20.

‡ Rev. ix. 14.

dually increased their power, and filled the world with carnage and confusion. In the mean time, the princes of Europe, absorbed in the vortex of narrow and contracted politics, indolently beheld these ferocious barbarians advancing further and further to the west, and formed no generous plan of defensive combination. It was in vain that the distressed emperors of the east implored the aid of the western princes. The common enemy *overflowed and passed over*,—to use the prophetic language of Daniel,—and having once gained a footing in Europe, he continued to domineer over a large part of Christendom, and to desolate the nations. The same unerring spirit of prophecy which foretold these amazing scenes by St. John, foretold also the continued obduracy and impenitence of the nominal Christians. They repented not of their idolatry and practical wickedness.*

There cannot be a more melancholy contemplation, than to observe the infatuation of nations, who have provoked God to forsake them. Though the voice of Providence is addressed to their senses, they consider not the works of the Lord, and at the same time seem to be as destitute of political sagacity, as they are of religious principle. This fifteenth century affords an awful instance of these things. The Turks oppressed Europe with persevering cruelty; but Europe neither humbled itself before God, nor took any measures to check the ambition of the Mahometans. The Sovereign of the Universe, however, was bringing order out of confusion, and light out of darkness. The learned men, who emigrated from Greece, revived the study of letters in Europe, and paved the way for that light of classical erudition, which was one of the most powerful of all those

* Rev. ix. 21.

subordinate means, which were employed in the demolition of idolatry and superstition. By a surprising concurrence of circumstances, the noble art of printing was invented about the year 1440.* Learning was cultivated with incredible ardour: the family of the Medici was raised up to patronise science; and toward the end of this same century, Erasmus arose, whose good sense, taste, and industry, were uncommonly serviceable to the reformation. By his labours, monastic superstition received a wound which has never since been healed; and learned men were furnished with critical skill and ingenuity, of which they failed not to avail themselves in the instruction of mankind to a degree beyond what Erasmus himself had ever conceived.

Thus, under the care of Divine Providence, materials were collected for that beautiful edifice which began to be erected in the next century. In the fifteenth century, the great value and benefit of these materials scarcely appeared; the same corruptions both of faith and of practice, which have so often been described, still prevailed in all their horrors.

In the mean time there were some individuals, who, though not connected with any particular Christian societies, evidenced the power of godliness. Among these, Thomas Rhedon, a Frenchman and a Carmelite friar, was distinguished.† This man came to Rome with the Venitian ambassadors, having undertaken this journey in the hope of improving his understanding in religious concerns. He had hitherto no conception of the enormous corruptions of that venal city, and was therefore astonished to find that even the habitation of St. Peter was become a den of thieves. His zealous spirit was

* Mosheim, vol. i. p. 764.

† Fox, vol. i. p. 758.

stirred up in him, to give an open testimony to evangelical truth; and at length by continual preaching he incurred the hatred of the ruling powers. In fine, he was degraded from the priesthood, and was burnt four years after his arrival at Rome, in the year 1436, during the pontificate of Eugenius, the successor of that same Martin who was raised to the popedom by the council of Constance. Several others, who like him were enlightened, and like him were faithful to their God, though unconnected with any particular church, were executed in Germany, not long after the burning of John Huss.

Jerom Savanarola, an Italian monk, by his zeal, learning and piety, incurred in an eminent manner, the hatred of the court of Rome. Notwithstanding the repeated menaces of the pope, he continued to preach the word of God with great vehemence, and with a degree of light and knowledge, which seems superior to that of most, if not of all men, in that age. In 1496, he upheld the standard of the gospel at Florence, though many warned him of the danger to which he was exposed by his great boldness. At length, in the year 1498,* he, and two other friars, named Dominic and Silvester, were imprisoned. During his confinement, he wrote a spiritual meditation on the thirty-first psalm, in which he described the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, a subject peculiarly evangelical, and which needs some real exercise of practical godliness, in order to be duly understood and relished by mankind. The pope's legates arriving at Florence, Jerom and his two companions, were charged with maintaining various heretical opinions, one of which deserves to be distinctly mentioned, as characteristic of the times in which they lived. For example, they were

* Fox, p. 830.

accused, in explicit terms, of having preached the doctrine of free justification through faith in Christ; and after they had persevered in what was called an obstinate heresy, they were degraded, delivered to the secular power at Florence, and burnt to death in the year 1499.

There were also some souls who in secret served God in the gospel of his Son; and who knew what spirituality in religion meant, though from some particular circumstances they never were exposed to suffer in any considerable degree for righteousness' sake. Among these was the famous Thomas a Kempis, who died in 1471.* Instead of entering into the tedious dispute concerning the author of the well known book of the Imitation of Jesus Christ, let us be content with ascribing it to this monk, its reputed author. It would be impertinent in me to enter into any detail of a performance, so familiar to religious readers; and let it suffice to say, that it abounds with the most pious and devotional sentiments, and could not have been written but by one well versed in Christian experience, though it partakes of the common defect of monastic writers; that is to say, it does not sufficiently illustrate the doctrine of justification by faith.

Vincent Ferrer, though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, was a shining model of piety.† He was born at Valencia in Spain, became a Dominican friar, and a zealous preacher of the word of God. A quotation from his book on Spiritual Life will deserve the attention of students. “Do you desire to study to advantage? Consult God more than books, and ask him humbly to make you understand what you read. Study drains the mind

* Du Pin.

† Butler, vol. iv.

and heart. Go from time to time to be refreshed at the feet of Christ under his cross. Some moments of repose there give fresh vigour and new light; interrupt your study by short, but fervent ejaculations. Science is the gift of the Father of lights. Do not consider it as attainable, merely by the work of your own mind or industry." This holy person was retained in the service of Peter de Luna, who, as pope, took the name of Benedict XIII. and was one of those three popes, that were deposed by the council of Constance. Very few men are represented in history to have been of a more proud and deceitful character than Peter de Luna. Vincent intreated his master to resign his dignity. Benedict rather artfully eluded, than directly refused the request. Bishoprics and a cardinal's hat were then offered to Vincent; but his heart was insensible to the charms of worldly honours and dignities. He very earnestly wished to become an apostolic missionary; and, in this respect, he was at length gratified by Benedict. At the age of forty-two he began to preach with great fervor in every town from Avignon towards Valencia. His word is said to have been powerful among the Jews, the Mahometans, and others. After he had laboured in Spain, France, and Italy, he then, at the desire of Henry IV. king of England, exerted himself in the same manner throughout the chief towns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Still finding Peter de Luna entirely obstinate in his ambition, he renounced his service, and, by the desire of king Henry V., made Normandy, and Brittany, the theatre of his labours during the last two years of his life. He died at the age of 62.

How truly humble this man was, appears from the whole of this little account which I can collect concern-

ing him; and particularly, from his own confession: “ My whole life is a sink of iniquity; I am all infection; I am corruption throughout. I feel this to be so more and more. Whoever is proud, shall stand without. Christ manifests his truth to the lowly, and hides himself from the proud.”

Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, born in the year 1389, seems to have been a similar character.* Great things are related of his pastoral labours and services. His secretary, observing his indefatigable exertions, once said to him, “ The life of a bishop is truly pitiable, if he is doomed to live in such a constant hurry as you live.” “ To enjoy inward peace,” replied he, “ we must, amidst all our affairs, ever reserve a closet as it were in our hearts, where we are to remain retired within ourselves, and where no worldly business can enter.” He died aged 70; and is said to have frequently repeated in his last moments, words which he had been accustomed to use in the time of his health; namely, “ To serve God is to reign.”

Bernardin,† of the republic of Sienna, was born in the year 1380, and on account of his uncommon zeal in preaching, was called “ the burning coal.” He gave this advice to clergymen: “ Seek first the kingdom of God; and the Holy Ghost will give you wisdom, which no adversary can withstand.” This excellent man expressed an earnest wish to be able to cry out with a trumpet through the world, “ How long will ye love simplicity?” He died aged sixty-three years.

John Wesselus of Groningen, was one of the most learned men of the fifteenth century, and was so celebrated for his talents and attainments, as to have been denominated *the light of the world*.

* Butler, vol. v.

† Ibid.

He was born about the year 1419, not in 1400, as some have supposed. He died in 1489. He has been justly called the Forerunner of Luther.

That great reformer was so astonished, when he first met with some pieces of the composition of Wesselus, that in the Leipsic edition of 1522, he wrote a preface to the work, in which he says,* "By the wonderful providence of God, I have been compelled to become a public man, and to fight battles with those monsters of indulgences and papal decrees. All along I supposed myself to stand alone; yet have I preserved so much animation in the contest, as to be every where accused of heat and violence, and of biting too hard. However, the truth is, I have earnestly wished to have done with these followers of Baal among whom my lot is cast, and to live quietly in some corner; for I have utterly despair'd of making any impression on these brazen foreheads, and iron necks of impiety.

"But behold, in this state of mind, I am told that even in these days, there is in secret a remnant of the people of God. Nay, I am not only told so, but I rejoice to see a proof of it. Here is a new publication by Wesselus of Groningen, a man of an admirable genius, and of an uncommonly enlarged mind. It is very plain he was taught of God, as Isaiah prophesied that Christians should be.† And as in my own case, so with him, it cannot be supposed that he received his doctrines from men. If I had read his works before, my enemies might have supposed that I had learnt every thing from Wesselus, such a perfect coincidence there is in our opinions. As to myself, I not only derive pleasure, but strength and courage from this publication. It is now impossible for me to

* Ep. II. p. 89.

† Isaiah, liv. 13.

doubt whether I am right in the points which I have inculcated, when I see so entire an agreement in sentiment, and almost the same words used by this eminent person, who lived in a different age, in a distant country, and in circumstances very unlike my own. I am surprised that this excellent Christian writer should be so little known. The reason may be, either that he lived without blood and contention (for this is the only thing in which he differs from me,) or perhaps the Jews of our times suppressed his writings as heretical.

"I recommend it therefore to the pious reader, to peruse this book with care and consideration. The writer peculiarly excels in judgment; and moreover he is admirably calculated to improve the judgment of his reader. Lastly, those who are displeased with my asperity, will meet with nothing of that sort, in Wesselus, to offend them."

A complete edition of the works of Wesselus was published in 1614, with a short account of his life, by Albert Hardenberg. The book is in quarto, and contains above nine hundred pages, and is extremely scarce.

Sixteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

The Reformation under the Conduct of Luther.

INTRODUCTION.

THE sixteenth century opened with a prospect of all others the most gloomy, in the eyes of every true Christian. Corruption both in doctrine and in practice had

exceeded all bounds; and the general face of Europe, though the name of Christ was every where professed, presented nothing that was properly evangelical. Great efforts indeed had been made to emancipate the church from the “powers of darkness;” and in consequence many individual souls had been conducted into the path of salvation. Still nothing like a general reformation had taken place in any part of Europe. For it must be confessed, that the labours of Claudio of Turin, of the Waldensian Barbs, of Wickliff, and of Huss, had not been sufficiently directed against the predominant corruptions in doctrine, though the practical abuses of the popedom had been opposed with ingenuous freedom and disinterested courage. The external branches only, rather than the bitter root itself, which supported all the evils of false religion, being attacked, no permanent or extensive change had ensued. The Waldenses were too feeble to molest the popedom; and the Hussites, divided among themselves and worn out by a long series of contentions, were reduced to silence. Among both were found persons of undoubted godliness, but they appeared incapable of making effectual impressions on the kingdom of antichrist. The Roman pontiffs were still the uncontrolled patrons of impiety. Neither the scandalous crimes of Alexander VI. nor the military ferocity of Julius II. (pontiffs whose actions it is impertinent to the plan of this history to detail) seem to have lessened the dominion of the court of Rome, or to have opened the eyes of men so as to induce them to make a sober investigation of the nature of true religion.

But not many years after the commencement of this century, the world beheld an attempt to restore the light of the gospel, more evangelically judicious, more simply

founded on the word of God, and more ably and more successfully conducted, than any which had ever been seen since the days of Augustine. Martin Luther, whom Divine Providence raised up for this purpose, was evidently the instrument rather than the agent of this reformation. He was led from step to step, by a series of circumstances, far beyond his original intentions; and in a manner, which might evince the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man.* Even the reformations, which took place in several other parts of Europe, besides Germany, the scene of Luther's transactions, were in a great measure derived from the light, which he was enabled to diffuse among mankind. And as the peculiar excellency of the revival of godliness now before us lay in this, that it was conversant in fundamentals of doctrine, rather than in correction of mere abuses of practice, hence the history of Lutheranism recommends itself in an especial manner to the study of every theologian.

In a manuscript history, extending from the year 1524 to 1541, composed by Frederic Myconius, a very able coadjutor of Luther and Melancthon, the author describes the state of religion in the beginning of this century in striking terms. "The passion and satisfaction of Christ, were treated as a bare history, like the *Odyssey* of Homer: concerning faith, by which the righteousness of the Redeemer and eternal life are apprehended, there was the deepest silence: Christ was described as a severe judge, ready to condemn all who were† destitute of the intercession of saints, and of pontifical interest. In the room of Christ, were substituted as saviours and intercessors, the Virgin Mary, like a pagan Diana, and other saints, who from time to time had been created by the

* 2 Cor. iv. 7.

† Seckendorf, vol. i. p. 4.

popes. Nor were men, it seems, entitled to the benefit of their prayers, except they deserved it of them by their works. What sort of works was necessary for this end was distinctly explained; not the works prescribed in the decalogue, and enjoined on all mankind, but such as enrich the priests and monks. Those who died neglecting these, were consigned to hell, or at least to purgatory, till they were redeemed from it by a satisfaction made either by themselves or by their proxies. The frequent pronunciation of the Lord's Prayer and the salutation of the Virgin, and the recitations of the canonical hours, constantly engaged those who undertook to be religious. An incredible mass of ceremonious observances was every where visible; while gross wickedness was practised, under the encouragement of indulgences, by which the guilt of the crimes was easily expiated. The preaching of the word was the least part of the episcopal function: rites and processions employed the bishops perpetually, when engaged in religious exercises. The number of clergy was enormous, and their lives were most scandalous. I speak of those whom I have known in the town of Gothen," &c. If we add to this the testimony of Pellicanus, another of Luther's followers, "that a Greek Testament could not be procured at any price in all Germany,"* what can be wanting to complete the picture of that darkness in which men lived, and in what did the Christian nations differ from pagans, except in the name? It may be proper to mention, that even the university of Paris, the first of all the famous schools of learning, could not furnish a single person capable of supporting a controversy against Luther on the foundation of Scripture. And scarcely any Christian doctor in the begin-

* Seckendorf, vol. i. p. 132.

ning of this century had a critical knowledge of the word of God. The reader may find it useful to be detained a little longer in contemplating the situation of the Christian world at the time of Luther's appearance. The observations I have to offer for this purpose shall be arranged under four distinct heads; and they will, I trust, assist us in demonstrating the importance of the reformation, and fully evince that the difference between Popery and Protestantism is not merely verbal.

1. The popish doctrine of indulgences was then in the highest reputation. We shall be in no danger of misrepresenting this doctrine, if we state it according to the ideas of one of the ablest champions of popery.* The church, he tells us, imposes painful works or sufferings on offenders; which, being discharged or undergone with humility, are called satisfactions; and when regarding the fervor of the penitents, or other good works, she remits some part of the task; this is called "an indulgence." For he pretends that the infinite satisfaction of Christ may be applied in two ways, either by entire remission, without the reservation of any punishment, or by the changing of a greater punishment into a less. "The first, he says, is done in baptism, the second in the case of sins committed after baptism." And here he gives us the authority of the council of Trent, to support his assertion, namely, "The power to grant indulgences has been committed to the church by Jesus Christ, and the use of them is beneficial to salvation." Those, he observes, who depart this life indebted to divine justice for some of the pains reserved, must suffer them in another life in the state of purgatory.

* Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, in an Exposition of the Doctrine of the Catholic Church in matters of Controversy.

Reliefs are however provided in this case also; the benefit of indulgences extends, it seems, beyond the grave, and the doctrine of commutation for offences, applied in real practice by the friends of the deceased, was held to be valid in heaven. The foundation of all this system was generally believed to be this: There was supposed to be an infinite treasure of merit in Christ and the saints, which was abundantly more than sufficient for themselves. Thus, what is strictly true of the Divine Saviour, was asserted also of saints, namely, that they had done works of supererogation. This treasure was deposited in the church, under the conduct of the See of Rome, and was sold, literally sold for money, at that See's discretion, to those who were able and willing to pay for it; and few were found willing to undergo the course of a severe penance of unpleasant austerities, when they could afford to commute for it by pecuniary payments. The popes, and under them the bishops and the clergy, particularly the Dominican and Franciscan friars, had the disposition of this treasure; and as the pontiffs had the power of canonizing new saints at their own will, the fund was ever growing; and so long as the system could maintain its credit, the riches of their church, thus secularized under the appearance of religion, became a sea without a shore. No impartial examiner of authentic records will say, that I have overcharged this account of indulgences. In fact, these were the symptoms of the last stage of papal depravity; and as the moral evils, which they encouraged, were plain to every one not totally destitute of discernment, they were the first objects assaulted by the reformers.

2. But the views of those wise and holy personages were far more extensive. They saw, that a practice so

scandalously corrupt, was connected with the grossest ignorance of the nature of gospel grace. The doctrine of justification, in its explicit form, had been lost for many ages to the Christian world. If men had really believed, that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ salvation was obtained, and that God “justifies the ungodly” through faith alone, how could they have been imposed on by the traffic of indulgences? In whatever manner the papist might subtilize and divide, he was compelled by his system to hold, that by a compliance with the rules of the church, either in the way of indulgences, or by some severer mode, pardon was to be obtained: and that the satisfaction of Christ was not sufficiently meritorious for this end; in other words, that the gift of God is not eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* And in fact the preachers of indulgences, whether popes themselves or their ministers, held out to the people with sufficient clearness, that the inheritance of eternal life was to be purchased by indulgences. Proofs of this have already appeared in the course of this history, and more will be given hereafter. The testimony of Sleidan, one of the most judicious and dispassionate historians, to the nature of indulgences, well deserves to be transcribed in this place. It is contained in the beginning of his excellent history. “Pope Leo X. making use of that power, which his predecessors had usurped over all Christian churches, sent abroad into all kingdoms his letters and bulls, with ample promises of the full pardon of sins, and of eternal salvation to such as would purchase the same with money!!!” Even when the traffic of indulgences was checked by the pontiffs, as being carried on in too gross a manner, no clear account was given in what the

* See Rein. vi. end.

abuse consisted. In fine, it was evident, that no reformation could take place through the medium of qualifying and correcting abuses of this traffic. The system itself was wholly impious, and the right knowledge of justification was the only remedy adequate to the evil. This, therefore, the reader is to look for, as the most capital object of the reformation: and thus, in the demolition of one of the vilest perversions of superstition, there suddenly arose and revived, in all its infant simplicity, that apostolical doctrine, in which is contained the great mystery of the Scriptures.

3. The state of mankind at that time was peculiarly adapted to the reception of so rich a display of gospel grace. God sent a plentiful rain, whereby he refreshed his inheritance, when it was weary.* Men were then bound fast in fetters of iron: their whole religion was one enormous mass of bondage. Terrors beset them on every side; and the fiction of purgatory was ever teeming with ghosts and apparitions. Persons truly serious, and such there ever were and will be, because there ever was and will be a true church on earth, were so clouded in their understandings by the prevailing corruptions of the hierarchy, that they could find no access to God by Jesus Christ. The road of simple faith, grounded on the divine promises, connected always with real humility, and always productive of hearty and grateful obedience, was stopped up with briers and thorns. No certain rest could be afforded to the weary mind, and state of doubt, of allowed doubt and anxiety, was recommended by the papal system. What a joyful doctrine then was that of the real gospel of remission of sins through Christ alone received by faith! a doctrine, which is indeed to be found

* Ps. lxviii. 9.

every where in the Scriptures; but the Scriptures were almost unknown among the people at the beginning of the Reformation.

4. Should the philosophical sceptic, or the pharisical formalist, express his surprise, that I should lay so great a stress on the Christian article of justification, and wonder that any persons should ever be at a loss to discover the way of obtaining true peace of conscience; it may be useful towards satisfying his scruples, to remind such a character of a *fourth* mark of corruption, which much prevailed in the times previous to the reformation. This is, the predominance of the Aristotelian philosophy in Europe at that period; a philosophy, which knew nothing of original sin and native depravity, which allowed nothing to be criminal but certain external flagitious actions, and which was unacquainted with the idea of any righteousness of grace, imputed to a sinner. How many in this age, who neither know nor value Aristotle, do yet altogether follow his self-righteous notions of religion! These are congenial to our fallen nature, and are incapable, while they prevail in the mind, of administering any cure to papal bondage, except that which is worse than the disease itself. They tend to lead men into the depths of atheistic profaneness. But the person, whom God raised up particularly at this time to instruct an ignorant world, was most remarkably eminent for self-knowledge. Only characters of this sort are qualified to inform mankind in subjects of the last importance towards the attainment of their eternal happiness. Luther knew himself; and he knew also the scriptural grounds on which he stood in his controversies with the ecclesiastical rulers. His zeal was disinterested, his courage undaunted. Accordingly, when he had once erected

the standard of truth, he continued to uphold it with an unconquerable intrepidity, which merits the gratitude and esteem of all succeeding ages.*

CHAPTER II.

The Beginning of the Controversy concerning Indulgences.

POPE Alexander VI. the most flagitious of men, died in the year 1503. After the short interval of the dominion of Pius III. who ruled the church less than a year, Julius II. was elected pontiff. A circumstance attended this election, which deserves to be recorded† as a memorable indication of those times. The cardinals agreed upon oath before the election, and obliged the new pontiff after his election to take the same oath, that a general council should be called within two years, to reform the church. The effect of this measure, which so strongly implied the consent of the Christian world to the necessity of a reformation, was the council of Pisa. But nothing good was to be expected from Julius, a man, in the language of worldly greatness, renowned for military ambition. By his intrigues the council of Pisa was dissolved, and Julius died in 1513, after he had filled the Christian world with blood and confusion by his violence and rapacity.

Leo X.,‡ a man famous for the encouragement of let-

* Milner. † Seckendorf, vol. i. p. 3.

‡ This prelate, the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was ordained at the age of seven years, made an abbot before he was eight years old, and at the age of thirteen became a cardinal! Such was the influence of his father in the court of Rome! Lorenzo, in a prudential letter to his son, tells him, that he had heard with pleasure of his attention to communion and confession; and that there was no better way for him to obtain the favour of heaven, than by ha-

ters and the fine arts, and deservedly celebrated among the patrons of learned men, succeeded. But historical veracity can scarcely admit any further encomium on his character. He was a Florentine of the illustrious house of the Medici, and inherited the elegant taste and munificent spirit of that family. He was elected pope in the thirty-seventh year of his age. Though refined and humanized by his love of the liberal arts, and extremely abhorrent from the savage manners of Alexander and of Julius, he possessed other qualities, no less inconsistent than theirs with the character of a pastor of the church of Christ. An excessive magnificence, a voluptuous indolence, and above all, a total want of religious principle, rendered him perhaps more strikingly void of every sacerdotal qualification than any pontiffs before him. He has been accused of open infidelity; but the proofs are said to be only negative; certainly, however, he at no time took the least pains to discover to mankind, that he had a sincere reverence for religion. It was during the pontificate of this man, that Providence gave the severest blow to the authority of the Roman hierarchy, which it had ever received since the days of Gregory II.

Both before his exaltation and after it, he opposed with dexterity and success the laudable attempts after a reformation, which have been mentioned. A council called by this pope, and held in the Lateran palace, was directed under his auspices against the determinations of the council of Pisa. Afterwards, in the year 1517, the university of Paris, renowned at that time through Europe for learning and knowledge, appealed from its de-

biuating himself to the performance of such duties. Roscoe's Life of Lorenzo de Medici.—Lorenzo appears to have known the art of rising in this world, better than the narrow road to eternal life.

cisions to a future general council. It is not necessary to enter into the detail of these transactions. They are here briefly mentioned in a general way, for the purpose of showing that common sense and the voice of natural conscience had agreed to the necessity of a reformation, though men knew not the principles on which it ought to proceed. The greatest personages of the times had delivered their sentiments to the same effect. The existence of the distemper was admitted. The true remedy was unknown; that was to be drawn only from the word of God; and almost all parties were equally ignorant of the contents of the sacred volumes. In this same year, however, the spirit of Luther was raised up, to instruct the ignorant, to rouse the negligent, and to oppose the scandalous practices of interested and ambitious ecclesiastical rulers.

No reformer had ever an opportunity more favourable to his designs. Such was the temerity of the existing hierarchy, that they might seem even to have purposely afforded to their opponents an advantage for the beginning of a contest, or rather to have been providentially infatuated. Leo X. after he had presided almost five years, having reduced himself to straits by his prodigal expenses of various kinds, and being desirous to complete the erection of St. Peter's church, begun at Rome by his predecessor Julius II., after his example had recourse to the sale of indulgences, the general nature of which Maimbourg describes much in the same manner as has been done in the foregoing chapter.* These he

* Seckend. p. 8. Let the reader remember that this incomparable author; Seckendorf, gives us all along the very words of his antagonist, whence the papal as well as the protestant materials are continually held up to view.

Even Du Pin allows, that Leo was naturally proud and lofty; and he confesses, that the erection of St. Peter's church was the occasion of that pope's having recourse to the sale of indulgences. Book ii. chap. 1.

published throughout the Christian world, granting freely to all, who would pay money for the building of St. Peter's church, the license of eating eggs and cheese in the time of Lent. This is one of the many ridiculous circumstances which attended Leo's indulgences, and it is gravely related by the papal historians. The promulgation of these indulgences in Germany, was committed to a prelate, the brother of the elector of Brandenburg. His name was Albert, a man who at that very time held two archbishoprics, namely, those of Mentz and of Magdeburg, and who himself received immense profits from the sale. Albert delegated the office to John Tetzel, a Dominican inquisitor, well qualified for an employment of this kind. He was a bold and enterprising monk, of uncommon impudence, and had already distinguished himself in a similar transaction. He had proclaimed indulgences in support of the war against the Muscovites, and by that means had much enriched the Teutonic knights, who had undertaken that war. "This frontless monk," says a celebrated ecclesiastical historian,* "executed this iniquitous commission not only with matchless insolence, indecency, and fraud, but even carried his impiety so far as to derogate from the all-sufficient power and influence of the merits of Christ. Myconius assures us, that he himself heard Tetzel declaim with incredible effrontery, concerning the unlimited power of the pope and the efficacy of indulgences. The people believed, that the moment any person had paid the money for the indulgence, he became certain of his salvation, and that the souls, for whom the indulgences were bought, were instantly released out of purgatory. So Maimbourg allows; and if the people really believed the current doc-

* Mosheim.

trine of the times, and looked on the preachers of indulgences as men worthy of credit, they must have believed so. We have formerly seen popes themselves to hold this confident language. John Tetzel boasted, that he had saved more souls from hell by his indulgences, than St. Peter had converted to Christianity by his preaching. He assured the purchasers of them, that their crimes, however enormous, would be forgiven; whence it became almost needless for him to bid them dismiss all fears concerning their salvation. For remission of sins being fully obtained, what doubt could there be of salvation? In the usual form of absolution, written by his own hand, he said, "May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon thee, and absolve thee by the merits of his most holy passion! And I, by his authority, that of his apostles Peter and Paul, and of the most holy pope granted and committed to me in these parts, do absolve thee, first, from all ecclesiastical censures in whatever manner they have been incurred; and then from all the sins, transgressions, and excesses, how enormous soever they may be, even from such as are reserved for the cognizance of the holy see: and as far as the keys of the holy church extend, I remit to thee all the punishment which thou deservest in purgatory on their account; and I restore thee to the holy sacraments of the church, to the unity of the faithful, and to that innocence and purity which thou possessed at baptism, so that when thou diest, the gates of punishment shall be shut, and the gates of the paradise of delight shall be opened; and if thou shalt not die at present, this grace shall remain in full force when thou art at the point of death. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."*—Such

* Seckend. p. 14.

was the style in which these formulas were written. It is impertinent to blame the abuses committed by the officials; it is not to be supposed, that these formulas were without papal authority; neither has any thing of that kind ever been asserted. In regard to the effect of indulgences in delivering persons from the supposed torments of purgatory, the gross declarations of Tetzel in public are well known: "The moment the money tinkles in the chest, your father's soul mounts up out of purgatory." It does not appear, that the rulers of the hierarchy ever found the least fault with Tetzel as exceeding his commission, till an opposition was openly made to the practice of indulgences. Whence it is evident, that the Protestants have not unjustly censured the corruptions of the court of Rome in this respect. Leo is declared to have granted, immediately and without hesitation,* the profits of the indulgences collected in Saxony and the neighbouring countries as far as the Baltic, to his sister, the wife of prince Cibus, by way of gratitude for personal favours which he had received from the family of the Cibi. The indulgences were farmed to the best bidders, and the undertakers employed such deputies to carry on the traffic, as they thought most likely to promote their lucrative views. The inferior officers concerned in this commerce were daily seen† in public houses, enjoying themselves in riot and voluptuousness. In fine, whatever the greatest enemy of popery could have wished, was at that time exhibited with the most undisguised impudence and temerity, as if on purpose to render that wicked ecclesiastical system infamous before all mankind.

It may not be improper to introduce the following

* Maimbourg, p. 11.

† Id. p. 12.

anecdote concerning Tetzel, the audacious vender of the papal indulgences.

When the emperor Maximilian was at Inspruck, he was so offended at the wickedness and impudence of Tetzel, who had been convicted of adultery, that he condemned him to death, and had intended to have him seized and put into a bag, and flung into the river Oenoponte; but he was prevented by the solicitations of Frederick the elector of Saxony; who, fortunately for Tetzel, happened to be there at the time.*

Burnet informs us, that the scandalous sale of pardons and indulgences had by no means so completely ceased in popish countries as is commonly taken for granted. He says, that in Spain and Portugal there is every where a commissary, who manages the sale with the most infamous circumstances imaginable. In Spain, the king, by an agreement with the pope, has the profits. In Portugal, the king and the pope go shares.

“In the year 1709, the privateers of Bristol took a galleon, in which they found five hundred bales of bulls” for indulgences——“and sixteen reams were in a bale. So that they reckon the whole came to 3,840,000. These bulls are imposed on the people, and sold, the lowest at three ryals, a little more than twenty pence, but to some at about eleven pounds of our money.——All are obliged to buy them in Lent.” The author adds, “Besides the account given of this in the cruising voyage, I have a particular attestation of it by Captain Dampier.”†

Protestants in our times are not sufficiently aware of the evils from which, under the blessing of God, a great part of Europe has been delivered, by the rational, ani-

* Adam. Meich.

† Vol. iii. Introd. p. xx.

mated, and persevering exertions of Luther, his associates, and other early reformers.

Indulgences were granted also under the pontificate of Leo X. on many *particular* occasions. The consecrated Host had been lost at the parish church at Schiniedeberg in the diocese of Misnia: in consequence of which, the pastor had excommunicated the deacon and the porter of the church. These men, whom the superstition of the times had made culprits, had, however, recourse to the generosity of Tetzel, who was in the neighbourhood, and who furnished them with a diploma of absolution.* The prices of these indulgences were accommodated to the various circumstances of petitioners; and thus a plan was formed and was successfully carrying into execution, which would infallibly lay all orders of men under contribution. The prodigious sale of indulgences evinces both the profound ignorance of the age, and also the power of superstitious fears, with which the consciences of men were then distressed. This however was the very situation of things, which opened the way for the reception of the gospel. But who was to proclaim the gospel in its native beauty and simplicity? To give a satisfactory answer to this question was no easy matter. The princes, the bishops, and the learned men of the times, saw all this scandalous traffic respecting the pardon of sins; but none was found who possessed the knowledge, the courage, and the honesty, necessary to detect the fraud, and to lay open to mankind the true doctrine of salvation by the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. But at length an obscure pastor appeared, who alone and without help, began to erect the standard of sound religion. No man who believes that,

* Seckend. p. 15.

"the preparation of the heart is from the Lord," will doubt whether Martin Luther, in this great undertaking, was moved by the Spirit of God. This extraordinary person, at that time an Augustine monk, was professor or lecturer of the university of Wittemberg in Saxony. That academy was at once a college of students and a society of monks. Frederick the Wise, elector of Saxony, ardently desirous of promoting literary knowledge, had added the former character to the latter, and always showed a steady regard to Luther, on account of his skill and industry in advancing the reputation of that infant seminary of knowledge, which then was very low and abject both in its revenues and its exterior appearance. Luther preached also from time to time, and heard confessions.* In the memorable year 1517, it happened, that certain persons, repeating their confessions before him, and owning themselves to be atrocious offenders, yet refused to comply with the penances which he enjoined them, because they said they were possessed of diplomas of indulgences. Luther was struck with the evident absurdity of such conduct, and ventured to refuse them absolution. The persons thus rejected, complained loudly to Tetzel, who was preaching in a town at no great distance. The Dominican inquisitor had not been accustomed to contradiction. He stormed and frowned, and menaced every one who dared to oppose him; and sometimes he ordered a pile of wood to be constructed and set on fire, for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of heretics. Luther was at that time only thirty-four years old, vigorous both in mind and body, fresh from the schools, and fervent in the Scriptures. He saw crowds flock to Wittemberg and the neighbour-

* Seckend. p. 17.

ing towns to purchase indulgences, and having no clear idea of the nature of that traffic, yet sensible of the obvious evils with which it must be attended, he began to signify, in a gentle manner, from the pulpit, that the people might be better employed than in running from place to place to procure *indulgences*. So cautiously did this great man begin a work, the consequence of which he then so little foresaw. He did not so much as know at that time, who were the receivers of the money. In proof of this, we find he wrote to Albert, archbishop of Mentz, who, he understood, had appointed Tetzel to this employment, but with whose personal concern in the gains he was then unacquainted, intreating him to withdraw the license of Tetzel, and expressing his fears of the evils which would attend the sale of indulgences. He sent him likewise certain theses, which he had drawn up in the form of queries, concerning this subject. He expressed himself with the greatest caution and modesty. In fact, he saw enough to alarm a tender conscience, but he knew not well where to fix the blame. He was not, as yet, fully satisfied in his own mind, either as to the extent of the growing mischief, or the precise nature of its cause. In this state of doubt and anxiety, he wrote also to other bishops, and particularly to his own diocesan the bishop of Brandenburg,* with whom he was a particular favourite.

Nothing can be more orderly, candid, and open, than this conduct of our reformer.† Zeal and charity were

* Seckend. p. 16.

† Du Pin, in conjunction with all the Roman Catholic writers, asserts that Luther's zeal for the interest of his own order, led him to oppose the doctrine of indulgences. The best refutation of this calumny is to be derived from a fair statement of facts. It has been said likewise, that Staupitius, the vicar-general of Luther's order of monks, and that the elector of Saxony, stimulated

here united with the most perfect regard to ecclesiastical discipline. The bishop of Brandenburg reverenced the integrity of Luther, while he was aware of the dangerous ground on which he was advancing. "You will oppose the church," he replied, "you cannot think in what troubles you will involve yourself; you had much better be still and quiet." This was not a language calculated to repress the firm and intrepid spirit of the Saxon monk; for, though by no means as yet a competent master of the points in debate, he saw they were of too great magnitude for a conscientious pastor to pass them by unnoticed: he knew too the manners of lower life, and could judge, far better than the bishops in general could do, of the mischievous consequences which were to be apprehended. With deliberate steadiness he ventured therefore to persevere; and having tried in vain to procure the concurrence of the dignitaries of the church, he published his theses, ninety-five in number; and in fifteen days they were spread throughout Germany. Their effect on the minds of men was rapid and powerful, though Tetzel, by threats, had silenced some pastors who had faintly opposed him, and though bishops and doctors, through fear of the flames, remained perfectly silent.

"Thus," says Luther, for much of the foregoing account is taken from his own words, "I was commended as an excellent doctor, who alone had the spirit to attempt so great an undertaking; but the fame which I had acquired was by no means agreeable to my mind; because I had then some doubts concerning the nature of

Luther to commence his opposition. But there is no where to be found the smallest proof of these assertions. The love of truth itself appears from his whole conduct to have influenced his measures, and the story needs only to be fairly told, in order to convince any candid person that this was the case.

indulgences, and because I feared that the task was beyond my powers and capacity.^{222*}

But the real motives of Luther will be discovered in the surest manner by a brief review of the manners and spirit of the man, previous to his open declarations respecting indulgences. This Saxon reformer was born in the year 1483, at Isleben, a town belonging to the county of Mansfield. His father wrought in the mines of Mansfield, which were at that time very famous; and, after the birth of his son Martin Luther, removed to that town, became a proprietor in the mines, discharged public offices there, and was esteemed by all men for his integrity. He gave a very liberal education to Martin, who was remarkable for dutiful affection to his parents in general, though in one instance, to be mentioned presently, he was led away by the superstition of the times, so as to offend his father exceedingly. After he had made great proficiency in his studies at Magdeburg, Eisenach, and Erfurt, he commenced master of arts in the university of Erfurt, at the age of twenty; and having now finished his course of philosophy, he began to give close attention to the science of the civil law, and is said to have intended to advance himself by pleading at the bar; but he was diverted from his purpose by an accident.† As he was walking in the fields with one of his most intimate friends, his companion was suddenly killed by lightning; and Luther himself was so terrified, partly by this event, and partly by the horrid noise of the thunder, that while his mind was in the utmost consternation, he formed the sudden resolution of withdrawing from

* Seckend. p. 16.

† Du Pin.—Moreri.—Maimbourg.

Some authors say, that Luther's intimate friend was found murdered about the same time that he himself was so terrified by the thunder.

the world, and of throwing himself into the monastery at Erfurt. His father, a man of plain, but sound understanding, strongly remonstrated. The son as strongly pleaded what he considered as a terrible call from heaven, to take upon himself the monastic vow. "Take care," replied the father, "that you are not ensnared by a delusion of the devil." But the mind of Martin was determined; and filial disobedience, in such a case, was looked on as a virtue. To the great grief and mortification of his father, he entered the monastery in the year 1505.

In one of his letters, he owns, that from the very beginning of his monastic life he was constantly sad and dejected,* and being unable to give peace to his mind, he at length opened his griefs to John Staupitius, vicar-general of the Augustine monks in Germany, a man highly esteemed by Frederick the Wise, and consulted by him particularly in things which concerned the university of Wittemberg. Staupitius himself appears to have had some serious views of religion, and a degree of knowledge at that time very uncommon. After Luther had explained to him the uneasy thoughts with which he was burdened, "You do not know," said he, "how useful and necessary this trial may be to you; God does not thus exercise you for nothing; you will one day see that he will employ you as his servant for great purposes." The event gave ample honour to the sagacity of Staupitius, and it is very evident, that a deep and solid conviction of sin, leading the mind to the search of Scripture truth, and the investigation of the way of peace, was the main spring of Luther's whole after conduct; and indeed this view of our reformer's state of mind furnishes the

* Seckend. p. 19.

only key to the discovery of the real motives, by which he was influenced in his public transactions. Rash and prejudiced writers, of the popish persuasion, choose to represent him as having been under the dominion of avarice or ambition; but till they can produce some proofs beyond their own suspicions or bare affirmations, all such slanderous accusations must fall to the ground. In truth, no man was ever more free from avarice and ambition: the fear of God predominated to a very high degree in Luther's mind; and a nice sensibility of conscience, attended with an uncommon insight into the depth of our natural depravity, allowed him no rest. As yet he understood not the Scriptures; nor felt that peace of God which passeth understanding. He had too much light to sit down in slothful content and indifference, and too little to discern the rich treasures of the gospel, and apply its healing promises to deep convictions of sin and misery. He remained for above a year not only in constant anxiety and suspense, but in perpetual dread and alarm. All these things are abundantly evident, and beyond all contradiction, to those who are acquainted with his writings.

In the second year after Luther had entered into the monastery, he accidentally met with a Latin Bible in the library. It proved to him a treasure. Then he first discovered, that there were *more* Scripture passages extant than those which were read to the people: for the Scriptures were at that time very little known in the world. In reading the word of God with prayer, his understanding was gradually enlightened, and he found some beams of evangelical comfort to dart into his soul. The same year he was refreshed in his sickness by the discourse of an old monk, who showed him that remis-

sion of sins was to be apprehended by faith alone, and referred him to a passage in Bernard's sermon on the annunciation, where the same doctrine was taught. With incredible ardour he now gave himself up to the study of the Scriptures and the books of Augustine. He was at length regarded as the most ingenious and learned man of his order in Germany. But the soul of Luther was constantly panting for something very different from secular glory.

He was ordained in the year 1507, and in the next year was called to the professorship of Wittemberg by Staupitius, where a theatre was opened for the display of his talents both as a teacher of philosophy and as a popular preacher. He excelled in both capacities. Eloquent by nature, and powerful in moving the affections, acquainted also in a very uncommon manner with the elegancies and energy of his native tongue, he became the wonder of his age. These things were allowed very liberally by his enemies;* but it ought to be observed, that the exercises of his own mind, by which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he was led more and more into Christian truth, would naturally add a strength to his oratory, unattainable by those who speak not from the heart. Martin Polichius, a doctor of law and medicine, exclaimed, "This monk will confound all the doctors, will exhibit new doctrine, and reform the whole Roman church; for he is intent on reading the writings of the prophets and apostles, and he depends on the word of Jesus Christ; this, neither the philosophers nor the sophists can subvert." He, who spake thus, was himself looked on as a prodigy of wisdom; and, I suppose, a degree of discernment, less than his, might have

* Page 18, Maimbourg. Page 22, Varillas.

shown an attentive observer, that the didactic plan of Luther was that of an original thinker, who was not likely to confine himself to the beaten track, but to produce something new to mankind. Melancthon's concise account entirely agrees with this statement: "Policlius," says he, "often declared, that there was a strength of intellect in this man, which he plainly foresaw would produce a revolution in the popular and scholastic religion of the times." Nor does it seem at all improbable, that if Luther had followed merely the dictates of his own adventurous genius, he might have been the inventor of some novel theological schemes and doctrines. But all tendency to fanciful excursions in the important concerns of religion, was effectually restrained and chastised in the mind of our reformer, by his profound reverence for the written word: moreover, from his first entrance into the monastery, he appears to have been taught of God, and to have been led more and more into such discoveries of native depravity, as to render a man low in his own eyes, and dispose him to receive the genuine gospel of Christ.

In the year 1510, he was sent to Rome on some business, which related to his own monastery; and this he discharged with so much ability and success, that on his return he was compelled by the vicar-general to assume the degree of doctor of divinity. He writes, that he did this with great reluctance, and entirely from obedience to his superiors. It is easy indeed for a man to say this; but, from the mouth of Luther it is with me decisive of its truth. For veracity and integrity do evidently appear to have remarkably entered into the character of this reformer, as indeed these virtues are always eminently to be found in those, who have had the most genuine ex-

perience of Christianity. The expenses attending this high degree were defrayed by the elector of Saxony, who always admired Luther and was perfectly convinced of the profundity of his learning and the rectitude of his views of religion. While he had been at Rome, he had discovered something of the singularity of his character, which had attracted the attention of the Italian priests. The external rights of religion, which to them were matter of political formality, with him were serious exercises. While they hurried over their exercises of the mass, he performed his with a solemnity and devotion which excited their ridicule, and they bad him to repeat them with more rapidity. A thoughtful mind like his, could not conceive that religious employments should be discharged with levity, and he returned to his monastery more fully convinced than ever, that Rome was not the scene, in which a serious pastor could properly learn the rudiments of religion. He studied and taught the Scriptures with increasing ardour and alacrity, and after he had been created doctor, in the year 1512, he expounded the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans, to the great satisfaction of his audience. He studied the Hebrew and the Greek languages, and highly valued the philological labours of the famous Erasmus of Rotterdam, the renowned reviver of classical literature; and while he concurred with that great man in his contempt of monastic trifles, he was intensely studious to learn better and more scriptural notions of God and his attributes, than those which Erasmus so ingeniously satirized. To build was, however, found much more arduous, as it is certainly a far more important work, than to pull down; and from the time that Luther was created a doctor of divinity, he conscientiously devoted his time and

talents to the sacred office. Already he was suspected of heresy, because of his dislike of the scholastic doctrines; and he was induced, both from the natural soundness of his understanding, and from the spiritual exercises of his own heart, to reject the Aristotelian corruptions of theology, and to study the genuine doctrines of Scripture.

In 1516, he thus wrote to a friend:—"I desire to know what your soul is doing; whether, wearied at length with its own righteousness, it learns to refresh itself and to rest in the righteousness of Christ. The temptation of presumption in our age is strong in many, and specially in those who labour to be just and good with all their might, and at the same time are ignorant of the righteousness of God, which in Christ is conferred upon us with a rich exuberance of gratuitous liberality. They seek in themselves to work that which is good, in order that they may have a confidence of standing before God, adorned with virtues and merits, which is an impossible attempt. You, my friend, used to be of this same opinion, or rather this same mistake; so was I; but now I am fighting against the error, but have not yet prevailed."

This interesting and instructive letter demonstrates what was the religious frame of our monk at that time. He had received the grace of Christ, and knew the true and only way of salvation; though, in his own eyes at least, he was weak in the faith. He both felt and preached the fundamentals of the gospel, before he appeared in the field against popery; and if he had not been absolutely persecuted into a secession, such was his modesty and love of peace and order, and so little had he then studied the particular corruptions of the hierarchy, that

* Seckend. p. 20.

he would, in all probability, have continued to his death an obedient son of the Roman church. Many excellent men had done so before him; because, through inadvertency, they had remained unconscious of the absurdities of the predominant religion. The methods of Providence were, however, admirable in conducting Luther into the depths of a controversy, to which he seems to have had no inclination. Indulgences were preached, and he saw the evil of them in a practical, rather than a theoretical light, and was thence drawn undesignedly into a contest, the effects of which were salutary to so many nations. Those, who apprehend that when he began the contest, he was ignorant of the nature of the gospel, appear not to have known the order and method, by which the mind of the Saxon reformer was conducted into religious truth.

In the same year he was appointed, by Staupitius, subaltern vicar: by which office he was authorized to visit about forty monasteries in Misnia and Thuringia. Returning to Wittemberg in June, he wrote to Spalatinus, who was the secretary of the elector, and always showed himself a steady friend of Luther, in terms which expressed the frank effusions of his own heart, on a review of the state of religion in the country, which the visitation had given him an opportunity of accurately observing. "Many things please your prince, and look great in his eyes, which are displeasing to God. In secular wisdom, I confess that he is of all men most knowing; but, in things pertaining to God, and which relate to the salvation of souls, I must own that he is blind sevenfold." This was the true character of Frederick, at that time, though justly esteemed the wisest prince of the age; and though he was sincerely and ingenuously desirous of

promoting religion and virtue. In fact, his good understanding was oppressed with a heavy load of the most pitiable superstitions. He was, however, by no means displeased with Luther for using freedom of speech, and there is reason to believe that, afterwards, he learnt more of the true nature of the gospel, though by very slow degrees.

In the October of the same year, Luther communicated to his learned friend Spalatinus, his thoughts concerning certain of the fathers, and also concerning Erasmus's method of interpreting the Scripture.* This memorable epistle deserves the particular attention of the reader, as it furnishes judicious and connected observations on Augustine and his contemporaries, and on the fathers both who preceded and who followed them; and as it likewise suggests very useful reflections on the comparative merits of theologians in different periods, from the days of Cyprian to those of Luther and Erasmus.

Luther, to Georg. Spalatinus:—“That, which strikes my mind in considering Erasmus, is this; in interpreting the apostle's account of the righteousness of works, or, of the law, he understands by these terms ceremonial observances *only*. In the next place, though he admits the doctrine of original sin, he will not allow, that the apostle speaks of it in the fifth chapter to the Romans. Now, if he had carefully read Augustine's Anti-Pelagian tracts, especially his account of the spirit and the letter, of the guilt of sin and the remission of it; and had observed how he speaks in perfect unison with the best of the fathers, from Cyprian to Ambrose, he might have better understood the apostle Paul, and also have conceived more highly of Augustine as an expositor, than

* Lib. I. ep. 20. See also Appendix, Spalatinus.

he has hitherto done. In dissenting from Erasmus's judgment in this point, I must frankly declare, that I as much prefer Augustine's expositions to those of Jerome, as he prefers those of Jerome to Augustine's. I am, it is true, an Augustine monk; but that circumstance has no influence on my judgment; for till I had read this father's works, I had not the least prejudice in his favour. But I see that Jerome studiously endeavours to draw every thing to a merely historical meaning,* and, what is very extraordinary, where he expounds the Scriptures as it were occasionally or accidentally, as in his epistles for instance, he does it in a much sounder manner than when he interprets professedly and on purpose. The righteousness of the law is by no means confined to ceremonies; for though it includes these, it still more directly respects an obedience to the whole decalogue, which obedience, when it takes place to a certain degree and yet has not Christ for its foundation, though it may produce such men as your Fabricius's, and your Regulus's, that is, very upright moralists according to man's judgment, has nothing in it of the nature of genuine righteousness. For men are not made truly righteous, as Aristotle supposes, by performing certain actions which are externally good,—for they may still be counterfeit characters;—but, men must have righteous principles in the first place, and then they will not fail to perform righteous actions. God first respects Abel, and then his offering.† I beg you would put Erasmus in mind of these things. In so doing, you will discharge the duties both of a friend and of a Christian. As on the one

* A merely historical meaning. A mere narration of facts, as opposed to a spiritual meaning, and a practical application to every man's conscience.

† Gen. iv.

hand, I hope and wish that he may be celebrated through the whole Christian world, so on the other I fear many may be induced, by the authority of his name, to patronise that literal and lifeless mode of interpreting Scripture, into which almost all commentators have fallen since the time of Augustine. I may be thought presumptuous and perhaps severe, in thus criticising many great men: my apology is, that I feel a concern for the cause of true theology, and for the salvation of the brethren."

A little before the controversy concerning indulgences, George, duke of Saxony, intreated Staupitius to send him some learned and worthy preacher. The vicar-general, in compliance with his request, despatched Luther with strong recommendations to Dresden. George gave him an order to preach: the sum of Luther's sermon was this;* That no man ought to despair of the possibility of salvation; that those, who heard the word of God with attentive minds, were true disciples of Christ, and were elected, and predestinated to eternal life. He enlarged on the subject, and showed that the whole doctrine of predestination, if the foundation be laid in Christ, was of singular efficacy to dispel that fear, by which men, trembling under the sense of their own unworthiness, are tempted to fly from God, who ought to be our sovereign refuge. An honourable matron, who attended the palace, and who had heard Luther, was asked by George the duke, at dinner, how she liked the discourse. I should die in peace, said she, if I could hear such another sermon. The duke, in much anger, replied, "I would give a large sum of money, that a sermon of this sort, which encourages men in a licentious

* Seck. p. 23.

course of life, had never been preached." And he repeated this several times. Within the space of a month, the lady was confined in bed by sickness, and soon after died, rejoicing in her prospects of future glory. Fabri- cius concludes the account with saying,* "From that time Luther came no more to Dresden." That capital of modern Saxony was then part of the dukedom of George, who proved one of the most virulent enemies of Lutheranism. He was the uncle of prince Frederick the Wise. Like pharisaic formalists in all ages, he per- versely misconstrued the doctrine of free salvation by Jesus Christ, which Luther preached, and which is in- tended to enable humble and repenting souls to serve God with lively faith and cheerful hope. The duke of Saxony, I observe, perversely misconstrued this doctrine, as though it had a tendency to persuade men to live in sin; but the good matron above mentioned, who resided at his court, appears to have tasted of that bitterness of true conviction of sin, which only can render the doc- trine of grace delightful and salutary to the mind.

How precious this doctrine must have been to the mind of Luther himself, may be conceived from a well authenticated circumstance,† which evinces the state of mental bondage in which he had been held. Having for many days neglected, through the intenseness of his studies, to recite the canonical hours, he, in compliance with the pope's decrees, and to satisfy his conscience, actually shut himself up in his closet, and recited what he had omitted, with punctilio exactness, and with such severe attention and abstinence, as reduced his strength exceedingly, brought on nearly a total want of sleep for the space of five weeks, and almost produced

* Orig. Saxon. Lib. vii.

† Vol. i. p. 344. Bavar. Seck. p. 21.

symptoms of a weakened intellect. Is it to be wondered at, that he, who at length found relief and liberty by the grace of Christ, should be zealous to preach the mystery of the cross to his fellow creatures?

CHAPTER III.

The Progress of the Controversy concerning Indulgences, till the Conclusion of the Conferences between Luther and Cajetan.

TETZEL, the Dominican, alarmed at the publication of Luther's theses, opposed to them one hundred and six propositions, in which he attempted to refute the arguments of the Augustine monk; and not content with this, by virtue of his inquisitorial authority, he also directed Luther's compositions to be burnt. It appears from very authentic documents,* that this shameless monk was an experienced veteran in the traffic of indulgences. He himself, in the year 1507, that is, ten years before the present dispute with Luther, had collected at Friberg two thousand florins in the space of two days by the iniquitous sale of that article. The sale of indulgences, therefore, was no new thing in the papal system; and the instance before us proves, that occasionally at least, the scandalous practice might be carried to a very great extent. It is, however, a relief to the indignant mind, to find that ecclesiastical history furnishes some few examples of pious Christians with enlightened understanding, who had bravely withheld the growing corruption. To mention one: John, bishop of Misnia, had effectually discharged from his own diocese the popish proclaimers

* Moller. Cron. Fribergen.

of indulgences, who like merchants, had been vending every where their certificates of pardon of sins, as if they were an ordinary commodity.* He had blamed the people for foolishly putting their money into a chest, of which they had not the key; and had declared that, by reading the Bible, he had discovered the apostolical religion to be very different from that which prevailed at present. This good prelate, a little before his death, happening to hear that Tetzel was again employed in a similar way, prophesied he would be the last of the dealers in indulgences, on account of his shameless audacity.† Notwithstanding this, and every other warning or remonstrance, the Dominican commissioner persevered in the traffic with augmented industry; and so much incensed the minds of Luther's disciples at Wittemberg, that they ventured, by way of retaliation, to burn publicly his propositions, or theses,‡ as they were called,

* Chytr. Lib. II.

† "A soul," said Tetzel in his theses, "may go to heaven, in the very moments, in which the money is cast into the chest. The man, who buys off his own sins by indulgences, merits more than he who gives alms to the poor, unless it be in extreme necessity." Other extraordinary assertions are likewise contained in his tracts, which demonstrate that Protestant writers have not misrepresented the controversy before us. Suffice it to mention two sentences more. "The ministers of the church do not barely declare men's sins forgiven, but do really pardon them by virtue of the sacraments, and by the power of the keys.—They may impose a punishment to be suffered *after-death*; and it is better to send a penitent with a small penance into purgatory, than by refusing him absolution to send him into hell." Du Pin, B. II. Seck. Lib. I.

‡ When Tetzel was at Leipsic, and had scraped together a great deal of money from all ranks of people, a nobleman, who suspected the imposture, put this question to him, "Can you grant absolution for a sin, which a man shall intend to commit in future?" "Yes," replied the frontless commissioner, "but on condition that the proper sum of money be actually paid down." The nobleman instantly produced the sum demanded; and in return, received a diploma sealed and signed by Tetzel, absolving him from the unexplained crime, which he secretly intended to commit. Not long after, when Tetzel was about to leave Leipsic, the nobleman made inquiry respecting the road he

with every mark of disapprobation and ignominy. Luther was much grieved at this rash action; and finding himself to be accused of instigating his followers to commit it, writes thus to a friend. "I wonder, you could believe, that I was the author of the deed. Think you that I am so destitute of common sense, as to stigmatize, in such a manner, a person in so high an office? I know better the rules of ecclesiastical subordination, and have more regard to my own character, both as a monk and as a theologian, than to act so." There were also persons, who, pretending to be in possession of court intrigues, were fond of circulating the report, that Luther had published his theses by the secret instigations of the elector Frederick. Luther, with great concern, takes notice of this false surmise. In a letter to his friend Spalatinus, he thus expresses his feelings: "I am heartily vexed at the scandalous report, which is diffused with much malignity, namely, that in all I do, I am only the engine of our illustrious prince, for the purpose of disgracing the archbishop of Mentz. What do you think I ought to do on the occasion? Shall I open the matter to the elector? I am extremely concerned, that the prince should be suspected on my account, and I cannot bear the thought of being the origin of contention among persons of so great dignity."

Luther also published a sermon, preached against indulgences, which Tetzel answered; and this produced a

would probably travel, waited for him in ambush at a convenient place, attacked and robbed him; then beat him soundly with a stick, sent him back again to Leipsic with his chest empty, and at parting said, "This is the fault I intended to commit, and for which I have your absolution."—This humorous story may seem scarcely worthy of the dignity of history; but it is recorded by the cautious Seckendorf, and may serve to show the almost incredible lengths to which the popish agents proceeded in the detestable traffic so clearly laid open by this anecdote.

reply from Luther. About the same time, Henry, duke of Brunswick, who was afterwards distinguished among the most active enemies of Lutheranism, appeared in the contest; and in a public writing accused Frederick of secretly supporting Luther. The well known character of the elector, for caution and prudence, seems however to have prevented the report from gaining much credit. This prince took extraordinary care not to involve himself unnecessarily in the concerns of Luther. Our intrepid reformer, in all his opposition to Tetzel, most certainly had no colleague or assistant; and he himself declared, that he never had conversed with the elector Frederick in his whole life.

Luther never did things by halves. Accordingly, as the affair of selling indulgences had laid firm hold of his mind, he could neither quiet his uneasiness, nor smother his indignation. He still continued to preach and to write on the same subject, till the end of the year 1517. In the next year he went to Heidelberg, and was courteously received by Wolfgang, the brother of the elector Palatine, who was the scholar of Ecolampadius, a name, afterwards renowned among the reformers. Luther had been advised by his friends not to go to Heidelberg, on account of the danger to which he might be exposed. But, as a general assembly of the Augustinian monks had been called at that place, he thought it right to obey his superiors, whatever might be the event. The official business of the assembly was of no great moment; and therefore we need not be surprised that the zealous and active spirit of Luther was not content with barely discharging the duties of his order. A providential opportunity was offered of propagating divine truth, and it behoved him not to neglect it. While, therefore, he re-

mained at this place, he wrote some propositions, in which he opposed the prevailing notions* concerning justification, faith, and works. His capital object in them was to demonstrate the doctrine of justification, before God, by faith, and not by our works and deservings. The theses or positions, which he intended to defend, were publicly exposed to view in writing, according to custom; and he called upon Leonard Bejar, a monk of the Augustinian order, to be his respondent. The professors of the university disapproved of the controversy; and therefore it was held in the Augustinian monastery. A large concourse of people attended, and a number of the learned bore a part in the disputation. Among the hearers were Martin Bucer, and John Brentius, men, afterwards eminent in the work of reformation. These and other persons, who in process of time became celebrated theologians, admired the acuteness, promptitude, and meekness of Luther, were struck with the truths of the gospel, which were new to their ears, and desired further instruction of him in private. This was the seed-time of the gospel in the Palatinate; and these were the beginnings of the reformation in that electorate. Luther's disciples cultivated and taught the same doctrines in private, and after a time ventured to teach them publicly in the university.

While the cause of evangelical truth was thus making gradual advances in Germany, two celebrated Romanists, Eckius of Ingolstadt, and Prierias a Dominican, master of the sacred palace at Rome, took up their pens against the theses of Luther, who, by these means was led into a fresh literary contest. Luther published elaborate answers on all the disputed points; and managed this

* Seckend. 29, from a MS. Hist. of the Palatine Churches by Altingius.

part of the controversy with so much moderation and gentleness, that his inimical historian Maimbourg, has no way left of reviling the man he dislikes, but by saying, “On this occasion he acted contrary to his natural disposition.” Let the reader infer the real disposition of Luther from authenticated facts, and not from the insinuations of prejudiced papists. At this time, he wrote also to his own diocesan, and to his vicar-general. To his diocesan, the bishop of Brandenburg, he declared, that he did not *determine*, but *dispute*, using the liberty allowed to scholastic men in all ages. “I fear not,” says he, “bulls and menaces; it is the audaciousness and the ignorance of men, that induce me to stand forth, though with much reluctance: were there not a weighty cause for it, no one, out of my own little sphere, should ever hear of me. If the cause I defend, be not the work of God, I would have nothing to do with it; let it perish. Let him alone have glory, to whom alone glory belongs.” He endeavoured to rouse the spirit of his vicar-general, thus: “When I first heard you say, ‘that true repentance begins with the love of righteousness and of God,’ the words made a deep and durable impression on my heart, as if they had come by a voice directly from heaven.” Hence, he said, he was filled with grief to see the true doctrine of repentance, superseded by indulgences. He expressed his great unwillingness to be drawn into the contest; but, being defamed as an enemy of the pope, he felt himself constrained to defend his own character. He, therefore, begged Staupitius to transmit his trifling writings, as he calls them, to pope Leo X. that they might speak for him at Rome. “Not,” says he, “that I would involve *you* in my dangers. I desire alone to stand the shock of the contest. Let

Christ see to it, whether the cause be mine or his. To the kind admonitions of my friends, who would warn me of danger, my answer is, The poor man has no fears. I protest, that property, reputation, and honours, shall all be of no estimation with me, compared with the defence of truth. I have only a frail body to lose, and that weighed down with constant fatigue. If, in obedience to God, I lose it through violence or fraud, what is the loss of a few hours of life? Sufficient for me is the lovely Redeemer and Advocate, my Lord Jesus Christ, to whose praise I will sing as long as I live."

Luther was far advanced in evangelical knowledge, and appears to have been an experienced Christian some time before he became known to the world. Yet was he still strongly wedded to the habits of superstition; and he slowly admitted the conviction of the antichristian character of the hierarchy. He dreaded the sin of schism: and the impetuous fire of his temper was perpetually checked by the admonitions of conscience, and by the fear of offending his Maker. In this singular character, there was certainly united an assemblage of qualities, rarely found together in the same person; in particular, the greatest caution in conduct with a temper remarkably ardent and choleric. Too often this last betrayed him into a blameable asperity of language, yet seldom does it seem to have influenced his measures or plans of action. The poet's simple, but sublime description of one of his heroes, "he feared God, and he feared none besides," is eminently true of the Saxon theologian.

While the literary contest was carrying on between Luther and his antagonists, there were at Rome those, who blamed the pope for not interesting himself in a controversy, which, by exciting a spirit of resistance, and

producing divisions, daily increased in magnitude and importance, and which, in its termination, might prove extremely injurious to the authority of the Romish church. With how much indifference and contempt Leo X. at first beheld the ecclesiastical disputes in Germany, how indolent was the disposition of this pontiff, and how improvident he showed himself in defending the papal jurisdiction, all this appears in the strongest light from the absurd and careless answer which he is said to have given to Silvester Prierias,* when that zealous and learned Dominican showed him some of Luther's heretical publications concerning indulgences. "Brother Martin," said he, "*is a man of a very fine genius*, and these squabbles are the mere effusions of monastic envy." Prierias, however, undertook the support of the pontifical authority; but, in writing against the reformer, he managed the Romish cause with so much heat and imprudence, that the pope himself presently directed him to be silent in future.† This writer, in the event, did much service to Lutheranism. In an affair, which required the utmost delicacy, he expressed his sentiments without the least caution or moderation; and exalted the pope's power even far beyond that of all general councils. Luther availed himself of the temerity of his adversary, and publicly exposed, with much severity, the odious doctrines which he had inculcated.

In the same year 1518, a rash author of a similar description, attacked Luther with all the virulence of an enraged and bigoted Roman Catholic. This was Hogostratus, a German Dominican inquisitor, who repre-

* Prierias was master of the sacred palace, and general of his order. He died of the plague in 1523.

† Erasm. Epis.

sented the growing heresy as now become incurable by any of the milder methods. Penal and compulsory remedies, he said, were absolutely necessary; and he exhorted the pontiff, by means of the sword and fire, to deliver mankind from the detestable innovator.* Many of the monks† joined in this clamour with incessant vociferation among the people. Scarcely a word came from their mouths, except, Heresy! Blasphemy! Schism! "I relate," says Erasmus, "what I saw with my own eyes; and I am convinced that no one thing tended more to dispose the people in Luther's favour, than this imprudent conduct of the clergy. His propositions concerning the indulgences were soberly stated; and if *they* had but argued the points in dispute in the same cool way, these ruinous consequences would never have taken place."

At length the Roman pontiff was roused from his state of indolence and security. Not only the avaricious vendors of indulgences vociferated against Luther, as Demetrius and the silversmiths did against St. Paul, when their craft was in danger,‡ but, from all quarters, complaints of the progress of heresy were sent to Rome. Even the emperor Maximilian I. represented to the pope, how necessary his interference was become. The Augustine monk, he said, was disseminating heretical and destructive doctrines, was obstinate in adhering to his opinions, and active in propagating them; and he had made many converts, even among persons of rank and distinction.§

The imprudence of Leo X. at this critical moment, may seem almost the consequence of judicial infatuation.

* Maimb. p. 38.

† Erasm. Epis.

‡ Acts, xix. 24.

§ Maximilian's Letter. Op. Luth. vol. i.

At once he passed from the extremes of neglect and indifference to those of tyrannical violence and blind tenacity. He ordered Luther to appear at Rome within sixty days, to answer for himself before certain judges, of whom his antagonist Silvester Prierias, was appointed one. Our reformer took the wisest method to protect himself against the impending storm. He instantly sent an account of the pope's citation to his friend Spalatinus, who was then with the elector Frederick at the diet of Augsburg; and in the strongest terms requested, that, through the interposition of the prince, his cause might be heard in Germany and not at Rome. Frederick the *Wise* understood the arts and practice of the court of Rome, and was convinced of the propriety, and even the necessity of seconding Luther's wishes. Accordingly he urged the competency of a German tribunal in an ecclesiastical controversy of that nature; and it seems entirely owing to the address, the penetration, and the firmness of this great prince, that the Roman pontiff, at last consented, that cardinal Cajetan, who was then his legate at Augsburg, should take cognizance of the matter. If the delinquent showed proper marks of penitence and submission, he was to be kindly received again into the bosom of the church; but if he refused to appear before his appointed judge, the legate was commissioned then to denounce publicly, against him and his adherents, all the thunders and anathemas of papal indignation.*

Leo X. perceiving how great a favourite Luther was with the elector of Saxony, judged it expedient, by all the means in his power, to secure the support and concurrence of that prince in an affair, which he had now begun to consider as of the greatest moment. For this

* The pope's directions to Cajetan. *Luther, Op. vol. i.*

purpose he acquainted Frederick, in a polite and affectionate, but very artful epistle, of the measures which he had been compelled to adopt, through the disobedience of an Augustine monk, whose very “order and profession should have perpetually reminded him of the duties of humility and obsequiousness.” He styles Luther a son of iniquity, a prevaricator, who boasts of the protection of the elector, but, in fact, reverences no superior whatever. I know, says the pope, he has no ground for representing you as one, who encourages and supports him; nevertheless, I exhort you in the Lord, and as you would preserve the reputation and dignity of a good Catholic prince, to be on your guard, lest the lustre of your highly honoured ancestors should be in any degree tarnished by this calumny. I know of no blame respecting you; but I would wish you to avoid the very suspicion of blame, in which the rashness of this man may involve you. He then proceeds: As many learned and religious persons, and in particular, our beloved son, Prierias, the master of our sacred palace, have informed us of the heretical proceedings of Martin Luther, we have ordered him to be called upon to answer for himself; and for this purpose, we have given *explicit directions* to cardinal Cajetan, our legate. Lastly, he concludes with a strong exhortation and injunction, that Frederick, in virtue of the holy obedience which he owed to the Roman church, should contribute his utmost to secure the person of Luther, and deliver him up to the power of the Holy See: he declared, however, at the same time, that if he was found innocent, he should be dismissed in peace and in favour; and even if he was guilty, he would exercise clemency towards him largely upon his repentance.*

* Pope's letter to the Elector of Saxony. Tom. I, Witt. p. 204.

Frederick provided for the safety of his favourite Luther in the following manner. He gave him letters of recommendation to the senate and principal inhabitants of Augsburg; who, instantly on his arrival, exhorted him not to appear before the cardinal, till he had obtained a promise of safe conduct from the emperor, who was then hunting at some distance from the city. Through the influence of these same persons, this important request of safe conduct was granted; and after three days the emperor's council announced to the cardinal, that the public faith was pledged to Luther, and therefore he must take no violent steps against him. The cardinal answered, "It is very well; nevertheless, I shall do my duty."

Luther informs us, that during those three days he was constantly pressed, by a very troublesome emissary of Cajetan, to recant. If I would but recant, he said, all would be right. He further relates a curious conversation which took place between himself and this emissary. He came on the third day, and expostulated as follows:

Why will you not go to the cardinal? he is waiting to receive you in the kindest manner.

I must listen to the advice of those excellent persons to whom I am recommended by the elector; and they tell me, I must by no means go to him till I have obtained the public faith. The moment *that* is obtained, I am ready to go.

What, said he, evidently in much agitation, Do you think that prince Frederick will take up arms on your account?

It is very far from my wish.

Where do you mean to stay?

In the open air.

Pray, suppose you had the pope and his cardinals all in your power, what would you do with them?

I would treat them with the greatest respect and honour.

So; said he, waving his hand in the Italian manner, and went away, and returned no more.*

At the first interview, Luther prostrated himself before the cardinal, and was courteously received. But, at the same time, he was required to retract his errors, to avoid them in future, and to abstain from every thing, which might disturb the peace of the church. And these three things were stated expressly to be the order of the most holy pope. Luther desired that he might be permitted to see the pope's *brief*. But this request was peremptorily refused.

The heaviest charge against him seems to have been, that he had transgressed the bull of Clement VI. which had defined the nature and extent of indulgences; and it may easily be conceived, with how much indignation the cardinal would hear the defence of Luther, namely, that the holy Scriptures, which he could produce in support of his own doctrines, had abundantly more weight with him than a pontifical bull, which in fact proved nothing, but merely recited the opinion of Thomas Aquinas. Cajetan, in answer, exalted the authority of the pope above all councils, above the church, and even above the Scriptures themselves. To this Luther opposed the appeal of the university of Paris, whose reputation had always stood high, as the parent of science, and the defender of the purest Christianity. Cajetan, in a rage, declared that the Parisians would meet with due punish-

* Luth. Pref.

ment; and that Gerson,* whose writings Luther had quoted, was *damned*, together with all his followers. So extravagantly high were the ideas of papal power conceived by this cardinal, that even the very moderate contradiction, given in France to the pontiff, appeared in his eyes an unpardonable sin. Little did he then imagine how much more openly his magnificent lord and master was to be opposed within the short space of a few months.

Frowns and menaces were by no means adapted to intimidate the determined mind of the Saxon reformer. He continued to insist on the authority of Scripture. He owned he might have erred, but he thought it reasonable that his errors should be pointed out, on *scriptural* grounds, before he should be required to retract.

When Luther found, that not the smallest progress was made by conversation with the cardinal, and that all his fine promises of kind treatment amounted precisely to this, "you must either recant, or suffer punishment," he wisely determined to commit his answers to writing. In so doing, says he, the oppressed find comfort in two ways; in the first place, what is written, may be submitted to the judgment of others; and in the second, one has a better opportunity of working upon the fears and the conscience of an arrogant despot, who would otherwise overpower one by his imperious language.†

Agreeably to this resolution, he appeared before the cardinal with a notary and witnesses, repeated his protestations of general obedience to the church, and his perfect readiness to recant any error of which he could

* The reader will remember, that this celebrated chancellor of the university of Paris, maintained, at the council of Constance, the superiority of a general council over the pope.

† Luther's letter to Fred.

be convicted. Cajetan replied with so much acrimony, that the accused monk had no opportunity of explaining or of vindicating his sentiments. He absolutely refused to dispute with Luther, either in public or in private; he would not even consent that a single word of his own answers should be put down in writing. He continued to press for a recantation.

Staupitius, who was present at the scene, and who hitherto had acted the part of a steady friend of Luther, rose up, and intreated the legate to permit the accused to return his answers at length in writing. To which request, he, with great difficulty, at last acceded.

At the next conference, Luther exhibited his written explanation and defence, which the cardinal treated with the greatest contempt. He told him, he had filled his paper with passages of Scripture, which were irrelevant, and in general that his answers were those of a perfect idiot. He condescended, however, to say, he would send them to Rome. Lastly, he ordered Luther to depart, and to come no more into his sight, unless he disposed to recant.

Notwithstanding this rough treatment, it was Luther's firm opinion, that it would have given the cardinal great pleasure to hear him recant. It may be thought some confirmation of this sentiment, that in the evening of the very day in which this last conference took place, he sent for the vicar-general Staupitius, and desired him to persuade his young monk to retract. Staupitius promised to do his utmost. "You must answer his scriptural arguments," said Cajetan. Staupitius replied ingenuously, "That is above my power. I am his inferior both in capacity and in knowledge of the Scriptures."

Throughout this whole conference at Augsburg, car-

dinal Cajetan appears to have been conscious how ill qualified he was to enter the lists with Luther, as a disputant in theological questions. Indeed, the doctrines of the gospel, as far as we can judge, gave him little concern. His anxiety was, how he might best ensure obedience to the pontifical mandates. He inquired not whether these mandates were reasonable or repugnant to Scripture, it was sufficient for him to know that they were the dictates of a pope. The decretal of pope Clement VI. which he urged with so much heat and positiveness against Luther in the dispute respecting indulgences, maintained, that "One drop of Christ's blood being sufficient to redeem the whole human race, the remaining quantity, that was shed in the garden and upon the cross, was left as a legacy to the church to be *a treasure from whence indulgences* were to be drawn and administered by the Ronian pontiffs:"* the Augustine monk had, for some time past, been too much enlightened to digest such wild superstitious inventions; and the man, who could call upon him, upon these grounds, to renounce his errors, was not to be reasoned with. Still it required extraordinary courage to deliver in a formal protest against the belief of tenets, which at that time were both established by the highest authority, and also supposed to have been dictated by an infallible judgment.

Some objections were made to Luther's ideas of justification by faith: but Cajetan did not scruple to confess, that, if he would but have retracted his opposition to the indulgences, all other differences might have been composed in an amicable manner; and that his opinions concerning the efficacy of faith in justification and in the

* Maclaine in Mosheim, vol. ii. chap. ii.

sacrament, admitted of being modified and interpreted, so as to be inoffensive. When Staupitius was informed of this circumstance, he expressed a wish, that the cardinal had avowed that sentiment in the presence of the notary and the witnesses; because, then, said he, there would have been clear proof that, at Rome, *money* was held in greater estimation than *faith*.

Luther, on the contrary, considered the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith as of infinite importance. He declared, that he would rather retract every thing which he had said upon other subjects, than *that*, which he must adhere to with his dying breath. That in regard to indulgences, their intrinsic nature, whatever it might be, could not be altered by ostentatious praises and honours, but that if he gave up the article of justification by faith, he should, in fact, deny Jesus Christ himself. That, though the cardinal had promised to conduct the inquiry according to the Sacred Scriptures, and the rules of the church, he had not produced a single text of Scripture against him, nor any one authority from the holy fathers. Lastly, that he was confident no answer could ever be given to the scriptural arguments and the authorities, which he had produced in support of the doctrine in question.* Our peace, says he, consists in coming to Christ in lively faith: if a man believe not the promise, he may practise confession to all the world, and he may be absolved a thousand thousand times even by the pope himself, but he will never obtain, on good grounds, a quiet conscience.†

It was on Friday, the fourteenth of October, 1518, that Luther made his last appearance before the pope's legate. A report was spread, that, notwithstanding the

* Epist. ad Fred.

† Resolut. de Indulg.

engagement of a safe conduct, he was to be seized and confined in irons. He remained, however, at Augsburg till the succeeding Monday. He heard nothing from the cardinal. How great must have been his anxiety! On the Monday, by a letter couched in the most respectful terms, he begged pardon for any irreverent or unbecoming language towards the pontiff, which might have escaped him in the heat and hurry of the debate; he even promised to desist from treating the subject of indulgences any more, provided his antagonists were enjoined to observe a similar silence. But to retract his sentiment, or give up the truth, he absolutely refused. He said, his conscience would not permit him to act in that manner. He acknowledged that his friends, and especially his vicar-general, had taken great pains to make him think humbly, submit his own opinion and form a right judgment: but, said he, neither the favour nor the advice, nor the command of any man ought ever to make me do or say what is contrary to my conscience. To this letter he received no answer.

On the next day he sent another letter to Cajetan, expressed in more spirited language and nearer to his usual strain. "He conceived he had done every thing which became an obedient son of the church. He had undertaken a long and dangerous journey; he was a man of a weak body, and had very little money to spend. He had laid the book, which contained his opinions, at the feet of his holiness the pope; he had appeared before his most reverend father the cardinal; and he was now waiting to be instructed how far he was right in his opinions, and how far wrong—it could no longer serve any good purpose to spend his time there, and be a burden to his friends. He was really in want of money. Besides,

the cardinal had told him *viva voce*, to come no more into his sight, unless he would recant;" and, said Luther, "in my former letter I have distinctly pointed out all the recantation I can possibly make." He then signified his positive determination to leave the place; but not before he had formally appealed from the pope's legate, nay from the pope himself, "ill informed, to the same most holy Leo X. that he might be better informed." In prosecuting this appeal he confessed that he acted rather from the judgment of some persons of distinction than from his own. If he had been left entirely to himself, he should have thought an appeal unnecessary in this case. He wished to refer every thing to the determination of the church. What could he do more? He was not a contentious adversary, but a tractable scholar. Even the elector Frederick, he knew, would be better pleased with his appeal than his recantation. He therefore besought the cardinal to consider both his departure and his appeal as the effect of necessity and of the authority of his friends. 'They said *what* will you retract? Is *your* retraction to be the rule of *our* faith? If any thing, which you have advanced, is to be condemned, let the church decide, and do you obey. This reasoning, in his mind, was irresistible.

Luther waited four whole days, reckoning from the day of his dismissal by the cardinal; and still received no further orders. The suspense was extremely afflicting; and both himself and his friends began to suspect that this *total silence* portended violence to his person. To prevent being seized and imprisoned, he quitted Augsburg very early in the morning of the nineteenth of October, 1518. A friendly senator ordered the gates of the city to be opened, and he mounted a horse, which

Staupitius had procured for him. He had neither boots nor spurs, nor sword; and he was so fatigued with that day's journey, that when he descended from his horse, he was not able to stand, but fell down instantly among the straw in the stable.* He had, however, taken care before his departure, that every thing relative to his appeal, should be done in a proper manner and in the presence of a notary public.

Such was the conclusion of the conferences at Augsburg, in which the firmness and plain dealing of Luther was no less conspicuous than the unreasonable and imperious behaviour of the cardinal.

CHAPTER IV.

The Controversy continued.

LUTHER, foreseeing the manner in which he should probably be treated at Rome, and desirous of anticipating the papal censures, of which he was in daily expectation, had recourse to the wise expedient of appealing formally to a general council. In the instrument of his appeal, he still professes obedience to the authority of the apostolic See; but as the pope was only a man, and like other men liable to err, and as St. Peter, the most holy of all his predecessors, had actually erred, he appealed to the next general council, which when legally assembled, was a power superior to that of the pope, and could afford redress to the oppressed.

It soon appeared, that Luther was not mistaken in his

* Tom I. Altemb. p. 150.—Paul Sarpi says, what is not at all improbable, that Luther had John Huss's case in his head.

conjectures respecting the intentions of the Romish Court. His appeal to a future council is dated November 28, 1518. But Leo X. without mentioning the name of Luther, on the 9th of November of the same year issued a bull, in which he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences in the most absolute manner.

But the mercenary prostitution of indulgences had not been confined to Germany. In the summer of this same year, 1518, Samson, a Franciscan, of Milan, came to Zurich, to prosecute the scandalous traffic. There he was opposed by Huldric Zwinglius, afterwards the famous Swiss reformer.* In the month of September, Samson came to Zug, where a servant seeing the people press in crowds, addressed them: "Be not so importunate, I beseech you; let those enter first, who are furnished with money, care shall be taken afterwards of the poor."† At Bern, the enormities exceed, if possible, those which had been practised in Germany. When the sale of the indulgences was over, *baptismal innocence* was restored to all present, who should confess their sins, and thrice recite the Lord's prayer, in the Angelic salutation: those also, who thrice went round the great church daily, repeating prayers, might free what souls they pleased from purgatory. Still grosser corruptions than these were practised. But the infatuation of the hierarchy was incurable. Evangelical light and liberty was fast advancing to the relief, both of Germany and Switzerland, yet the rulers of the church shut their eyes, and hardened their heart. Scarcely roused from a state of shameful sloth and sensuality, they seem to have instantly fallen into the opposite extreme of blind presumption and impetuous

* Father Paul, B. I. p. 8.

† Page 60, Seckendorf.—Hottingen.

rage. Pride, rashness, and a most tyrannical ambition, appeared in all their councils.

At length, however, Rome had recourse to negotiation. Frederick was courted by the offer of the golden consecrated rose, but in vain. A new legate, Charles Miltitz, a Saxon knight, had several conferences with Luther. These too were fruitless.

Luther wrote a submissive letter to the pope, for he was by no means disposed to break with the pontiff; and it is not improbable he would have continued an obedient subject of the Roman See all his days, if he might have been permitted, without molestation, to discharge the office of a faithful pastor of Christ.

He said, it was a great grief to him to find himself accused of want of respect to the church of Rome: that his design in all he had done, was to maintain the honour of that church; and that as his writings were now spread throughout all Germany, he could not retract his assertions without dishonouring the said church: that the persons who really injured the holy See, were the very preachers whom he had opposed: they disgraced their sacred office by the most absurd discourses, and by seeking only to gratify their avarice under the protection of his Holiness. Lastly, he declared, that he was ready to observe silence in future respecting indulgences, provided his adversaries would also forbear their provocations. In concluding, he solemnly protested, that all along he had aimed at nothing but to prevent the mother-church from being polluted by the vile imputation of avarice, and the people from being seduced by a false notion, that the indulgences were preferable to truly benevolent actions.*

* Luth. Op. Vol. I.—Du Pin. Cent. 16.

Leo X. disdained to accept the submission, and open the door of reconciliation. While the Roman pontiff, rejecting counsels of peace, was listening to enraged bigots, greedy Dominicans, and ambitious cardinals, the inquisitive spirit of the humble professor of Wittemberg, was enabled, by degrees and a constant study of the Scriptures, to acquire a practical conviction that the tyranny of the papal hierarchy was no longer to be endured. It was undoubtedly this gradual insight into the enormities of the popedom, which, co-operating with the infatuation of the pontifical advisers in their unaccountable aversion to healing and pacific measures, raised that general spirit of indignation, and of opposition to the established religion, which at length terminated in the blessed Reformation.

Luther had almost as much to fear from timid friendship as from open enmity. When prompt, bold, and efficient support was necessary, he found himself called upon to encourage the doubting and cheer the trembling. Erasmus wrote to him, but Erasmus was resolved to venture nothing. Even the elector Frederick was full of anxieties. His friends cold, and irresolute, who could Luther repose upon but CHRIST.

The immediate circumstance, which seems to have given the alarm at this time* to the friends of Luther, was the bold declarations of this theologian, in his answers to the positions of Eckius, respecting the foundation of the pope's authority. He had written to Spalatinus very explicitly on this subject, but seems not completely to have satisfied his scruples. To call in question the origin of the power of the pope, was to treat tender ground; the nations, as yet, secretly revered his

* Viz. about the middle of 1519.

majesty, and dreaded his vengeance; though, in regard to ecclesiastical abuses in general, they had indeed begun to open their eyes, and were receiving fresh light apace.

After his literary defeat in the affair of indulgences, Eckius circulated thirteen propositions, all of them levelled against the heresies of Lutheranism. One of these propositions affirmed the grand article of a papist's faith, namely, "That the pontiffs are vicars of Christ, and the successors of St. Peter."* Luther had the sagacity instantly to see through his design, and expressed himself to the following effect: "I never so much as touched upon this subject in any of my discourses. Eckius now brings it forward to serve several purposes. He thinks, he shall hereby cast an odium upon me, and at the same time flatter the court of Rome, to his own profit, and to the ruin of his brother Martin Luther."

It will here be proper to give a brief account of the famous disputation which was carried on publicly at Leipsic, for many days together, in the course of this year:

Eckius, relying on the brilliancy of his own talents and the popularity of his cause, earnestly sought for a public exhibition of theological skill; and, with this view, challenged Carolstadt, the colleague and adherent of Luther, and even Luther himself, to try their strength with him in a contest on the points in dispute. Carolstadt was a doctor of divinity, and archdeacon of Wittemberg, and is esteemed one of the first open defenders of Luther. The challenge was accepted; and George, duke of Saxony, uncle of the elector, offered the combatants his city of Leipsic, as the scene of debate, with an engagement for their security, and a promise of every convenience. He

* Propos. Ecc. Luth. Op. Vol. I.

was himself a strenuous Roman Catholic, and he expected that great glory would accrue to the papal cause from the well-known abilities and attainments of Eckius. Luther obtained leave to be present at the contest as a spectator, but was expressly denied the grant of a safe conduct, if he attempted to appear in the character of a disputant. The assembly was splendid; the expectations of mankind were strongly fixed; and it was vainly imagined that some decision would be made concerning the objects of contention.

The first subject of debate between Eckius and Carolstadt, respected the limits of nature and grace.

The whole controversy was carried on with much clamour and confusion; the Roman party prevailed in popularity at Leipsic; Eckius delivered what he had to say with prodigious animation, and is allowed to have far exceeded Carolstadt in energetic exertions of voice and action. Luther protests, in the most solemn manner; that as long as an appeal to books and written documents were admitted, his friend Carolstadt defended himself with a rich variety of apt and excellent quotations. "But," says he, "Eckius made a proposal, that all books should be laid aside, and the dispute go on without them; the multitude gave a shout of approbation; and then, I freely own, that Eckius, who had the better memory and a greater flow of words, supported his side of the question in a more plausible manner than his opponent."*

This disputation continued for six days;† during which time, the superior eloquence and acuteness of Eckius seems to have afforded a temporary triumph to the enemies of the reformation. Flushed with success, and thirsting for glory, this champion of the papal system,

* Seck. 73.

† From June 27, 1519, to July 4.

came to Luther at his lodgings, and, with an air of confidence, said, "I understand you will not dispute with me in public." "How can I dispute with you," said Luther, "when the duke George refuses me my request of a safe conduct?" Eckius replied, "If I am not to combat you, I will spend no more time on Carolstadt. It was on *your* account that I came here. Suppose I could obtain the public faith for your safety, would you then meet me and try your strength?"* Luther consented; and very soon after he had the duke's leave to take Carolstadt's place in the public debate.

This second theological conflict was carried on for ten days, with uncommon ardour and without intermission. Among the articles of controversy were the doctrines of purgatory and indulgences, the nature of repentance and remission of sins, and, particularly, the foundation of the supremacy of the Roman pontiffs. It was in this last article of the controversy, that Eckius placed his chief strength and expectation of victory. His numerous audience in general, with the duke of Saxony at their head, favoured the papal cause: long habits of ignorance, superstition, and prejudice, in religious matters, had established the Romish doctrines; and the few, who ventured to inquire for reasons of their faith, were deemed impious and accursed, and worthy of expulsion from the community.

Moreover, this question concerning the superiority of the Roman See was well contrived to promote the ambitious designs of Eckius in every way. Luther, it was foreseen, must either shun the main point in debate by disgraceful evasions; or, by a direct avowal of his doctrines, expose himself to the charge of open heresy. He

* Melch. Ad.

must either yield the palm of eloquence and of theological skill to his crafty adversary, or he would inevitably furnish such decisive proofs of rebellion against the hierarchy as would ensure his own condemnation at the court of Rome. Thus the troublesome innovator was supposed to be entangled in an inextricable dilemma; while the prudent defender of the established religion, looking forward to nothing but conquest and glory, anticipated the praises and honours of the Roman pontiff. Luther, whom we have observed to have been fully sensible in how nice and critical a situation he was placed, was much hurt by the ungenerous conduct of Eckius in this business, and severely reproached him for it afterwards.

To the talents and the artifices of the popish advocate, the Saxon reformer, besides his superior abilities and more intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, opposed a good conscience, a firm determination to hazard every thing in the cause of *truth*, and a confident expectation of the blessing of the Almighty. In particular, against Eckius's doctrine of the divine right of the popes, he advanced the following proposition: "All the proofs, which can be produced to show that the church of Rome is superior to other churches, are taken out of insipid decrets of the popes themselves, made within these four hundred years; and against this notion of supremacy, there are passages of the Holy Scriptures, approved histories for eleven hundred years, and the determinations of the council of Nice."

When Eckius contended, that the expressions "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." "And I will give unto thee the keys," evinced the supremacy of St. Peter and his successors; that this was the explanation given by the holy fathers, and that the con-

trary opinion was among the errors of Wickliff and John Huss; Luther in reply said, that he could produce more passages from the fathers in support of his own interpretation of the passages in question than Eckius could of his; but that he had no hesitation to add, that even if all the fathers, without exception, had understood the passages in that sense, he would confute them by the authority of St. Paul, and St. Peter himself, who say, that Jesus Christ is the only foundation and corner stone of his church. He further observed, that the words, "Thou art Peter," . . . if construed strictly, must be confined to the person of Peter, and therefore the authority conveyed by them ceased when that apostle died; and that if their meaning was to be extended to the church and to Peter's successors, no reason could be given, why *all* the apostles and *all* their successors should not be understood to be the successors of Peter: lastly, he intimated that his adversary had been very unfortunate in appealing to the authority of Cyprian. "If," said Luther, "the learned doctor will agree to stand or fall by the authority of Cyprian, we shall quickly put an end to this controversy: For, in the first place, Cyprian never addresses Cornelius, the bishop of Rome, in any other manner than 'My dear brother;' and in the second, he expressly says, that every bishop has a distinct jurisdiction of his own, and that bishops ought not to interfere with each other, but wait for the day of judgment by our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Eckius was so much struck with the reasonings of Luther, and especially with the neat and well digested order in which his materials were arranged, that he was compelled to acknowledge, before a splendid audience,

* Revolut. Lutheri.

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the "qualifications and attainments of his Reverend opponent." He even besought their illustrious and magnificent mightinesses to pardon himself, who was so much occupied with other concerns, if he should not be able to produce such a mass of accurate testimonies as the learned doctor had laid before them. He came to Leipsic, he said, not to write books, but to dispute.

Shortly after this contest, Luther wrote thus to a friend: "That I may be the better qualified for the ensuing debates at Leipsic, I am turning over the decretals of the popes; and I would whisper into your ear, that I begin to entertain doubts, whether the Roman pontiff be not the very Antichrist of the Scriptures, or his Messenger; so wretchedly corrupted by him, in the decretals, are the pure doctrines of Christ."*

The victory in the theological contest at Leipsic, as might have been expected, was claimed by both sides.

It was in an accurate acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, and with ecclesiastical history, that Luther more particularly manifested his superiority over Eckius. Very full and exact documents are in existence, both of what was said and what was written in the disputation; and no well-informed Roman Catholic will deny this to be a fair statement of the case. But, notwithstanding the increased reputation with which the German theologian departed from the scene of controversy, it was easy to foresee, that the court of Rome would now be more incensed against him than ever. He had indeed almost agreed with his adversary on some of the disputed points; he had even defended the authority of the Roman See, so far as to place it on the foundation of *human right*; In short, he had exhibited a spirit of fidelity, moderation

* Ep. p. 100.

and obedience; but all this could not expiate the unpardonable offence of searching the sacred oracles for himself, of confuting the papal pretensions to divine appointment and infallibility, and, what was deemed, perhaps, if not the most heinous, the most dangerous crime of all, of resisting and exposing the flagitious practices of the inferior agents and instruments of ecclesiastical rapine and tyranny. The man, who had proceeded to such extremities, was not to be managed by mild and gentle admonitions; neither was he to be gained over by bribes and flattery; he was an enemy of the holy church, and justly merited all she could inflict in her utmost fury and indignation.

Moreover, popery was not a religion which betrayed only occasional defects and errors: It had long been a *system* of corruption; all the parts of which were thoroughly connected with each other, and conspired together to deceive, defraud, and domineer over mankind. The members of the system sympathized with their head in a remarkable manner: they saw their very existence in its safety; and flew to its defence on the slightest appearance of danger. In return, the sovereign head of this vast body superintended the respective interests of all the members with exquisite care, and even with paternal solicitude. If, in some instances, the conduct of the Roman pontiffs does not exactly accord with this representation, the deviation will be found to have arisen, never from a relaxation or a change of principle, but from pride, contempt, indolence, and a sense of security. This was the case, we have seen, with Leo X. in the very early stages of Lutheranism.

That some good might result from the contentions at Leipsic, and that mankind might be less bewildered in

the mazes of subtle disputation, this diligent servant of God determined to review carefully all his own positions, which had been the subject of debate in his conference with Eckius, and to publish them with concise explanations, and with arguments in their support, consisting of appeals to Scripture and ecclesiastical history. These positions, or, as they were sometimes called, theses or conclusions, amounted in number to thirteen, and related chiefly to Roman Catholic peculiarities. Several of them, however, gave the author occasion to state and studiously illustrate the scriptural doctrine of *grace*, and the nature of indwelling* sin, as described by St. Paul in the seventh chapter to the Romans. In fallen man, he observes, there remains an internal principle of evil, even after he is renewed by the grace of God. Every Christian needs daily repentance, because he sins daily, not indeed by daily perpetrating flagrant crimes, but by falling short of perfect obedience. Hence there is not a just man upon earth, because even in actions that are good in themselves, there is precisely so much sin as there is repugnance, or difficulty, or want of cheerfulness in the will. He owns, that divines were accustomed to evade the positive testimony of such passages of Scripture, as, "There is not a just man upon earth, who doeth good and sinneth not;" but, says he, let us listen to St. Paul, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." And again: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind. Let human reasoning and human authority,

* This word, though not a very common one, has been thought, by excellent divines, to express St. Paul's meaning in Romans vii. verse 20, better than any other. . . . "Sin that dwelleth in me."

whether of the church or of councils, give place and submit: If an angel from heaven should teach the contrary, I would not believe him."

If, continues Luther, the evil principle, called the flesh, prevented the operation of the good principle, called the spirit, in a man so holy and full of grace, as the apostle Paul, how can our theologians maintain that there is no sin in good works? "It is not," say they, "sin; it is defect, it is infirmity."—This is an unscriptural and a dangerous way of speaking. In fact, every Christian feels a continual conflict between the flesh and the spirit as long as he lives; and therefore in the very best actions there is, in this world, a mixture of the effects of the flesh: but it is not so in heaven. Wherefore, what knowledge other persons may have derived from the scholastic divinity of the times, it is for them to consider: In regard to myself, I am sure I learnt from it nothing of the real nature of sin, of righteousness, of baptism, or of the whole Christian life; nor any thing of the excellency of God or his works, his grace, his justice. Faith, hope, charity, were to me words without meaning. In short, I not only learnt nothing right; but I had to *unlearn* every thing which I had acquired in that way. I shall be much surprised if others have succeeded better; but should there be any such, I sincerely congratulate them. In the schools I lost Jesus Christ, I have now found him in St. Paul.

"Search the Scriptures," is the precept, which of all others seems to have most deeply impressed the anxious, inquisitive mind of Luther. And further, in his inquiries, he never forgot that he himself was personally interested in the great truths of revealed religion. He studied the Bible, not through curiosity, or the love of fame,

but from a sense of the importance of its contents, and of his own dangerous situation. How little have those understood the real character of this reformer, who have looked on him as a turbulent, ambitious innovator, impelled by selfish and worldly motives. Nothing can be more affecting than the following account, which he himself gives of his own internal troubles: "However blameless a life I might lead as a monk, I experienced a most unquiet conscience; I perceived myself a sinner before God; I saw that I could do nothing to appease him, and I hated the idea of a just God that punishes sinners. I was well versed in all St. Paul's writings; and, in particular, I had a most wonderful desire to understand the epistle to the Romans. But I was puzzled with the expression, "*therein* is the righteousness of God revealed." My heart rose almost against God with a silent sort of blasphemy: At least in secret I said with great murmur and indignation, Was it not enough that wretched man, already eternally ruined by the curse of original depravity, should be oppressed with every species of misery through the condemning power of the commandment, but that, even through the *gospel*, God should threaten us with his anger and justice, and thereby add affliction to affliction? Thus I raged with a troubled conscience. Over and over I turned the above-mentioned passage to the Romans most importunately. My thirst to know the apostle's meaning was insatiable.

"At length, while I was meditating day and night on the words, and their connexion with what immediately follows, namely, 'the just shall live by faith,' it pleased God to have pity upon me, to open mine eyes, and to show me, that the righteousness of God, which is here said in the gospel to be *revealed* from faith to faith, re-

lates to the method by which God, in his mercy, justifies a sinner through faith, agreeably to what is written, ‘the just shall live by faith.’ Hence I felt myself a new man, and all the Scriptures appeared to have a new face. I ran quickly through them as my memory enabled me; I collected together the leading terms; and I observed, in their meaning, a strict analogy, according to my new views. Thus, in many instances, the *work* of God, means that which he works in us; and the power, and wisdom of God, mean the power and wisdom, which his Spirit operates in the minds of the faithful; and in the same manner are to be understood the *patience*, the *salvation*, the *glory*, of God.

“The expression, ‘righteousness of God,’ now became as sweet to my mind as it had been hateful before; and this very passage of St. Paul proved to me the entrance into paradise.”*

The publications of Luther were circulated throughout Germany, and were read with the greatest avidity by all ranks and orders. Eckius and other advocates of the Roman Catholic cause answered the heretic with great heat and indignation. Luther replied with the promptitude and precision, and also with the zeal and confidence, of a man who was perfectly master of the arguments on both sides of the questions in dispute, felt deeply interested in the establishment of truth, and had thoroughly examined the foundations of his opposition to the prevailing corruptions. By these means the discussions at Leipsic were detailed with minuteness, and continued with spirit; they every where became topics of common conversation; and, as Luther constantly appealed to plain sense, and the written word of God, the scholas-

* Luth. Op. præf. Vol. I.

tic subtleties of Eckius lost their weight and reputation among the people. It is not difficult to see, that the advantages, which, in this way, the cause of the reformation derived from the public contest at Leipsic, and its consequences, must have been very considerable.

Among others, the elector of Saxony became more favourably disposed towards Luther: and Melancthon, then twenty-three years of age, and already distinguished for his learning and skill, was effectually convinced, insomuch that he devoted his attention to theology, and became the most powerful coadjutor of Luther.

The pope's nuncio made several attempts to get Luther in his power, but without effect. "Charles Miltitz," said he, "is so ridiculous, that he would have me go to Coblenz, and defend myself before the archbishop, elector of Treves, in the presence of cardinal Cajetan; and yet this pleasant man owns, that he has received no precept from Rome concerning the matter. Every where, from all quarters, and by any method, I perceive, my life is sought! ! !!"*

Towards the end of this same year, 1519, Luther began to preach on the propriety of administering to the laity the communion in *both kinds*. This step gave great offence to George, duke of Saxony, who complained to his nephew, the elector, of the violent proceedings of the Wittemberg theologian.

The elector replied with his usual caution; but prudential lessons did not suit the temper of Luther. "I am oppressed," says he, "with a multitude of concerns; and I heartily wish I could be relieved from the duty of teaching and reading lectures. Nothing could be more agreeable to me than to be loosed from this employment.

* Luth. Epist. 110 and 111. Lib. I.

But if I am to continue a teacher, I cannot comprehend the notion of yourself, my Spalatinus, and of the friends you mention, namely, that sacred theology may be taught without giving offence to the pontiffs. The Scriptures themselves, in the most explicit manner, lay open men's abuses of the Scriptures, which abuses the pontiffs cannot bear to have mentioned. I have given up myself to this work in the name of the Lord. May his will be done! The cause is that of mankind in general; let us, in faith and prayer, commit the event to God and we shall be safe. For what can our adversaries do? Will they murder us? They cannot do that twice. Will they asperse us as heretics? Was not Christ himself treated as a malefactor? When I contemplate *his* sufferings, I blush for shame to think that my trials should be thought so considerable, when in reality they are nothing; and so we should reckon such trials, had we right views of mortification, of self-denial, and, in a word, of the Christian cross, to which in our days we are perfect strangers. Cease then your attempts to divert me from my purpose. My enemies may rage, but I shall smile in security. I am determined to abide the event, and not to give way to any unbecoming fears. I should, indeed, be sorry to involve the prince in my concerns; otherwise, at this moment the world should see a very explicit publication of my sentiments, a publication, which though it might still more provoke the *furies*, would at the same time expose their folly."

In much the same spirit of determined resolution and of confidence in the justice of his cause, he wrote to the new emperor Charles V. imploring, however, in modest and submissive terms, the assistance and protection "of so great a prince." "Nothing," he said, "was nearer

his heart, than that he might be permitted to discharge his duty quietly in his own little sphere. The violent and deceitful practices of others had compelled him to appear in public; but the very best men living, as well as his own conscience, would witness, that his sole object was, the propagation of evangelical truth, in opposition to the superstitions of human tradition. For this cause," continues he, "during almost three years I have been persecuted in every way that my enemies could invent. In vain have I proposed terms of peace, in vain have I offered to be silent, in vain have I begged for information and correction of my errors. After having tried all methods without success, I have judged it advisable to follow the example of St. Athanasius, in applying to your imperial majesty, if so be it may please God in that way to protect his own cause. I humbly therefore beseech your most serene majesty, that as you bear the sword for the praise of the good and the punishment of the bad, you would deign to take under the shadow of your wings the cause of truth; and as to myself, I crave your support not one moment longer than while I shall appear to have reason on my side. Abandon me the instant I am found impious or heretical. All I beg is, that my doctrines, whether true or false; may not be condemned unheard and without examination. If your most sacred majesty, by your interposition, should prevent the exercise of tyrannical power, such a conduct would be worthy of your royal and imperial throne, would adorn your government, and consecrate to posterity the age in which you live."*

His celebrated letter to the pontiff Leo X. in the year 1520, and his treatise on **Christian Liberty**, were the ef-

* *Epiſtol. Luth. ad Carol. V.*

feet of the last effort of Charles Miltitz, to produce a reconciliation between the reformer and the court of Rome. As Luther was an ecclesiastic of the Augustine order, Miltitz endeavoured to persuade the fathers of that fraternity to depute, from their general assembly, then held in Saxony, some persons who should persuade their refractory brother to desist from his opposition to the lawful commands of his superiors. This measure was tried; and Luther received the deputation with the most kind and dutiful attention; and very soon afterwards he had a friendly conference with Miltitz himself. A distinct account of this part of the negotiation of the pope's nuncio is contained in the following letter of Luther to Spalatinus;* and it is the more expedient that we should have recourse to this authentic document, because the whole affair has been miserably misrepresented by papal writers, and particularly by Maimbourg,† who compares Luther to the traitor Judas, and Augustinian fathers to the holy apostles. "Miltitz and myself," says Luther, "met at Litchtemberg; and we have agreed upon the following terms,—from which *he* entertains the most sanguine hopes. I am to print and publish some little tract, and preface it with a letter to the pontiff. That letter is to contain a narrative of my proceedings, and an assurance that I never intended any personal affront to his holiness; at the same time I am allowed to lay a heavy load of blame upon Eckius. As this plan is founded in the most perfect truth, it is impossible that I should have the smallest objection to it. In the most submissive manner, I mean to propose silence on both sides; in order that nothing of a conciliatory nature may be omitted on my part. I need not tell you, that it has always been my wish to

* Lib. i. Ep. 141.

† Maimbourg, in Seck. p. 94.

bring about peace. I shall have every thing ready in a few days. If the event should answer our hopes, all will be well; but if it should not, I have still no doubt, that *good* will be the consequence.”*

This is evidently the language of a man, who was not very anxious concerning the success of the project in contemplation.

Early in the year 1520, he writes to Spalatinus thus; “I am extremely distressed in my mind. I have not much doubt but the pope is the *real* Antichrist. The lives and conversation of the popes, their actions, their decrees, all agree most wonderfully to the descriptions of him in *Holy Writ*.” It is to these views of the true nature of the papacy,—which were every day becoming clearer in Luther’s mind,—that we are to ascribe that species of indifference with which he looked to the termination of the present negotiation. The man, who was almost convinced of the antichristian character of the whole Romish system, could feel no great anxiety to obtain the approbation of the sovereign pontiff. With a truly Christian spirit he seems to have resigned the event to the Divine disposal, and to have cherished a full persuasion in his own mind, that some great *good* to the Church of God would result from the step, which he was about to take. If the court of Ronie should adopt prudent and temperate counsels, a reformation of abuses and a revival of pure religion might still take place under the established hierarchy; and if they continued to turn a deaf ear to entreaty, advice, and remonstrance, such presumption and arrogance would more strongly mark the features of Antichrist, and hasten his downfall.

CHAPTER V.

Pope's Bull.—Conduct of Frederick.—Luther's Conduct.

WHILE Leo was consulting, Luther was writing. At length, after the court of Rome had hesitated almost three years, during all which time *the word of God had grown and multiplied*, it was on the fifteenth of June, one thousand five hundred and twenty, that Leo X. published that famous damnatory bull against Luther, which in the event proved so fatal to the established hierarchy. Forty-one propositions extracted out of Luther's works are therein condemned as heretical, scandalous and offensive to pious ears; all persons are forbidden to read his writings, upon pain of excommunication; such as had any of them in their custody, are commanded to burn them; and he himself, if he did not, within sixty days send or bring his retraction in form to Rome, is pronounced an obstinate heretic, is excommunicated, and delivered unto Satan for the destruction of his flesh; and all secular princes are required, under pain of incurring the same censures, and of forfeiting all their dignities, to seize his person, that he might be punished as his crimes deserved.*

There was a time when the most powerful monarchs would have trembled at such a sentence. That time was now elapsed; and though Eckius and his party triumphed, as if by one decisive blow they had at length annihilated Lutheranism, the more judicious and dispassionate part of mankind beheld this rash step of the Ro-

* Luth. Op. II. Wit. Palavic. 27.

man court as the certain prognostic of increased tumults and distractions.

Spalatinus has informed us how little intimidated or disconcerted he found his friend Luther to be on the arrival of the bull; but, it should seem, that some weeks before their interview, Luther knew the long-expected event had actually taken place. We collect this from one of his letters to Spalatinus, dated October the thirteenth, 1520; an extract of which we shall lay before the reader, who will, doubtless, be gratified to see his very first thoughts and resolutions on this memorable occasion. "At last the Roman bull is come: and Eckius is the bearer of it. I treat it with contempt. I consider it in all respects as a machination of Eckius, and I attack it as impious and false. You see, that the express doctrines of Christ himself are here condemned; no cause assigned why I should be deemed a heretic; and, lastly, I am called, not to a hearing, but to a retraction. I shall, however, as yet, not seem to know that it is a papal bull, but treat it as a fiction and forgery. Oh! how I wish that the emperor Charles V. would act like a man; and in behalf of Christ oppose the emissaries of Satan. On my own account I have no fear. Let the will of the Lord be done. Neither do I see what steps the prince should take; perhaps, a silent connivance is his truest wisdom. Every where, even at Leipsic, I understand that both the bull and Eckius are extremely despised; so that I almost suspect it will, of itself, come to nothing, if we ourselves do not procure it importance, by discovering too great an anxiety. I send you a true copy of the bull, that you may see what these Romans are. If they prevail, there is an end of the church, and of the faith of the Gospel. From the bottom of my heart I rejoice

that I suffer this persecution in the best of causes; though I am not worthy to undergo tribulation in so holy a conflict. I feel myself now more at liberty, being assured that the popedom is antichristian and the seat of Satan. My only prayer is, that God may preserve his own people from the impious seductions of Romish adherents. Erasmus writes, that the emperor's court overflows with beggars and dependants, all disposed to promote tyrannical principles, so that there is no hope in Charles. No wonder! Trust not in princes, or in any child of man, for there is no help in them.”*

An emissary of the Pope demanded of the elector of Saxony: 1. That he would cause all Luther's books to be burnt; and, 2. That he would either put the author of them to death, or imprison him till he should be sent to Rome.

Frederick, after due consideration, and by the advice of his privy counsellors, replied with great prudence, firmness, and spirit. He expressed much surprise, that after the many proofs he had given of piety and obedience, the pope should make such extraordinary demands.

He besought that the business might be committed to learned, pious, impartial, and disinterested judges, who might meet in a convenient place, and have the parties before them, with the public faith pledged for their safety. “Whenever,” he continued, “this supposed heretic shall have been convicted by solid Scriptural arguments, the Elector of Saxony will be the last person to protect him; and I must believe that even then His Holiness will not require me to do any thing dishonourable.”

Erasmus continued to act with his usual caution, but when Frederick pressed him for his opinion, he said iro-

nically, “Luther has committed two great faults: he has touched the pope on the crown, and the monks on the belly.” The elector smiled; and was so much impressed with the sarcastic observation, that he mentioned it a little before his death. Erasmus then subjoined, with great seriousness, “that Luther was just in his animadversions on the ecclesiastical abuses; that a reformation of the church was become absolutely necessary; that the reformer’s doctrine was true in the main; but that there was a want of mildness in his manner.”

The legates of the pope, in their turn, are said to have plied Erasmus closely with the offer of a rich bishopric, if he would undertake to write against Luther: but he answered them: “Luther is too great a man for me to encounter. I do not even always understand him. However, to speak plainly, he is so extraordinary a man, that I learn more from a single page in his books, than from all the writings of Thomas Aquinas.”—Such was the reputation of Luther for profound knowledge in divinity.

From little anecdotes of this kind we often learn more of the real judgment of mankind concerning extraordinary characters, than from long historical details.

For example: Count Nassau, governor of Flanders, Brabant and Holland, exhorted the divines at the Hague in the following manner: “Go and preach the Gospel in simplicity and truth, *as Luther does*; and you will offend nobody, nor suffer any molestation.”

Again: The Academicians of Louvain complained to Margaret, the emperor’s sister, governess of the Netherlands, that Luther, by his writings was subverting Christianity. Who is this Luther? said she. They replied, He is an illiterate monk. Is he so? said she; then do you, who are very learned and numerous, write against

this illiterate monk; and surely the world will pay more regard to many scholars, than to one ignoramus.

Another instance: At the emperor's table, mention being made of Luther, Ravenstein said, "Here is one Christian arisen among us, at last, after four hundred years; and the pope wishes to kill him. Our teachers at Louvain, by dint of bribes, obtained the burning of Luther's books. The pile was kindled, and great was the concourse of the students and others around it. But what books, think ye, did they bring? Not those of Martin; but a great deal of monkish trash, was committed to the flames."*

The active mind of Luther was not a moment idle. He appealed from the pope's bull to a general council. He wrote several tracts which were widely circulated and read with the greatest avidity. In these he laid open the corruptions of the papacy, showing Rome to be the Babylon predicted in scripture, and calling on all to study the Scriptures. "The primitive church," says he, "acted thus: she must have acted so; for she had seen no writings of the fathers. The Scripture is its own interpreter, trying, judging, and illustrating all things. If it be not so, why do Augustine and other holy fathers appeal to the Scripture as the first principles of truth, and confirm their own assertions by its authority? Why do we perversely interpret the Scriptures, not by themselves, but by human glosses, contrary to the example of all fathers? If these fashionable modes of exposition be right, we had better at once admit, that the writings of the fathers are more perspicuous than the Scriptures. Again: If this be the case, the fathers themselves acted very absurdly, when they undertook to prove their own writings

* Ex. Libell. in Biblioth. Paul. Lips. per. Seck.

by the authority of Scripture; and it will follow, that we ought to pay more regard to expositors than to the word of God. The Apostles themselves proved their assertions by the Scriptures; yet they surely had more right to plead their own authority than any of the fathers had. Let the fathers be allowed to have been holy men; still, they were only men, and men inferior to apostles and prophets: let them however be an example to us; and, as they in their time laboured in the word of God, so let us in our days do the same. There is one vineyard, and there are labourers employed at different hours. It is enough that we have learned from the fathers the duty of studying, and diligently labouring in the Scriptures; it is not necessary that we should approve of all their works. There are seasons, when the diligence of many does not afford what a critical opportunity alone gives to one,—provided that that opportunity be connected with the incomprehensible energy of the Holy Spirit."

Sentiments like these had scarcely, for many ages, been whispered in the Christian world. Even the best and wisest of men had long been accustomed to lay an undue stress on human authority; and, in many instances, the most unwarrantable tenets had rested on the credit of real or pretended fathers.

"I own," said he to Spalatinus, "that I am more vehement than I ought to be: I have to do with men who blaspheme evangelical truth; with wolves; with those, who condemn me unheard, without admonishing, without instructing me; and who utter the most atrocious slanders against myself and the word of God: even the most senseless spirit might be moved to resistance by their unreasonable conduct; much more I, who am choleric by nature, am possessed of very irritable feelings, and of a

temper easily apt to exceed the bounds of moderation. I cannot however but be surprised, whence this novel taste arose, to call every thing spoken against an adversary, abusive language. What think ye of Christ? Was he a reviler, when he calls the Jews an adulterous and perverse generation, a progeny of vipers, hypocrites, the children of the devil? What think ye of Paul, who calls the enemies of the Gospel, dogs, and seducers; who, in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts, inveighs against a false prophet in this manner: ‘O full of all subtlety and all malice, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness.’ Why does not Paul gently sooth the impostor, rather than thunder at this rate? A mind conscious of truth cannot with easy indifference endure the obstinate enemies of truth.—I see that all persons demand of me moderation, and especially those of my adversaries who least of all exhibit it. If I am too warm, I am yet frank and open; in which point I think that I excel those, who always act with artifice and guile.”*

Again, in a dedication to the elector, of one of his Commentaries on a portion of the Gospels, he freely acknowledges, that he had not obeyed that prince’s admonitions to avoid all acrimony in his controversies.

When Luther, by his publications, had opened men’s eyes to the impiety and injustice of the sentence of the Roman court, he proceeded to perform one of the boldest actions recorded in history. He was convinced that his appeal to a general council would be disregarded by the pope and his cardinals; and he foresaw, that if he did not soon recant his heresies, the thunder of actual excommunication would be levelled against the man who had so long been the object of ecclesiastical indignation.

* Lib. I. Ep.

He determined therefore to separate himself from the communion of the church of Rome: and as Leo, in the execution of the bull, had appointed Luther's books to be burnt, he, by way of retaliation, erected an immense pile of wood without the walls of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of the professors and students of the university, and of a vast multitude of spectators, committed to the flames the papal bull of his excommunication, together with the volumes of the decretals and canon law which relate to the pontifical jurisdiction. It has been thought probable that Luther was directed in this spirited measure by persons well skilled in the law. For by thus voluntarily withdrawing himself in a public manner from the Romish church, it was supposed he had eluded and rendered insignificant any further exercises of papal authority against his person. The man was now no longer a subject of the pontiff, and therefore it must be deemed superfluous and absurd to eject him by force from an ecclesiastical community of which he had ceased to be a member.*

To convince mankind that the measure which he had just executed with so much firmness and intrepidity, was not a hasty thought, or the ebullition of a sudden gust of passion, he immediately selected *thirty articles* from the code of papal laws, as a specimen of the iniquitous contents of the books which he had just consumed. Upon these he wrote concise and pointed remarks; he then printed the whole, and circulated the little tract among the people, calling upon them in the most animated strains to exercise their own judgments in matters of such vast importance. "Let no man's good sense," said he, "be so far seduced as to reverence the volumes which I have

* Mosheim.

burnt, on account of their great antiquity or their high titles. Let every one first hear and see what the pope teaches in his own books, and what abominable, poisonous doctrines, are to be found among the *sacred, spiritual laws*; and then let him freely judge whether I have done right or not in burning such writings."

The two last of the articles selected by Luther were as follows:

Art. 29. The pope has the power to interpret Scripture, and to teach as he pleases; and no person is allowed to interpret in a different way.

Art. 30. The pope does not derive from the Scripture, but the Scripture derives from the pope, authority, power, and dignity.

Luther then affirms, that, comparing together the different parts of the canon law, its language amounts to no less than this; "That the pope is God on earth; above all that is earthly or heavenly, temporal or spiritual; That all things belong to the pope; and, That no one must venture to say, What doest thou?"

The established character of Frederick the *Wise*, as the elector of Saxony was called, made him so much more respected than the profane and prodigal pope of Rome, that he was well qualified to afford Luther efficient protection. Moreover, Frederick had generously resigned the empire when it was offered to him, and thus prepared the way for the elevation of Charles, so that the emperor was under great obligation to him.

Charles having ordered an imperial Diet to assemble at Worms, in January, 1521, deferred all severities against Luther until that time; though urged by the pope's nuncio to immediate persecution. At that diet the pope's legates pressed hard for an immediate edict

of condemnation against the man who had so long disturbed the peace of the Church, and who, for more than six months, had been under actual sentence of excommunication, as an incorrigible heretic.

But the members of the diet *openly* withheld the pope's advocates, in their attempts to procure Luther's condemnation without deliberation or inquiry. Such a proceeding they considered as inconsistent with justice, and unauthorized by precedent. Moreover, the emperor himself admonished the principal nuncio, Aleander, that it behoved him to explain to the Diet some just and weighty causes of Luther's excommunication; causes too, which should be abstracted from the particular interests of the court of Rome and of the pope, and be evidently connected with the general concerns of religion.

With considerable effect Aleander opened the cause against Luther. Beside the force of his eloquence, he was armed with *money*, and was empowered to distribute among persons of distinction, the most efficacious diplomas.

The elector of Saxony, foreseeing the important questions, of a political as well as of a religious nature, which would be agitated at the next Diet, took care to be at Worms some weeks before the meeting of the General Assembly. There this wise and good prince, from the conversations with the emperor and others, soon discovered that mischief was meditated against Luther. His enemies, in general, were contriving to have him brought before the Diet, with the design, no doubt, of securing the person of the heretic: and we find that the emperor had once so far acceded to their wishes, as to issue express orders for his appearance. The summons for this purpose was sent to the elector; but this prince refused

to concur in that mode of conducting the business, and Charles recalled his summons. All this took place before the middle of January, 1521.* In fact, at this moment the cautious Frederick scarcely knew what course to steer. Perfectly upright and conscientious, he wished for nothing so much as an impartial hearing of the whole cause, and an equitable sentence in consequence; but he had great fears lest by calling Luther to Worms, he should entangle him in the dangerous snares of his adversaries; and moreover, he did not then know what Luther himself might think of such a proposal. In this obscurity of circumstances the good sense and good principles of the elector determined him to adhere steadily to two points: 1. By no means to compel Luther to appear among his adversaries against his own will; and, 2. In every event not to permit him to stir a step towards Worms without a complete and unequivocal safe conduct, nor to write any letters of passport in his behalf without the express directions of the emperor.—In the mean time he caused Luther to be made acquainted with the intentions of his malignant adversaries; and the question to be put to him, what he would do if he should be cited to appear at the Diet?

The answer of our intrepid reformer was perfectly in character. He said, if he should be called by so high an authority as that of the emperor, he would conclude it to be the Divine will that he should go; and if violence was done to him, as probably might be the case, he would recommend his cause to God, who had saved the three children from the fiery furnace.

And if it should not please God to preserve him, his life was but a small thing compared with that of Christ

* Com. de Luth. XC.

and His sufferings. “Though kings and princes,” said Luther, “conspired against the Lord and his Christ, yet, as it is written in the same psalm, Blessed are they that put their trust in him. It is not our business to determine whether more or less benefit will accrue to the Church from my life or my death; but it is our bounden duty to beseech God that the reign of Charles may not commence with blood, shed in an impious cause. And for my part, as I have often said, I would much rather die by the Romanists alone, than that he should be involved in this business. But if I must die, not only by pontifical but also by civil injustice, God’s will be done. You have here my resolution. Expect from me any thing rather than flight or retraction. I mean not to flee; much less to retract. So may the Lord Jesus strengthen me! I can do neither without scandalizing godliness, and hurting the souls of many.” This letter was addressed to his friend Spalatinus, the elector’s secretary.*

To the elector himself he writes, as being the subject of this prince, with more ceremonious respect; and probably with a suspicion also, that his letter might be shown to the emperor. He calls the elector his most illustrious prince and gracious master, and says,

“I rejoice from my heart that his Imperial majesty is likely to undertake the management of this cause, which is indeed the cause of the Christian world in general, and of the whole German nation in particular.—I have ordered copies of all my writings to be transmitted to your Grace; and I now most humbly offer again, as I have repeatedly offered before, to do every thing which becomes a servant of God and of Christ to do, the mo-

* Com. de Luth. XC.

ment I shall be informed what my duty is from the clear evidence of the Holy Scriptures.

"I have therefore with all submission to entreat your Grace to present my humble petition to his Imperial Majesty, that he would graciously be pleased to grant me a safe conduct, and sufficient security against every kind of violence, as I have great reason to be apprehensive on this account; and that he would also appoint learned and good men, unsuspected, and well skilled in the knowledge of their Bibles, to try this cause; and that for the sake of Almighty God I may be protected from every outrage till I have been indulged with a fair hearing, and have been proved to be an unreasonable, ungodly man, and, in short, no Christian.

"I humbly beg also, that the secular power may so far interfere in my behalf, that my adversaries, the defenders of the Roman See, may be compelled, during this state of the business, to desist from their wicked and malicious attempts against my life, honour and dignity, and in particular from publicly burning my writings; though as yet I have never been tried, much less convicted of any crime.

"In regard to myself, provided I am but allowed a safe conduct, I shall in humble obedience to the emperor's summons, most cheerfully appear before the next general Diet at Worms; and there by the help of Almighty God, so conduct myself before just, learned and impartial judges, that all may be fully convinced that I have done nothing from an inconsiderate, rash, refractory spirit, or with a view to temporal honours and advantages; but that every line I have written, and every doctrine I have taught, has proceeded from a conscientious regard to my oaths and obligations. I own myself unworthy to be

styled a Doctor in sacred learning; nevertheless, it will appear that I have constantly intended to promote the praise and glory of God, the happiness and salvation of the Catholic church, the prosperity of all Germany, the overthrow of dangerous abuses and superstitions, and the emancipation of the whole Christian world from innumerable, tyrannical, impious, and disgraceful grievances.

“That the gracious elector of Saxony, together with his Imperial Majesty, may deign to turn a Christian eye to the present state of religion, burdened and enslaved as it is in so many ways, is the prayer of,

“The elector’s obedient and suppliant Chaplain,

“MARTIN LUTHER.”

The extraordinary piety and firmness so manifest in these letters, must have been highly pleasing to the elector of Saxony; especially as both the public and private proceedings at Worms every day convinced him more and more of the necessity of our Reformer’s presence. He was disgusted to find that secret consultations, to which he was not admitted, were continually held at the emperor’s apartments, for the purpose of ruining Luther: moreover, an Imperial mandate was issued, by which the magistrates were commanded to collect together all the writings of the heretic. Lastly, attempts, though fruitless, were made by the emperor, to persuade Frederick, that it was his peculiar duty to call his own subject, Dr. Luther, before the assembly by his single authority, and also to supply him with the necessary passports.* The tendency of these machinations was sufficiently evident; and nothing was so likely to disconcert them all, as the actual appearance of the *accused*, secured by an effectual safe conduct. Also, if Aleander’s malignant sophisms

* Id. Add. II, LXXXVIII, and Add. XC.

and gross misrepresentations had impressed or puzzled the minds of any of his hearers, nobody could so soon or so completely undeceive them as Luther himself, by his knowledge, his eloquence, and his plain dealing.

Influenced by these and similar considerations, the elector of Saxony, in full Diet, urged the propriety of proceeding no further in the affairs of Luther, till he himself could be heard in his own cause. The question before them, he said, was not merely whether certain doctrines were false, and ought to be proscribed, but also whether Martin Luther was the author of them. Common justice, therefore, required that he should be called before the Diet, that they might learn from himself whether he really avowed and propagated the sentiments which were said to be found in his books.

It was impossible on any decent grounds to resist so wise and reasonable a proposition. In fact, the whole Diet almost without exception, though for various and even opposite reasons, concurred in this sentiment of the elector. The different Imperial Orders thanked the emperor for his good intentions in securing by his mandate the books of Luther, and in general expressed their approbation of the measure. But still, they feared, no material good was to be expected from the publication of that mandate. Luther's doctrines had spread throughout Germany, and had excited much thinking, much speculation and design; for all which there now seemed no remedy but to give the author a fair hearing. "Let him have a safe conduct," said they, "and let the question be put to him, 'Whether he will retract such articles as militate against the holy Christian faith which we have received from our ancestors and preserved until this time?' When that business is over, he may be heard on

other points, and the Diet may come to such equitable resolutions as the case shall require. If indeed he should refuse to recant, then, no doubt, the Orders of the empire will strenuously support the emperor's decree with all their might." They concluded with entreating his Imperial Majesty to adopt some measures by which many practices of the Roman See might be effectually corrected: * for, said they, they are become highly injurious and intolerable to the German nation.

Aleander, however, was most excessively alarmed on the prospect of Luther's appearance, and strenuously exerted every nerve to prevent it.

Charles ventured to grant Luther a safe conduct to Worms, and again in return to Wittemberg. He even with his own hand wrote to the heretic, and calls him, *our honourable, beloved, devout, doctor Martin Luther, of the Augustine order.* He then proceeds to inform him, that the emperor, and the sacred Imperial Orders, then met in congregation, had determined to examine him respecting certain books which he had published; that they had joined in granting him a safe conduct; and that he must not fail to appear before the Diet within twenty-one days, reckoning from the sixth of March, the date of the letter. The emperor concludes with repeating his assurances of protection from every injury and violence. †

Still the friends of Luther remained dissatisfied with even these pledges for his safety; so deeply were their minds impressed with what had happened to John Huss at Constance. It was agreed therefore, that several of

* These and many other interesting particulars in this account are not so much as hinted at by the popish writers. They are taken from very authentic accounts of the proceedings at Worms deposited among the Saxon archives at Weimar.

† Luth. Op. II. 163.

the princes of the empire should also particularly and distinctly sign the safe conduct, as a further security against the hostile designs of the Romans. Lastly, the sagacious elector of Saxony had the spirit to demand, and the perseverance to obtain from the emperor, in writing, an express renunciation of the detestable popish tenet, that *good faith is not to be preserved with heretics.*

Luther presently resolved on the journey to Worms. On the way he wrote thus to a friend: "I hear the emperor has published a mandate to frighten me. But Christ, nevertheless, lives; and I will enter Worms, though all the gates of hell and all the powers of darkness oppose. I mean to terrify and to despise the prince of darkness."

Still his friends besought him not to venture. Their solicitations to save his life met him at every step. It was under *such* circumstances, and to *such* solicitations, that our Saxon hero, with his usual intrepidity, returned that ever-memorable answer, "That though he should be obliged to encounter at Worms as many devils as there were tiles upon the houses of that city, this would not deter him from his fixed purpose of appearing there: That these fears of his friends could only arise from the suggestions of Satan, who apprehended the approaching ruin of his kingdom, by the confession of the truth before such a grand assembly as the Diet of Worms."* Luther is said to have mentioned the circumstance a little before his death, and to have made this observation: "So fearless can God render a man:—I do not know whether at this day I should be so bold."

Luther arrived at Worms on the sixteenth of April, 1521; and as he stepped from his open vehicle, he said

* Luth. Op. II. Du Pin, c. x.

these words, in the presence of a prodigious concourse of people, “God will be on my side.”*

Immense crowds daily flocked to see him; and his apartments were constantly filled with visitors of the highest rank. In short, he was looked on as a prodigy of wisdom, and respected as one who was born to enlighten the understandings of mankind, and direct their sentiments;—a homage, more sincere, as well as more flattering, than any which pre-eminence in birth or condition can command. Luther lodged with the Teutonic knights, near the elector of Saxony; and on the day after his arrival was conducted to the Diet by the marshal of the empire.†

On his appearance before that august assembly, he was directed to be silent till questions should be put to him. The Official of the archbishop of Treves, who was the emperor’s speaker on the occasion, then produced a bundle of books, and informed Luther, that, by order of his Imperial Majesty, he was directed to propose two questions to him. The first was, whether he acknowledged those books which went *by his name*, to be his own; and the second, whether he intended to defend or to retract what was contained in them. Upon this, before any reply could be made, Jerome Schurff, a celebrated doctor of the civil laws, who had come from Wittenberg in the character of Luther’s advocate, called out with a loud voice, “You ought to recite the titles of the books.” The Official then read over the titles in succession. Among which were, Commentaries on the Psalms; a little Tract on Good Works; a Commentary

* Pallav. Du Pin.

† The crowd was so great, that it was found necessary to conduct Luther privately through a garden, and by back stairs, to the hall, where the emperor and the Diet were assembled. Luth. Op. II.

on the Lord's Prayer; and other books on Christian subjects, in no way related to controversy.*

I shall answer the question, said Luther, as concisely, and as much to the purpose, as I possibly can. 1st. Unless the books have been mutilated or altered by fanciful sciolists, or by the arts of my adversaries, they are certainly mine. 2dly. Because this question relates to *faith* and the salvation of souls, and because it concerns the Word of God, the most important of all objects in heaven and in earth, and which deservedly requires of us all the most profound reverence, it would be equally rash and dangerous for me to give a sudden answer to such a question; since, without previous deliberation, I might assert less than the subject demands, and more than truth would admit; both which would expose me to condemnation from that sentence of Christ, "Whosoever denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." For this reason I humbly beseech your Imperial Majesty to grant me a competent time for consideration, that I may satisfy the inquiry without injuring the word of God, and without endangering my own salvation. After some deliberation, he was allowed to defer his answer till the next day, on the express condition, however, that he should deliver what he had to say *viva voce*, and not in writing.

On the following day he was told that he ought not to have petitioned for delay, because he had well known,

* The reader may smile at the management of Dr. Schurff, who, quite in the character of a practitioner of the law, took this very fair opportunity of bringing into view and exposing the unjustifiable lengths to which the enemies of his client had proceeded in condemning to the flames even his most unexceptionable writings. The Official called on Luther to own or disown such books as went by his name. "Let us hear the titles, let us hear the subjects of the books," said the lawyer.

for a long time, what would be the nature of his examination; and, moreover, that every one ought to be able at any moment to give an account of his faith; and much more a Doctor of great reputation, like Luther, who had been long exercised in theological discussions. At length, however, said the Official, return an answer to the question of the emperor, who has so kindly granted you your request.

Luther then rose, and spoke before the emperor and the princes, in the German language, to the following effect:

“I stand here in obedience to the commands of his most serene Imperial Majesty and the most illustrious princes, and I earnestly entreat them that they would deign to listen to this cause with clemency. It will appear, I trust, to be the cause of truth and justice; and therefore, if through ignorance, I should fail to give proper titles to each of the dignified personages who hear me, or if in any other respect I should show myself defective in politeness, they will be pleased to accept my apology with candour. I have not been accustomed to the refinements of the court, but to the cloisters of the monastery; nor of myself have I any thing further to say, than that hitherto I have read lectures and composed books with that simplicity of mind which *only* regards the glory of God and the instruction of mankind.

“To the first question,” continued Luther, “I gave a plain and direct answer; and in that I shall persist for ever. I did publish those books, and I am responsible for their contents, so far as they are really mine; but I do not answer for any alterations that have been made in them, whether by the crafty malice of enemies or the imprudent officiousness of friends.

"In regard to the second question I humbly beg your most serene Majesty and their highnesses to take especial notice, that my publications are by no means all of the same kind. Some of them treat only of piety, and of the nature of faith, and morals; and these subjects are handled in so evangelical a manner, that my greatest adversaries are compelled to pronounce them innocent, profitable, and worthy to be read by Christians. The pope's bull, indeed, though it actually declares some of my books innocent, yet, with a monstrous and cruel *indiscrimination, condemns them all.* Now were I to retract such *writings,* I should absolutely stand alone, and condemn those truths in which friends and foes most perfectly agree.

"There is another species of my publications in which I endeavour to lay open the system of the papal government, and the specific doctrines of the papists, who, in fact, by their corrupt tenets and bad examples, have made havoc of the Christian world, both in regard to body and soul. There is no denying this: Witness the universal complaints now existing, how the papal laws and traditions of men most miserably entangle, vex, and tear to pieces the consciences of the faithful, and also plunder the inhabitants of this famous country in ways most shameful, tyrannical, and scarcely credible, notwithstanding that Germany by her own laws has declared, that any doctrines or decrees of the pope, which are contrary to the Gospel or the sentiments of the fathers, are to be deemed erroneous, and in no degree obligatory.—If, therefore, I should revoke what I have written on these subjects, I should not only confirm the wicked, despotic proceedings to which I allude, but also open a door to further abuses of power, that would be still more li-

centious and insupportable; especially if it were said among the people that what I had done was confirmed by the authority of his most serene Majesty and a general meeting of the empire.

"Lastly, the defences and replies which I have composed against such individuals as have laboured either to establish the Roman tyranny, or to undermine my explanations of the fundamental principles of religion, constitutes a third class of my publications. And in these, I freely confess, I have been betrayed into an asperity of expression, which neither becomes me as a clergyman, or as a Christian: however, I pretend not to set myself up for a saint, neither do I plead for the strictness of my life, but for the doctrines of Christ. But, it is not in my power to retract even these writings as far as the matter contained in them is concerned; lest by such a step I should become the patron of the most arbitrary and impious usurpations, which in consequence would soon gather strength, and spend their fury on the people of God in more violent outrages than ever. Yet, since I am but a man, and therefore fallible in judgment, it would ill become me, in supporting my poor paltry tracts, to go further than my Lord and Master Jesus Christ did in the defence of his own doctrines; who, when he was interrogated concerning them before Annas, and had received a blow from one of the officers, said, 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?' If then our Lord, who was infallible, did, nevertheless, not disdain to listen to any thing that could be said against his doctrine even by a person of the lowest condition, how much more ought such a contemptible being as I, who am all imperfection, to be ready to attend to whatever arguments can be brought in the

way of objection to my positions? I entreat therefore your Majesty and the members of this illustrious assembly, to produce evidence against me; and however high, or however low, be the rank of the person who shall be able, from the sacred Scriptures, to convict me of error, I will instantly retract, and be the first to throw the book into the fire.

“ Permit me to suggest for the consideration of us all, that as Almighty God is wonderful and terrible in counsel, surely it behoves this august assembly to examine with especial care, whether the object which my enemies so ardently long to compass, does not in fact amount to a condemnation of *the divine word*; and whether such a measure, adopted by the first German Diet of the new emperor, might not lead to a dreadful deluge of evils. Under the protection of God, there is reason to augur well of this excellent young prince; but take care that you do not render the prospect of his government unfavourable and inauspicious.

“ By a variety of instances from holy writ, and particularly by the cases of Pharaoh, of the king of Babylon, and of the kings of Israel, I could prove this important point, namely, that men have ruined themselves at the very moment when they imagined they had settled and established their kingdoms in the most prudent manner. The ruling principle should be, the *fear of God*. HE it is, who taketh the wise in their craftiness, and removeth the mountains and they know not, and overturneth them in his anger.*

“ In saying these things, I mean not to insinuate, that the great personages who condescend to hear me, stand in need of my instructions or admonitions: no,—but there

* Job.

was a debt which I owed to my native country, and it was my duty to discharge it. The reasons, which I have now alleged, will, I trust, be approved by your serene Majesty and the princes; and I humbly beg that you will disappoint my enemies in their unjust attempts to render me odious and suspected.—I have done.”*

As soon as Luther had finished his speech, which was delivered in the German language, he was ordered to say the same things in Latin. But he was so much out of breath, and so overcome with heat and the pressure of numerous persons of quality, that he found it necessary to pause a little. Upon which a courtier of the elector of Saxony, supposing him to be disconcerted and afraid to proceed in the Latin language, kindly admonished him to desist from the attempt, and assured him that he had said enough. Luther, however, did not relish this advice; but having quickly recovered himself, he again went over the same ground in Latin with prodigious animation, and to the very great satisfaction of all his friends, and particularly the elector of Saxony. It appears that this prince was so delighted with the piety, confidence, and ability of Luther on this occasion, that he took Spalatinus aside into his bedchamber, and there expressed his approbation and astonishment in the following manner: “O how excellently did Father Martin speak, both in German and Latin, before the emperor and the Imperial Orders. He was sufficiently, if not rather too animated!”†

His adversaries acknowledged that he spoke for two hours with the applause of one half of the assembly; until John Eckius,‡ the Emperor’s speaker, having lost almost all patience, before Luther had well concluded, cried out,

* Acta Worm.

† MS. Spal.

‡ Not Eckius, the Leipsic disputant.

in much heat and passion, That he had not answered to the point; That he was not called upon to give an account of his doctrines; That these had already been condemned in former councils, whose decisions were not now to be questioned: That he was required to say simply and clearly, whether he would or would not retract his opinions. "My answer," said Luther instantly, "shall be direct and plain. I cannot think myself bound to believe either the pope or his councils; for it is very clear, not only that they have often erred, but often contradicted themselves. Therefore, unless I am convinced by Scripture or clear reasons, my belief is so confirmed by the Scriptural passages I have produced, and my conscience so determined to abide by the word of God, that I neither can nor will retract any thing; for it is neither safe nor innocent to act against a man's conscience."—Luther then pronounced these words in the German language: *Hie stehe ich; Ich kan nicht anders; Gott helff mir; Amen.* "Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. May God help me. Amen."

After the Diet had taken Luther's speech into consideration, their Speaker told him;—That he had not answered with the modesty that became his character and situation. That if he had retracted those books which contained the main part of his errors, he would have suffered no persecution for the rest. That for him, who had revived the errors condemned at Constance, to require a refutation and conviction from Scripture, was the wild proposal of a man scarcely in his senses. That, on such principles, nothing would be left certain in the Church. That for these reasons, he was once more asked, whether he intended to defend all he had written as orthodox, or whether he would retract any part as erroneous.

Luther persisted in his former answer; and intreated the emperor not to permit him to be compelled to do violence to his conscience, by recanting what he felt himself bound to believe on the authority of the word of God, unless he was proved to be mistaken by evident arguments from Scripture. Councils, he repeated, have erred frequently. "You cannot prove that," said Eckius. "I will pledge myself to do it," replied Luther. But night coming on, the Diet broke up.

During the whole of this interesting scene, the special partizans of the pope were filled with indignation; and many of the Spanish Roman Catholics followed Luther as he returned home from the tribunal, and showed their enmity by long-continued sneers and hisses.

On the next day,* the emperor directed a schedule, written with his own hand, to be read to the princes in full congregation. The purport of the schedule was this: "His ancestors had always respected the Roman church, which Luther now opposed: He could not with any propriety depart from their example: He was bound to defend the ancient faith, and support the papal See: And as Martin Luther could not be induced to give up any one of his errors, he was determined to proceed against him as a notorious heretic: Nevertheless he by no means intended to violate the safe conduct which had been granted to him."†

This hasty and indiscreet measure, which was partly owing to the juvenile impetuosity and inexperience of Charles, and partly to the incessant solicitation of the papal party, produced complaints and murmurs in the assembly.‡ The emperor, by giving his opinion first, had broken the established rules of the Diet. He ought

* April 19.

† Acta Worm.

‡ Du Pin.

not to have given his judgment, till all the other states had given theirs. Such a procedure was esteemed a prejudging of Luther's cause, and manifestly tended to abridge the electors and princes of their right of voting freely in the matter before them. Party spirit ran high at this moment. Acrimonious papers on both sides of the question were publicly affixed to the walls; and the most violent and even threatening expressions are said to have been used. Had Luther been a man of a worldly temper, or actuated by political considerations, he might easily have turned these critical circumstances to his own advantage. Could he have been persuaded only to temporise a little, and to explain away or even soften a few of the most offensive positions in his publications, there seems abundant reason to conclude, that he might have gained an easy victory over his enemies at Worms, and at the same time have given a severe blow to the papal authority—So great was the impression he had produced on the members of the Diet; and so odious was become the systematic oppression of the Roman See.

But a true servant of God rarely suffers himself to be influenced by what are called the prudential maxims of men of the world. His conduct is straight and steady; and he commits the event to God. This holy, this Christian temper of mind, was eminently exemplified in the behaviour of Luther, during the remaining conferences at Worms.

Charles V. no doubt soon perceived the mistake he had committed, in having sent so premature a message to the Diet. That assembly, notwithstanding the peremptory declaration of the emperor, continued all that day, and all the next, in consultation, and no official information was sent to Luther, respecting a matter in

which he was so deeply interested. The misunderstanding, however, was compromised in this way: Charles, at the instance of the Diet, consented that the heretic should be allowed a few days' longer delay, during which time such of the princes as pleased might endeavour to persuade him to recant his errors; and if they succeeded, he promised that he himself would take care he should be pardoned by the Roman pontiff.*

Accordingly, on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of April, incredible pains were taken by the princes, electors, and deputies of various Orders, to shake the resolution of this hero of the Reformation. In particular, the archbishop of Treves summoned him to his own lodgings, where, in the presence of several persons of the greatest distinction, he was earnestly exhorted to be less obstinate, and to submit his own judgment to that of holy councils. He was told, that though he had written many good things, yet some of his books had excited incredible dissensions and tumults; and that if he persisted in those sentiments, the emperor would assuredly proceed to banish him from the country. Much was added concerning the necessity of laws, and of obedience.

Luther humbly thanked the princes for their clemency and good-will towards him. He said, "he by no means censured councils in general, but only a part of the proceedings at Constance in regard to John Huss. If the faith of Christ was truly set forth, and Christ's flock were fed in a real Gospel-pasture, there would be no need to burden the church with human traditions. He allowed that he ought to obey magistrates, even wicked magistrates; that the precepts for this purpose were to be taken in their plain meaning, and that he had often taught this

doctrine in his writings. He was ready to do any thing, provided he was not urged to deny the clear word of God."

Luther was then ordered to withdraw; and the princes, after consultation, called him again before them, went over the same ground, and concluded with again exhorting him to submit his writings to the judgment of Charles, and of the princes of the empire.

Luther replied, That it should never be said that he declined the judgment of the emperor and the leading orders of the state. He was so far from dreading a scrutiny of that sort, that he wished it to be as accurate as possible, provided always, that every thing was to rest on the authority of the Holy Scriptures. He humbly besought them, therefore, to do no violence to his conscience, by urging him to deny the express declarations of the divine word. They should find him completely obedient in all other respects.

Are we to understand, then, said the elector of Brandenburg, that you will not give way, unless convinced from the Holy Scripture? "Yes, most kind and gentle sir," replied Luther, "or by very clear and evident reasons."

Upon this the assembly broke up. When it immediately occurred to the archbishop of Treves, that possibly he might succeed better at a private, than a public meeting. He therefore took Luther into his chamber, with two doctors, namely, Eckius, his official, as above mentioned, and Cochleus, the dean of Francfort, a celebrated papal advocate, who had come to Worms on purpose to oppose the heretic.

Luther, however, had the good sense and caution to object to a secret conference of this kind, unless several

creditable persons, of his own friends, were likewise admitted. This being agreed to, a dispute of some length ensued concerning the rise of various heresies and the decrees of councils: but not the smallest advance was made towards an accommodation.*

It was on the 25th of April, 1521, that the archbishop of Treves made his last efforts to reclaim this obstinate heretic.† He commissioned two learned doctors, one of whom was Conrad Peutinger, privy counsellor to the emperor, to try to the utmost, whether they could not persuade him to submit to the judgment which Charles V. and the several imperial orders should pass upon his writings. Luther, as usual, agreed, provided they would depend solely on scriptural authority; otherwise, he said, nothing could be more opposite to his principles. "Trust not," continued he, "princes, or the sons of men, for there is no safety in them. Cursed is he who putteth his trust in man."

The same persons then entreated him to consent that a selection of various articles should be made from his publications, and that these should be submitted to the judgment of a general council. Luther continued inflexible. Neither threats, nor exhortations, nor promises, availed to make him change his resolution, or vary from the answer he had so often given, respecting the absolute necessity he was under of abiding by the sole authority of the sacred Scriptures.

The elector, archbishop of Treves, appears to have been a bigoted Roman Catholic, but a man of gentle manners, and of a humane disposition. His conduct at

* Spalatinus and Justus Jonas were among the friends of Luther who were present at this meeting.

† This is the name which had long been given him by the papal party.

Worms, in regard to Luther's cause, has been ascribed to different motives, as natural timidity, or friendship for the elector of Saxony. There is, however, no imputation on his sincerity in his negotiations with Luther. So earnestly did this prelate wish for an accommodation of the differences, that when all other methods had failed, he took Luther into his closet, and there, in the kindest manner,—no other person being present,—exhorted him to submit to *some* of the proposals that had been made to him, respecting the final judgment of the emperor and the imperial orders, or of a general council. Luther answered roundly, That he by no means thought it safe to entrust the decision of so important a matter to persons, who, when he was called before them under the public faith, had yet persecuted him afresh, had already given judgment against him, and had even approved of the pope's bull.—Lastly, the archbishop called in Spalatinus, and, in his presence, asked Luther, whether he himself could suggest any healing measures, that were likely to succeed. "Nothing better," replied Luther instantly, "than the advice of Gamaliel; 'If this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot resist it.' The emperor and the princes may inform the pope, that I feel perfectly assured this whole religious agitation and controversy, in which I am now concerned, will of itself die away in less than two years, unless God be actually on my side."

What would you do, said the archbishop, suppose an extract of certain propositions from your books should be made, and the articles so extracted be submitted to the judgment of a future council? "I hope, kind sir," replied Luther, "they would not be those which were condemned by the council of Constance." I fear they

would, said the archbishop. "Then," rejoined Luther, "I neither can nor will be silent, in regard to such a proposal; for I am sure that the decrees of that council condemned the word of God; and rather than give up the word of God, when the case is quite clear, I *would lose my life.*"

In about three hours after this conversation, Luther received a message from the emperor, which directed him to leave Worms, "because, notwithstanding the most friendly admonitions and entreaties, he persisted in his contumacy, and would not return into the bosom of the church." He was allowed twenty-one days to return home; during which time the public faith was pledged for his safety; but he was strictly enjoined not to preach to the people in the course of his journey.

"This is the Lord's will," said Martin, "and blessed be the name of the Lord!" He then, through the official, returned most respectful thanks to the emperor, and the members of the assembly, for their patience in hearing him, and their liberal treatment in general. He said, he had wished for nothing but a reform in religion, on the plan of the Holy Scriptures; nor did he now request any thing for himself, but to be allowed the free use of the word of God. Let that only be granted, and he was ready to undergo every thing without exception, for the sake of his imperial majesty and the imperial orders.—He left Worms on the following day, the twenty-sixth of April.

But the papists still meditated his destruction. To secure him, Frederick contrived a plan, not very agreeable to Luther, but effectual to his preservation. Three or four horsemen, in whom Frederick could confide, disguised themselves in masks, and contrived to meet

the persecuted monk near Eisenach, on his return home. They played their part well. They rushed out of a wood, secured Luther as it were by force, and carried him into the castle of Wartburg.* There Luther had leisure to pursue his plan of studying the Scriptures and writing. From his retirement he sent forth new works continually. These encouraged the hearts of his friends, and kept alive the spirit of reformation.

In the year 1522, he left his Patmos, as he called his castle, and returned to Wittemberg, without the consent or even the knowledge of his patron and protector, Frederick. The active spirit of the reformer ill brooked his long confinement, and moreover, the distracted state of the infant Protestant church absolutely required his presence.

CHAPTER VI.

Fanatics.—Activity of Luther.—Adrian.

THE necessity of knowledge and piety to temper and direct zeal is frequently manifest. Much disorder arose from the violent proceedings of Carolstadt, a coadjutor of Luther's. He discouraged learning, and at the head of impetuous youths broke down the images in the Roman Catholic churches, overthrew their altars, &c. These were all opposite to the gospel, but his mode of procedure was entirely indefensible. Luther was much distressed by it. He, however, wrote "There is no reason to be frightened. Rather give praise to God; and rejoice in the certain expectation that all will end well. Things of this kind always happen to those who en-

* May 3.

deavour to spread the gospel. We must not only expect Annas and Caiaphas to rage against us; but even a Judas to appear among the apostles, and Satan himself among the sons of God. Be wise, and look deeper than to the external appearance. Other agents, besides those which are merely human, are at work. Don't be afraid; but be prepared for more events of this sort. This is only the beginning of the business: Satan intends to carry matters much further yet. Believe me in what I now say; I am but a plain, simple man; however, I know something of *his* arts. Suffer the world to clamour against us, and to pass their harsh judgments. Be not so much concerned at the falling away of particular Christians. Even holy Peter fell; and also others of the apostles. Doubt not but they will in a short time rise again, as surely as Christ himself rose from the dead. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians,* are at this moment peculiarly applicable to our circumstances, namely, 'that we should approve ourselves, as the ministers of God, in much patience, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours.'

Several enthusiasts appeared in Saxony, among whom Nicholas Stork, Mark Stubner, Martin Cellary, and Thomas Munzer, have, by their follies, obtained a memorial in history. Stork was a baker at Zwickau, who had selected, from his acquaintance of the same calling, twelve whom he called apostles, and also seventy-two disciples. The other three, in a tumultuous manner, harangued the populace in the church of St. Catharine of the same town. Nicholas Hausman, the pious master of the place, resisted these insane prophets to the best of his power, but could not control their fury.—They pro-

* 2 Cor. v.

fessed themselves to have a divine commission, and pretended to visions and inspirations. They raised disputes concerning the baptism of infants, and appealed to supernatural revelations for their authority. Luther wrote thus to Melancthon concerning them. "As you are my superior," said he, "both in discernment and erudition, I cannot commend your timidity in regard to these prophets. In the first place, when they bear record of themselves, we ought not implicitly to believe them; but rather to try the spirits, according to St. John's advice. As yet, I hear of nothing done or said by them, which exceeds the imitative powers of Satan. It is my particular wish that you would examine whether they can produce any *proof* of having a divine commission. For God never sent any prophet, who was not either called by proper persons, or authorized by special miracles, no, not even his own Son. Their bare assertion of a divine *aflatus*, is not a sufficient ground for your receiving them; since God did not even choose to speak to Samuel, but with the sanction of Eli's authority. So much for their pretensions to a public character.—In the next place, I would wish you to sift their private spirit,—whether they have experienced any internal distresses of soul, the attacks of death and hell, and the comforts of the new birth unto righteousness. If you hear nothing from them but smooth, tranquil, and, forsooth, what they call, devout, religious contemplations, regard them not; for there is wanting the characteristic of the Son of Man, of the Man of sorrows; there is wanting the Cross, the only touchstone of Christians, and the sure discerner of spirits. Would you know the place, the time, the manner of divine conferences and communications; hear the

written word, ‘As a lion will he break all my bones.’* And ‘I am cast out of the sight of thine eyes. My soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto hell.’ The majesty of the Divine Being speaks not *immediately*, in a way that man should see HIM. None can see HIM and live. Do you try them therefore carefully, and listen not even to a glorified Jesus, unless you find he was first crucified.”

Returned to Wittemberg, Luther resumed his favourite employment of preaching, for which he was eminently qualified. In a conference with some of the fanatics, he showed their want of scriptural support. He also published his version of the New Testament in the German language, and prepared for the publication of the Old, which he eventually accomplished. The progress of the reformation having become considerable, he gave directions concerning the removal of various abuses, such as administering the sacrament in one kind only, &c.

Great opposition was made to the reformer by Duke George of Saxony, who excited various enemies against him. Among other things this persecutor sought to destroy the copies of the New Testament Luther had circulated. But the work proceeded.

Many of the bishops opposed him. To them he wrote with great energy. At the same time he proceeded to show how much those were to be valued who were bishops indeed, and governed their flocks according to the rules prescribed by St. Paul to Timothy and Titus; and how exceedingly opposite to the apostolical standard was the general character of the bishops of his own time.

“But,” says he, “the most atrocious and most mis-

* Isaiah xxxviii. 13.

chievous poison of all the papal usages is that, where the pontiff, in his bulls of indulgence, grants a full remission of sins. Christ, in the 9th of Matthew, did not say to the sick of the palsy, ‘put money into this box,’ but ‘Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.’ No words nor conceptions can reach the atrocity and abomination of this satanic invention: for, through this mean, the people are seduced from the purity and simplicity of that faith which, by relying on the gracious promises of God, alone justifies and obtains remission of sins; and they are led to put their trust in the pope’s bulls, or in paying certain prescribed sums of money, or in their own works and satisfactions.”

Immediately after the declaration contained in his famous bull, Luther proceeds thus:—“These propositions I undertake to prove, even at the tribunal of Almighty God, by unanswerable arguments. The apostle Paul directs Titus to ordain bishops in every city; men, who should each of them be blameless, the husband of one wife, and whose character should agree with the rest of his description.* Such then is the mind of the Holy Spirit, speaking by the apostle Paul in the clearest terms.”

Leo X. dying, was succeeded by Adrian VI., formerly the preceptor of Charles V. He entered into the course of persecution pursued by his predecessor. “It is a most unaccountable thing,” said he, “that so large and so religious a nation should be seduced by a single pitiful friar.” He called upon the German princes assembled at Nuremberg to root out Lutheranism. It was beyond their power. The Pope having confessed that many corruptions existed, they besought him to summon a general

* Tit. chap. i. and ii.

council, and drew up a memorial of a hundred grievances against the church of Rome. Luther published an address to the princes and noblemen of Germany, in which he gratefully acknowledged this important aid.

But the enemies of the truth became at length outrageous, and both Luther and the elector of Saxony were in the most imminent danger. That Providence, however, in which Luther steadfastly confided, proved their sufficient shield.

CHAPTER VII.

Denmark.—Sweden.—New Pope.—Consubstantiation.—Münzer.—Death of Frederick.

IN Denmark the light of truth began to shine. Several students of divinity from that country had visited the university of Wittemberg, induced by what they had heard of Luther's talents and learning. On their return, it soon appeared that they had caught the salutary flame which had already exhilarated the hearts of so many foreigners. Both in public and in private, among their countrymen, they most industriously spread the reformation they had obtained from their great Saxon master.

Herman Tast, in the year 1522, was the first, who, when he found the church at Husum shut against him by the popish clergy, preached boldly, under a tree in the churchyard, a course of most excellent sermons to a numerous audience; and this same pastor also two years after preached at Gardingen the first public sermon which was ever composed according to the sound principles of the reformed religion, and delivered in a regular way

from the pulpit in that country: for in 1524, Frederick I., king of Denmark and duke of Holstein, made it a capital offence for any person to take away the life, or injure the property or dignity of another, on account of his religion, whether Papal or Lutheran.

In Sweden, the renowned Gustavus Vasa, having in his youth lived an exile at Lubec, and there gained some information concerning the grounds of Lutheranism, and having afterwards been further instructed by Laurentius and Olaus Petri, two disciples of Luther, no sooner saw himself in firm possession of the throne, than he determined to reform the church.

A royal proclamation by Gustavus, in substance as follows, must have been extremely beneficial to the reformers. "We do not deny that our care is for the true religion founded on the word of God. There can be no better religion than that which Christ and his apostles have delivered to us. Here there is no place for dispute. But, respecting certain ceremonies questions are raised, and more especially respecting the privileges of the clergy. It is true, that we find learned men are desirous of abolishing several useless external rites, but there is not the least ground for calumniating us, as though we wished to introduce any other religion than that which is truly Christian. Our single aim is, to worship God in spirit and truth, and to become a partaker of the joys of heaven with all Christ's faithful servants. Let not our beloved subjects, therefore, listen to slanderous reports concerning their sovereign; but remain assured, that our thoughts are employed how we may best promote the glory of God, and their eternal welfare. It is not long ago, since we learned what fraudulent means the Roman pontiff has employed to drain this kingdom of large sums

of money, through the institution of private masses and indulgences. And in regard to other countries men of the best information have proved, beyond contradiction, by what variety of deceitful methods the bishops and other ecclesiastical dignitaries make a gain of the simple; and how they burden wretched consciences, and multiply acts of hypocrisy. The luxurious prelates now see that these evil practices are detected and exposed by persons of the greatest piety and knowledge; and therefore they set their faces against the truth with all their might, and cry out, **Innovation and heresy!** But believe them not.—We seriously exhort you to believe them not; for there is not one word of truth in their malicious accusations.”*

Violent opposition was made by the papists, but Gustavus prevailed.

He called an assembly of the states of his kingdom, and proposed a reform.

Upon hearing the king’s proposal, the convocation was almost in an uproar. The prelates, and other papal adherents, cried **No! No!** with the utmost clamour, and called loudly on the leading men of the country, to withstand such unjust innovations.

But the pious and disinterested Gustavus had formed a resolution, from which even the splendour of a crown could not induce him to depart. He came into the assembly, and there publicly resigned the government of the kingdom. With some warmth, but with great decency and firmness, he informed them, that he had made his choice, and that his conscience did not permit him to support a superstitious and depraved system of religion. He added, that he had determined to leave the country,

* Baazius Histor.

but expected them to pay him the price of his hereditary possessions.

The great body of the Swedish representatives were now in an uproar, and threatened the papists with vengeance if they did not consent to the wishes of their beloved sovereign.

George, marquis of Brandenburg, protected the rising reformation in Hungary.

But the persecution in Flanders was ferocious. There Aleander, armed with the authority of the pope, and supported by the united power of the inquisition and of the civil government, exercised the vengeance of the hierarchy without mercy. The writings of Luther had infected the Augustinian monks at Antwerp. Some of them were imprisoned, and recanted; but three, in spite of persuasion, threats, and long confinement, remained steady.* These were publicly stript of their holy orders, and declared heretics on a scaffold at Brussels, about the middle of the year 1523.

Adrian dying, Julius de Medicis succeeded him, with the title of Clement VII. He was by no means disposed to comply with the wishes of the Diet of Nuremberg.

The triumphs of evangelical doctrine continued. Prussia received the truth, as did also various other regions. The labours of the faithful were not in vain.

It is matter of regret, that Luther retained one error, that of consubstantiation. Perhaps, however, we should say it is astonishing that he gained deliverance from so many. Born and educated a papist, having every inquiry to make for himself, we may indeed be surprised that he arrived at so large a measure of truth.

He rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, but

* Brandst.

maintained, nevertheless, that along with the elements of bread and wine, the real body and blood of Christ were received by the partakers of the Lord's Supper. It is a memorable instance of human imbecility, that a man who had risen superior to the habits and prejudices of education in so many other respects, and who, through the grace of God and the instruction of the written word, had been more completely emancipated from vulgar and fashionable absurdities, than any mere philosopher in any age had ever been, should in this single point remain so unreasonably attached to the opinion which he had imbibed in his youth. Our astonishment is increased by this circumstance, that he could allow the scriptural expressions to be consistent with the admission of the *reality* of the elements according to the plain testimony of our senses, and yet should think that those same expressions do still imply that the partaker of the real bread and wine does also partake at the same time of the material substance of Christ's human body. Thus, however, the advocates for the doctrine of *consubstantiation* must argue. And the case before us shows, that great men are not so in all things; and that it is never wise to adhere implicitly to the authority of mere fallible men as teachers. He contended for this doctrine with vehemence.

Munzer and the celestial prophets have already been adverted to. They boasted of conversations with the Almighty. By eulogizing them, Munzer united to himself a number of persons, who entered into a conspiracy with him, subscribed their names and took a solemn oath, for the express purpose of murdering all wicked persons, appointing new princes and magistrates, and organizing the world afresh; and upon such a plan, that pious and

good people only should have the upper hand.—The enthusiast declared, that for all this, he had the positive command of God.

Banished from Saxony, Munzer retired to Nuremberg, and thence to Mulhausen, where he had more success: He became the minister of the common people, and stimulated them to degrade the old magistrates and elect new ones; and to turn the monks out of doors, and seize their houses and property. The very best and richest house fell to the share of Munzer himself, who was now become both the first ecclesiastic and the first magistrate of the place. He decided all points in a summary way by the Bible or by inspiration, and taught the doctrine of perfect equality, and of a community of goods. The poor ceased to labour, and supplied their wants from the rich by force. The number of this deluded rabble increased in a most astonishing manner; their infatuated leader became every day more insolent, and persuaded himself that the time for carrying his detestable designs into execution was fast advancing.

Availing himself of popular grounds of complaint of a secular nature, Munzer inflamed the passions of the people. He made violent and delusive harangues, and, by his relation of visions and inspirations, and a pretended foresight of certain success, rendered them altogether desperate and outrageous.

Luther at first counselled to forbearance, but when the murderous designs of the fanatic were fully manifest, he used all his influence against him. He wrote against him. He addressed the common people. He addressed the princes and nobles. The rustics were anxious for his countenance, but he warned them against the con-

sequences of their conduct, and displayed to them in strong colours the character of their leaders.

When at length the violence of the mob became wholly ungovernable, and monasteries, castles and houses were pulled down, and many persons murdered, Luther wrote a tract *against the robbers and murderers*. To relate all the particulars of the rebellion in 1525 would be foreign to our purpose; it may be sufficient to add, that the princes of the empire found it absolutely necessary to unite their forces and their efforts for the suppression and punishment of the insurgents. The carnage in various parts of Germany was dreadful. A vast multitude of the faction in Thuringia were met by the Saxon and other confederate princes near Mulhausen, where they were defeated in a pitched battle, and Munzer their ring-leader was also taken and put to death.

On the 5th of May, 1525, died Luther's friend the Elector of Saxony. The Lord never wants for instruments. Frederick the Wise was a most powerful promoter of the reformation, at a period when it was most in need.

A short time before he expired, he addressed his servants and domestics in the following terms. "I entreat you, my dearest children, in the name of God, and for HIS sake, to forgive me, if I have offended any of you in word or deed; and I further entreat you to make in my name this same request for me to others. We princes are apt to treat our poor distressed subjects in a vexatious and unjustifiable manner." The devout and affectionate expressions of the elector drew tears from Spalatinus and all his domestics who were present.—His last words were, "I cannot say any more." "Does anything," said Spalatinus, "lie heavy on your mind?" He

answered, “No, but I have much bodily pain.”—He expired, however, like one falling asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

Erasmus.

IN 1525, Luther married; thus paying more respect to the word of God, than to the decretals of Rome.

Erasmus, the antagonist of Luther, dwelt with much virulence on this circumstance. I have said the antagonist of Luther, for though the restorer of learning performed essential service by his writings against monks and friars, he injured the cause by his excessive desire to be applauded for politeness, elegance, and moderation. His views were evidently secular. The weak side of Erasmus was his disposition at all times to court the favour of persons of rank and distinction; and it was through their incessant importunities, that he was at length prevailed on, though with much reluctance, to enter the lists against Luther.

An extensive erudition, a perspicuous and eloquent style, and especially an exquisite vein of sarcastic humour, marked this celebrated scholar as the proper champion to engage Luther. Accordingly, neither pains nor artifice were spared to secure his services. Princes and prelates, and cardinals, and even the pope himself, were most assiduous in touching those strings, the vibrations of which they judged most likely to gratify his pride, stimulate his ambition, and awaken his natural timidity. King Henry VIII. of England, is known to have intreated him to commence active hostilities against Lu-

ther; and the pope Adrian himself, in two memorable epistles, condescended to act the same suppliant part.

Nothing could be more grateful to Erasmus, than to be thus looked up to by persons in high stations. "Princes," he tells us, "from all quarters, exhorted him to write against Luther. He sent a trusty servant to England, for the purpose of removing a suspicion which had been injected into the mind of Henry VIII., that he had assisted Luther in his reply to the king; and he expresses great satisfaction that this step had been attended with much success. His servant was rewarded; his old friends were increased and confirmed in their affections: also, Henry and Cardinal Wolsey had even condescended to make their apologies to him."*

In the autumn of 1524, this elegant scholar published his dissertation, called *Diatribē*, on the Freedom of the Will; having first sent a part of the manuscript to Henry VIII. for the approbation of that prince, who always pretended to a considerable degree of theological acumen. Perhaps the author hoped by this flattering attention, to induce Henry to engage for the expenses of the publication; as he took care to inform his majesty, that no printer at Basil would dare to undertake his or any work which contained a word against Luther, and that therefore he must print the book somewhere else. "We may, however," said he, "write what we please against the pope. Such is the present state of Germany."†

No man that ever lived, perhaps, was less disposed than Martin Luther to temporize with his adversaries in essential points; yet in the instance of Erasmus, it is admitted that he exercised extraordinary patience and forbearance. The reason is, Erasmus, by his writings

* Ep. 1860.

† Ep. 774. Jortin, 322.

against monks and friars, had been of considerable service in abating the attachment of mankind to popery. Moreover, he was one of the first literary characters in the world, and well deserves the thanks of all who have a relish for classical learning. No wonder therefore Luther, in the great business of the Reformation, should have been anxious to prevent so much weight from being placed in the opposite scale. But Erasmus grew every day more and more out of humour with the Lutherans. He had repeatedly declared, that the church wanted reformation, but would never run any risk to forward the good cause. Hence the reformers became cold in their regards for him; and he, in return, beheld with pique and jealousy, the rapid progress of the new system.

The sagacity of Luther pointed out to him distinctly the situation of the mind of Erasmus, thus puzzled and distracted by a contrariety of motives. He viewed him as a man of letters buoyed up by the love of praise and the patronage of the great; also, as flattered and caressed by popes and prelates, and supposed peculiarly qualified to support a falling church. Moreover, he was aware how Erasmus, by trimming artfully between the two parties, had lost the confidence and friendship of both; and how, in his present state of irritation, he was disposed to do service to the Romanists, and regain their favour. He wrote the learned man, a masterly epistle, concerning which, Erasmus was constrained to allow that it was sufficiently civil, but that, for fear of his calumniators, he did not dare to answer him with equal civility.*

Luther answered the Diatribe. Erasmus rejoined in a work in two parts, called *Hyperapistes*.

Erasmus's timidity, double-dealing, chagrin, and re-

* Ep. 803.

sentment, are much to be lamented. Such had been his tergiversation and versatility, such the most solemn protestations of the sincerity of his faith, and so many the ambiguous and satirical effusions of his wit on occasions which could not but give offence to serious and pious minds, that it is not easy to point out the person who really loved and respected this otherwise great and venerable character. At the end of the year 1527, we find the Emperor himself writing to Erasmus, and telling him how great was his satisfaction to have been informed, by Erasmus's own letters, that the madness of the Lutherans began to decline. "The whole Christian world," he said, "was indebted to him, for having effected that which neither emperors, nor popes, nor princes, nor universities, nor numbers of learned men had been able to bring about." Notwithstanding all this gross flattery, the Emperor, in the same letter tells him, that he had allowed the Spanish Inquisition to examine his books—but that he had nothing to fear. The Emperor was fully convinced of his orthodoxy. However, if it should appear that he had made any slip, or had advanced any thing ambiguous, he would certainly, upon receiving a friendly admonition, clear it up, and, by thus removing every thing that could give offence to weak minds, secure immortality to his writings.*

It added not a little to his mortification, that, about the same time, the Faculty of Divines of the University of Paris extracted upwards of thirty propositions from his writings, and censured them in very strong terms.† His letters and his defence, on this occasion, are inimitable specimens of the author's great powers of evasion and

* Erasmo, 1047.

† Du Pin, III. 240 and 335. Also Op. Eras. IX. 319.

address. There is in them an artful mixture of submission, sarcasm, and menace. Yet, after all, the situation of Erasmus was such, as exposed him rather to ridicule than envy.—Perpetually calling heaven and earth to witness how good a Catholic he was, till nobody believed him; despising in his heart, and even hating the Parisian theologians, he yet condescended to make an ungracious sort of submission to them, and to own his having said things in his writings without sufficient caution; and, lastly, magnifying his own merits for having always been stanch to the church, and vilifying the Reformers for their heresy, he could not however deny, but that, in arguing against impieties, he himself might have, in some instances, fallen into errors of an impious nature.*

CHAPTER IX.

Spread of the Reformation.—Predestination.—Diets.—Death of Luther.

JOHN, the new elector of Saxony, conducted the religious concerns of his dominions in a manner quite different from that of his brother and predecessor, Frederick. The latter connived at and tolerated, rather than avowed and established the alterations introduced by Luther and his associates. But the former no sooner found himself in possession of the sovereign authority, than he exercised it with resolution and activity, by forming new ecclesiastical constitutions, modelled on the principles of the great Reformer.

New regulations were introduced at Wittemberg, both in the church and the university. The sacrament was there

* Ep. Coll. Sorb. Theol. Hisp. Sorbon. Senat. Par. Beddeæ, 1031 to 1044.

administered to the laity, for the first time, in the German instead of the Latin language, on Sunday the 29th of Oct. 1525.* The regulation of the public service of the church, and the appointment of well-qualified pastors, was a matter near the heart of the reformer.

The landgrave of Hesse became a convert to the truth. Being son-in-law to duke George, he was sanguine enough to entertain the hope of gaining him to the Gospel, by writing to him a brief exhortation, full of piety and affection. George sternly replied, "That he should commit the cause to God; for that after a hundred years it would appear who was right and who was wrong."—The honest landgrave, like most young converts, had not yet been taught, by experience, how exceedingly perverse and obdurate men usually become by being long hackneyed in the ways of Pharisaical religion; but this rough answer of the father-in-law was an instructive lesson, no doubt, to his son-in-law Philip. The same answer produced reflections in the truly Christian mind of the young prince John Frederick, which deserve to be remembered. "I am shocked," said he, "at the sentiments contained in the letter of George, especially at his saying, the truth will appear after a hundred years. What sort of faith is that which requires an experiment to support it? Assuredly, there is nothing of the nature of faith, where a man will not believe till he is convinced by experience. St. Paul says, 'Faith comes by hearing;' not by experience. I am grieved at the poor prince's situation; for if he will not believe what is true and right till after trial has been made, and, also, if during the trial he is determined to refuse obedience to the word of God, he may defer the important business too long, that is, till

* Id. p. 23.

there be no room for repentance. I would have every proper method used to cure him of his attachment to Popery, if, by the grace of God, there be a possibility of doing it. But I greatly fear all will be to no purpose; and that God will harden him, like Pharaoh, so that he will neither receive his Word, nor regard his signal providences.”*

The word of the Lord spread and was glorified. Many places of the empire publicly renounced antichrist:—preferring the Bible to Rome.

All this, however, did not take place without shedding the blood of some martyrs.

The powerful enemies of the reformation making many preparations that savoured of an assault, the elector of Saxony, with the landgrave of Hesse, and several others, entered into a league for their common defence. Luther steadily opposed offensive war, and advocated nothing but a defence against the popish princes. But the diet of Spires, which was much suspected, passed off without any steps being taken against the Lutherans, and an interval of quiet again returned. This interval Luther improved, as usual, by promoting the holy cause.

In 1527, took place a visitation of the electorate of Saxony. Sundry directions for the government of the church were published by Melanethon. In a preface to these, Luther showed the great use of ecclesiastical visitations, and censured the neglect of the bishops of those times. One of the directions defined the duty of a superintendent, an officer intended to act the part of bishop. He was directed to inspect the conduct of the clergy in his diocese, to examine candidates for holy orders, and to admonish defaulters.

* Seck. II. 35.

In 1528, the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse made preparations to attack their popish adversaries, but Luther persuaded them to continue at peace, and wait for an attack.

On the delicate subject of predestination, Luther always displayed great moderation. Content with what scripture had revealed, he never undertook to explain it with any thing like systematic precision. To a clergyman who applied to him for advice concerning it, he wrote thus:

"Many have perished in the indulgence of such curious inquiries; it is a temptation which leads even to blasphemy. I, myself, by giving way to it, have more than once been reduced to the last extremity. We, poor mortals, by faith can scarcely comprehend a few rays of the Divine promise, or receive in practice a few sparks of the Divine precepts; and yet, feeble and impure as we are, we rashly attempt to fathom the majesty of God in all its brightness. Do we not know that his ways are past finding out? Instead of using well the mild light of the promises which is adapted to our faculties, we rush with eyes of moles, to view at once the majestic splendour of the Deity. What wonder then if his glory should overwhelm us in the attempt to investigate it! We ought to know that there is such a thing as the secret will of God: but the danger is when we attempt to comprehend it. I am wont to check myself with that answer of Christ to Peter, who had asked what was to become of John;—‘What is that to thee? follow thou me.’ But suppose we could give an accurate account of the judgments of Almighty God in his secret determinations: what advantage would accrue to us from such knowledge, beyond what lies open to us from the promises and precepts—

from the former addressed to our faith—from the latter to our practice? Tell your friend, if he would have peace of mind, to abstain from such intricate speculations. The subject is incomprehensible, and the study of it may drive him to despair and blasphemy. Let him not give way to Satan, who would weary him out, by presenting impossibilities to his mind. Let him exercise faith in the promises, and obey the commandments: and when he has discharged those duties well, he will be able to judge whether he will have any time left for impossibilities. There is no other remedy than to neglect, and not give way to such thoughts; though this is a difficult task, because Satan suggests the absolute necessity of attending to them. This battle, however, must be fought; and many persons fail in the contest by not suspecting their thoughts to be the temptations of Satan; whereas, these are the very fiery darts of THAT WICKED ONE. He himself fell from heaven by aiming at a knowledge above his station.. Thus also he vanquished Adam, by teaching him to be dissatisfied with his ignorance concerning the will of God. Flight is the true wisdom here; there is no room for Christ to dwell in the heart, as long as reasonings of this kind are uppermost.” In another letter, while he admits the preordination and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, from Ezek. xviii. 23, “Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God,” he argues, that God chose, and seriously decreed from eternity, the possibility of the salvation and everlasting happiness of all men. And hence he concludes, that the general promises of a gracious God ought by no means to be limited; nor those suggestions of Satan to be indulged, which would separate us from the Divine mercy, which is represented in

scripture as infinite. He then refers the afflicted penitent to the voice of God himself, "This is my beloved Son, hear him;" and to the words of Christ, proclaiming in the streets, "Come unto me, all ye that labour." He invites all, even the very worst, as publicans and harlots. Why should we perplex ourselves with difficult and circuitous roads, when the direct road is so clearly pointed out to us in the gospel?"

A conference on the subject of consubstantiation took place between Luther and Zuingle at Marpurg. The violent temper of Luther on this occasion gave much grief to his friends. However, sundry articles of concord were agreed upon.

In 1529, a new diet met at Spires, which published a decree of intolerance against the Lutherans. Against this decree, fourteen imperial cities, with the elector of Saxony, and sundry other princes, solemnly protested. Hence arose the term protestant applied to the reformers. Charles V. was so enraged at this protest, that the authors of it thought fit to draw nearer their bonds of concord; and they formed the league of Smalcald for their mutual defence.

In 1530, sat the Diet of Augsburgh, at which was presented the famous confession of faith sketched by Luther, and elaborately drawn up by Melancthon. At this diet a decree was passed against the Lutherans, still more violent than the edict of Worms.

But Charles was so busied with wars against the Turks, the French, and others, that he was not able, for many years, to carry on a persecution. Luther, too, continually strove to prevent any violent measures on the part of the protestants, so that peace was maintained during his life. Various concessions, however, were

gained from the emperor, and, under the indefatigable labours of the reformer, the cause of truth spread, and became more established from year to year.

At length, his health having been gradually declining for some time, in 1546, Luther closed his valuable life at Isleben, the place of his nativity, whither he had gone, though in a rigorous season, to compose a difference among the counts of Mansfeldt. His funeral was celebrated, by order of the elector of Saxony, with extraordinary pomp.

CHAPTER X.

Reformation in Switzerland.—Zuingle.

ULRIC ZUINGLE, or ZUINGLIUS, was born January 1, 1484, at Wildhausen, in the county of Tockenburgh, in Switzerland. His education, which was liberal, was completed at the university of Vienna. In his 18th year, he became classical teacher at Basil. Four years afterwards he took the degree of M. A. and, being chosen pastor of Glarus, was ordained by the bishop of Constance. Having been trained by a teacher who accustomed him to think for himself, without being trammelled by the system of the schools, he pursued his inquiries to a discovery of the corruptions of Rome. The New Testament was his principal counsellor. He made that the directory of his faith, and he also attended to many of those authors who had been censured by the papacy. But, though he had thus become dissatisfied with existing errors, he did not immediately separate from the pope, but, for ten years, pursued a course of practical in-

struction at Glarus, contenting himself with exposing, from time to time, some of the superstitions of the church. From Glarus he removed to the abbey of Einsidlin. While there, he preached against vows, pilgrimages, and offerings; he caused the relics to be buried; the inscription over the abbey gate—"Here plenary remission of sins is obtained," to be effaced; and he introduced among the nuns the habit of reading the New Testament. He also taught the necessity of purity of heart and life. He became more and more eminent, and excited more and more jealousy in such as were opposed to reformation, but his ecclesiastical superiors allowed him, as yet, to remain unmolested. In 1519, he was invited to the cathedral at Zurich. On being installed there, he announced his intention of preaching from the gospel of Matthew, with no other comment than the scriptures would afford him. This novel plan of expounding fully the word of God drew together large auditories, and excited great admiration. The iniquitous traffic of indulgences, which roused the spirit of Luther in Saxony, was carried into Switzerland. The agent whose business it was to dispose of these lures to perdition, met with great success, until he came to Zurich; there, he was so effectually opposed by Zuingle, that he was obliged to quit the city, and retire into Italy.

Zuingle was a man of adventurous genius, and of great intrepidity. He was remarkable for his penetration, and, above all, was learned in the word of God; so that he was well qualified to be a leader in the cause of truth. So sensible were the papists of his weight of character, that he was much courted by the cardinals, and pope Adrian sent him, by his nuncio, a brieve written with his

own hand. Moreover, the force of Italian gold was tried upon him, but he was not open to a bribe.

Being an enemy to offensive war, Zwingli, in 1522, obtained the passage of a law, in the assembly of the canton of Zurich, abolishing all alliances and subsidies for the term of twenty-five years.

He declared the superiority of the rules of the gospel over those of ecclesiastical discipline, and when some persons were denounced to the magistrate, for infringing the fast of Lent, without a dispensation, he defended them. The word of God he considered the authority from which there was no appeal, and the decisions of the church as binding only so far as they were founded in that word. At length he openly avowed the principles of the reformation, and when, in consequence, he was called to give an account of his doctrine, the great council of Zurich decided, "That Zwingli, having been neither convicted of heresy, nor refuted, should continue to preach the gospel as he had already done; that the pastors of Zurich, and its territory, should rest their discourses on the words of scripture alone." But, though he was thus supported by the magistracy, he appeared more anxious to lay a solid foundation for a salutary change, by instructing the people, than to hazard too much by hastily abolishing ceremonies and modes of worship. In 1524, the pictures and statues were removed, and, step by step, the simplicity of the gospel was introduced, until, in 1525, the mass was abolished.

In 1525, the anabaptists attacked Zwingli. They began by insinuating into the minds of the people that the reformation was not sufficiently spiritual. They then addressed Zwingli himself, charging him with conducting the business of religion in a slow and frigid manner.

They insisted on the necessity of adult baptism in all cases, and declared rebaptization the criterion of a union with Christ. The senate caused conferences to be held on the subject, but they were in vain. The anabaptists at length became furious. They boasted of having all things in common, and threatened destruction to all who would not follow their example. They also pretended to prophecy—crying “Wo to Zurich! Wo to Zurich! Repent or perish!”—allowing the same space for repentance that was allowed to Nineveh. Other conferences were appointed, but these fanatics were not open to argument. Finally, the senate made their offence capital, and, a year or two after, one of them suffered.

Zuingle differed from Calvin on the subject of the Divine decrees, and from Luther on the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament. Luther, as is well known, held the doctrine of consubstantiation. Zuingle, on the other hand, regarded the Lord's supper as only commemorative and symbolical. Between these two, and their respective adherents, a vehement controversy was carried on, which continued for several years, to the great injury of the reformation. At length, in 1529, Philip, landgrave of Hesse, anxious to close the dispute, invited Luther and Zuingle to a conference at Marpurg. Thither they repaired, Luther accompanied by Melanchthon, and Zuingle by Oecolampadius. The argument continued four days, after which they all signed fourteen articles containing the essential doctrines of Christianity, and expressed a hope that their difference, with respect to the real presence, would not interrupt their harmony.

The canton of Bern followed that of Zurich in adopting the reformation. In an assembly, at which Zuingle was present, the subject was discussed, and, so triumph-

ant were the reformers, that, in conclusion, the grand council of the canton resolved to adopt their principles. Upon this, five of the cantons, who were attached to popery, entered into a solemn engagement to prevent the doctrines of Luther and Zwingli from being preached among them. But the hostilities, between the Roman and reformed cantons, were terminated by the treaty of Coppel, in 1529. This treaty, however, was broken, and a battle took place, at which Zwingli was present. The Zurichers, who had gone to the relief of their countrymen at Coppel, were defeated, and Zwingli was mortally wounded. His wound deprived him of his senses, but, recovering himself, "he crossed his arms on his breast and lifted his languid eyes to Heaven." In this condition he was found by some catholic soldiers, who, without knowing him, offered to bring him a confessor; but, as he made a sign of refusal, the soldiers exhorted him to recommend his soul to the Holy Virgin. On a second refusal, one of them furiously exclaimed, "Die then, obstinate heretic!" and pierced him through with a sword. His body was found on the next day, and the celebrity of his name drew together a great crowd of spectators. One of these, who had been his colleague at Zurich, after intently gazing on his face, thus expressed his feelings: "Whatever may have been thy faith, I am sure thou wert always sincere, and that thou lovedst thy country. May God take thy soul in mercy!" Among the savage herd some voices exclaimed, "Let us burn his accursed remains!" The proposal was applauded; a military tribunal ordered the execution, and the ashes of Zwingli were scattered to the wind. Thus, at the age of 47, he terminated a glorious career by an event deeply

lamented by all the friends of the reformation, and occasioning triumph to the partizans of the Romish church.

CHAPTER XI.

France.—Geneva.—John Calvin.

JOHN CHAUVIN, or, as he is usually called, John Calvin, was born at Noyon, in Picardy, on the 10th of July, 1509. In the house of a noble family, he received, in his childhood, the rudiments of a liberal education, and along with the children of that family, he was sent to Paris, where he advanced in learning with great rapidity. At the age of twelve he is supposed to have received the tonsure, or the first part of the ceremony of ordination, according to the rites of the Romish church. He was then presented with a benefice; and, in 1527, with another; which, in 1529, he exchanged for a curacy in the native place of his father. Here he sometimes preached, though he was attached to the clergy only by the tonsure. But his father, anxious to see him prosperous in the things of the present life, diverted his attention, with some difficulty, to the study of the civil law. At the university of Orleans, and also at that of Bourges, he attained the first rank among his fellow students. As a mark of high respect, the faculty of the former unanimously voted him a doctor's degree.

But the study of the law by no means engrossed his entire attention. Through the instrumentality of Peter Olivetan, a near kinsman, he became acquainted with the doctrines of the reformation, then spreading in France. Obtaining the holy scriptures, he applied him-

self to the study of them with the greatest assiduity, until, at length, he determined to renounce the superstitions of Rome.

While at Bourges, he occasionally preached at Ligniers, a small town in the province of Berri. But the death of his father suddenly recalled him to Noyon.

At the age of twenty-two, he prepared and published a commentary on Seneca's epistle concerning clemency. This he did for the purpose of impressing mild and tolerant principles on the government of France; as, from observing the progress of the reformed doctrines, he anticipated much persecution.

Lest to his own choice of a pursuit for life, he renounced his legal studies, devoted himself to the cause of religion, and became active in illustrating and confirming the doctrines of the Bible, in the private assemblies held at Paris.

Pursuant to the advice of Calvin, Nicholas Cop, rector of the university of Paris, delivered a discourse, on the festival of All-saints, animadverting on the superstitions of the day. This gave great offence. Cop was obliged to fly. Calvin, who also was pursued, escaped by being absent from his lodgings, but his papers were seized, to the great hazard of many of his friends, whose letters in favour of reformation were among them. The queen of Navarre interposed, and arrested the fury of the inquisition. Calvin was kindly received at her house; and, through her intercession with the king, his personal safety was secured.

From Paris, Calvin retired to Saintonge. While there, he wrote, at the request of his friend Lewis du Tillet, some short Christian exhortations, which were used as

homilies for the purpose of awakening an inquiry after truth among the people.

In 1534, he returned to Paris. "There he was to have had a conference with Servetus, who had begun to propagate his heterodox opinions respecting the Trinity: but Servetus failed to appear, though Calvin attended at the time and place appointed, at the imminent hazard of his life; for this year was peculiarly troublesome and dangerous to the reformed." The French king ordered eight of them to be burned alive, and "swore that he would not spare even his own children, if they were infected with such abominable heresies."

Calvin departed to Basil, in Switzerland, where, in 1535, he published his celebrated Institutes of the Christian Religion. The design of this work was to defend the reformers from the aspersions of the papists, who were endeavouring to confound them with the anabaptist enthusiasts. In a preface, dedicating it to Francis I., the author endeavoured to soften the persecuting spirit of that monarch. This preface is distinguished by the elegance of its Latin, and the Institutes themselves are in the highest estimation with all who hold their views of doctrine. They were, in subsequent editions, repeatedly revised and enlarged by Calvin, and have been translated into a variety of languages.

After publishing this work, the reformer went into Italy, on a visit to the duchess of Ferrara, a nursing mother of protestantism; but the inquisition hearing of his arrival, compelled him to depart. He returned to France, but, on account of the persecution still raging there, he resolved to take up his abode in Basil or Strasburgh, and pursue his studies in quiet seclusion. On his way, he found the direct road to the latter place impeded by the

troops of the emperor, then invading France. In consequence of this, he changed his route, intending to pass through Geneva. Arrived at that city, he was arrested in his course by the reformers, Farel and Viret, who entreated him to remain and assist them in their labours. He refused, until, at length, Farel addressed him in the language of imprecation—"I declare to you, in the name of Almighty God, if, under the pretext of love to your studies, you refuse to unite your labours with ours, in the work of the Lord, the Lord will curse you in your retirement, as seeking your own will, and not his." Awed by this appeal, Calvin yielded. He accepted of the office which was offered him, and became both a preacher and professor of divinity. This occurred in 1536.

The Genevese had lately banished their bishop, who, contrary to the gospel, was prince as well as pastor, and who, moreover, was a persecuting papist. They had also defeated the duke of Savoy, who claimed some authority over them; and had formed themselves into a republic, under four syndicks, twenty-five senators, and a council of two hundred—the officers recognised by their ancient constitution. The principles of the reformation had been spread among them by the labours of Farel and Viret, and, in full assembly, they had renounced the pope.

Perceiving that this people, though reformed in name, were far from being all reformed in fact, Calvin, immediately on his settlement among them, entered upon a course of active labours. He prepared a formula of Christian faith, and a catechism; and, in 1537, with the help of Farel and Corault, he succeeded in making the senate and people openly abjure the church of Rome, and swear to a summary of doctrine and form of discipline which he had drawn up. The church government

recognised by this form, was Presbyterian, though, from a work written by him in 1544, on the subject of reforming the church, it would appear that he desired another — “If they would bring unto us,” says he, “such a hierarchy, wherein the bishops shall so rule as that they refuse not to submit themselves to Christ, that they depend upon him as their only head, &c. then, surely, if there should be any that shall not submit themselves to that hierarchy, reverently, and with the greatest obedience that may be, I confess there is no anathema of which they are not worthy.”

But, though his labours were thus successful, he was not without difficulties. The anabaptists endeavoured to spread their disorganizing tenets at Geneva. With them, he held a public disputation, and they were defeated. One Peter Caroli, an outcast from the Sorbonne, accused him of heretical notions on the subject of the Trinity. The reformer proposed to assemble a synod of ministers in the canton of Bern. These pronounced Caroli guilty of defamation. He, however, persisted in his charge, and was, at length, banished by the senate. But the greatest trouble arose from the Genévese themselves. They had sworn to uphold the principles of the gospel; but the majority had not yet received them in their hearts. Many wished to live in sinful practices, with none to molest or make them afraid. Animosities, engendered during the war with the duke of Savoy, divided many families and individuals, producing the most injurious effects. Against these, Calvin and his colleagues preached, and exerted their official influence. They called, also, on the civil authority to interfere for the preservation of public morals. But, their enemies were only exasperated; and the more violent wished for

nothing so much as to relieve themselves from the vigilance of such pastors. A controversy, which arose about this time, between the church of Geneva, and that of Bern, on the subject of ceremonies, gave the disaffected an opportunity of gaining their wish. The church of Geneva was in the habit of using leavened bread in the eucharist; had removed all the baptismal fonts, and abolished every festival except Sunday. Of these things the churches of the canton of Bern disapproved; and, by a synod held at Lausanne, required a change. This requisition the ministers of Geneva refused to obey, alleging that they had not been called to the synod, and demanding the privilege of being heard. The demand was acceded to, and a council appointed to be held at Zurich, to decide. But, taking advantage of the refusal to obey the synod of Lausanne, the enemies of Calvin procured an order from an assembly of the people, that he, with Farel and Corault, should leave the city in two days. "Had I been," said he, "in the service of men, this would have been a poor reward; but it is well. I have served Him who never fails to repay his servants whatever he has promised."

The banished ministers proceeded to the council of Zurich—the synod of the Swiss churches. This synod directed the church of Bern to use its influence with the Genevese, to revoke their decree of expulsion. The intercession was made, but it did not avail.

Calvin repaired to Strasburgh, where he became, once more, professor of theology, and preacher of the gospel. He collected a French church, which he modelled after the plan of that at Geneva. He discharged the duties of his professorship with so much ability, that the seminary at Strasburgh increased in celebrity, and in the

number of students. In 1539, he published a commentary on the Romans; and a small work on the Lord's Supper, intended to allay the controversy between the adherents of Luther and Zwingli. He addressed sundry letters to the church of Geneva. He returned an answer to an able and eloquent letter of cardinal Sadolet, to the Genevese, endeavouring to recall them to the Romish communion. This answer so unmasked the abominations of popery, that the cardinal was completely frustrated.

In 1540, Calvin was married. In 1541, he was appointed by the divines of Strasburgh "to attend the diet convened to meet at Worms, and afterwards at Ratisbon, for settling the religious differences which had arisen in Germany." While there, he proved highly useful to the protestants of France, procuring an address from the states and princes assembled to the French king, in behalf of the persecuted.

The lapse of two years caused a great change in the face of affairs at Geneva. A desire for Calvin's return became general, and an embassy was sent to entreat him. He, at first, refused; but, after much solicitation, and some intercession, consented. He arrived at Geneva on the 13th of September, 1541. He was received with gratulations, and the senate made a public acknowledgment to God for so signal a benefit.

He immediately attended to the subject of discipline. "He projected a kind of police, and procured the establishment of a tribunal called the consistory, with power to take cognizance of all offences, and to inflict canonical punishments, even to excommunication. In cases requiring the infliction of severe penalties, it reported to the council of the city, with its own judgment on the

evidence adduced." Considerable opposition was made, but Calvin's system was, at length, adopted.

The course of labours on which he now entered, was extremely severe. He preached every day of every other week: on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, he gave lectures in theology: on Thursday, he presided in the meeting of the presbytery; and on Friday, expounded the scriptures to the congregation. Besides all this, he carried on an extensive correspondence, composed various works of controversy, defended the reformation against its numerous enemies, assisted the council of Geneva, by deciding points of law and framing edicts, and produced works of learning and ability, intended for general edification.

"The deference shown to Calvin's opinions, and the respect paid to his personal character, were astonishing. His disapprobation of any tenet was sufficient to procure its rejection, and all who treated him ill were considered as enemies of the state. Castalio, having attempted to disseminate some doctrines which Calvin abhorred, was instantly denounced as a heretic, and obliged to leave Geneva."

In 1544, he published a work entitled, "The necessity of reforming the church;" and another "against the errors and fanaticism of the anabaptists and libertines." He exposed the fallacy of the position held by the libertines, that God is the author of sin. This last work offended the queen of Navarre: but he succeeded in regaining her good opinion.

The vices of many of the Genevese caused them to organize faction after faction against the discipline of the church. Continual attempts were made to wrest the power of excommunication out of the hands of the con-

sistory, and place it in the senate. The reformer was obliged to be always on the alert. He preached closely. He laboured faithfully. At one time, a body of the disaffected, led on by Perrin, had gained so considerable an advantage, that the council of two hundred was convoked. On the day of their assembling, September 16th, 1547, Calvin, being apprehensive of a tumult, went to the council chamber. He found before the door a noisy crowd, whose violence it was difficult to appease; and, even in the hall of legislation, it was only by his thrusting his body between their contending swords that he restrained the combatants. The result was, that the consistory was allowed to retain its spiritual authority.

Calvin, from time to time, exercised a watchful care over the protestant churches in France. As early as 1537, he wrote to his friend Ceminus, showing the danger of a compliance with popish superstition, into which some were falling; and also to Roussel, bishop of Oleron, exhorting him to a faithful discharge of the episcopal office: and he continued thus to counsel both individuals and communities. He repeatedly applied to the German princes, to use their influence with Francis I. in order to procure toleration. And when, notwithstanding all these applications, in 1545, the storm of persecution burst over the valleys of Piedmont, and men, women, and children, were put to the sword, or enveloped in the flame, because they would not declare themselves papists, he extended his protection to such as were able to escape, and procured for many of them an asylum in Geneva.

Calvin had, also, considerable correspondence with the reformers of the church of England. In October, 1548, he wrote to the protector, entreating him to press on in the good work, approving of what had been already

done, and giving wholesome counsel. In the course of his letter, he drew up what he considered a summary of Christian doctrines, in the following words, viz. "That we have one God, the Governor of our consciences: for the direction of these, we must make use of his law alone, for the rule of devotion, lest we bring to his worship any of the vain traditions of men: he must, moreover, be worshipped by all, according to his own nature, with the whole mind and heart. But, since there is nothing in us except a miserable corruption, which occupies both our senses and affections, we must acknowledge that entire abyss of iniquity, and dread it when acknowledged. In this manner, having obtained a true knowledge of our state, as being in ourselves, broken, wounded, lost, deprived of all dignity and wisdom, and finally of any power to do good, we must, at last, flee to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only fountain of all blessings, to partake of whatever he offers, and principally that incomparable treasure of his death and passion; by which method alone we may become entirely reconciled to God, the Father. Purified by the sprinkling of his blood, we shall be assured that none of those stains will remain in us, which would cover us with shame before his celestial throne. We shall be persuaded of the efficacy of his perpetual sacrifice, by which we have sealed to us the gratuitous remission of sins, and on which we must fasten as the refuge and anchor of salvation. Being sanctified by his spirit, we shall be consecrated in obedience to the righteousness of God; and confirmed by his grace, we shall come off more than conquerors over Satan, the world, and the flesh. Being members of his body, we shall not doubt but that God will number us in the family of his children; and we shall address him with entire confidence

by the legitimate and endearing name of Father. This is the design of the true doctrine, which is ever to be preserved and heard, by all in the church of God, that all may sincerely aim at this work; and that each individual, gradually withdrawing himself from the world, may raise himself to Christ his head, who is in heaven, by perseverance, prayer, and habitual holiness." "The door," said he, "must be shut against various innovations. The only means to be used for this purpose, is, to have a summary of doctrine received by all, which they may follow in preaching. To the observance of this, all bishops and clergy should be bound by oath." Again, he said, "the church of God cannot be without a catechism; for therein the true seed of doctrine is to be contained, from which, at length, the pure and seasonable harvest will be matured; and from this the seed may be multiplied abundantly." And again—"As to the formula of prayers, and ecclesiastical ceremonies, I very much approve that a proper one should exist, from which the pastors should not be permitted to vary, in the exercise of their office; and which might consult the simplicity and ignorance of some persons, and also establish a more certain agreement of all the churches among themselves. This would, moreover, put a check upon the instability and levity of those persons, who might attempt innovations, and it would have the same tendency as I have before shown the catechism would have. Thus ought to be established a catechism, the administration of the sacraments, and the public formula of prayers."

Along with this letter to the Protector, Calvin sent one to the king. The correspondence between him and the reformers of England, was continued from year to year.

In 1552, Cranmer addressed to Calvin a letter, of which the following is an extract:

“Thomas Cranmer to Calvin, greeting: As nothing tends more to separate the churches of God, than heresies and differences about the doctrines of religion, so nothing more effectually unites them, and fortifies more powerfully the fold of Christ, than the uncorrupted doctrine of the gospel, and union in received opinions. I have often wished, and now wish, that those learned and pious men, who excel others in erudition and judgment, would assemble in some convenient place, where, holding a mutual consultation, and comparing their opinions, they might discuss all the heads of ecclesiastical doctrine, and agree not only concerning the things themselves, but the forms of expression, and deliver to posterity some work, with the weight of their authority.” In answer to this, speaking of the importance of purging “the pure doctrine of the church,” Calvin addressing himself to Cranmer, said—“It is especially your duty, most accomplished prelate, as you sit more elevated in the watch-tower, to continue your exertions for effecting this object. I do not say this to stimulate you afresh; as you have already, of your own accord preceded others, and voluntarily exhorted them to follow your steps. I would only confirm you in this auspicious and distinguished labour by my congratulation. We have heard of the delightful success of the gospel in England.” “I know, moreover, that your purpose is not confined to England alone; but, at the same moment, you consult the benefit of all the world. The generous disposition and uncommon piety of his majesty, the king, are justly to be admired, as he is pleased to favour this holy purpose of holding such a council, and offers a place for its session

in his kingdom. I wish it might be effected, that learned and stable men from the principal churches, might assemble in some place, and, after discussing with care, each article of faith, deliver to posterity, from their general opinion of them all, the clear doctrine of the scriptures." After declaring his willingness to attend this synod, Calvin concludes, by saying—"I not only exhort you, but I conjure you to proceed, until something shall be effected, if not every thing you could wish. Farewell, most accomplished prelate, sincerely respected by me. May the Lord go on to guide you by his spirit, and bless your holy labours." Something occurring to prevent the proposed council, Calvin wrote afterwards to the archbishop, "Since we can by no means expect at this time, what we so much desired, that the principal doctors, from those churches which have embraced the pure doctrines of the gospel, should assemble, and, from the word of God, publish a definite and luminous confession, concerning all the points now controverted; I very much approve, reverend sir, of your design, that the English should maturely determine their religion among themselves." "It is especially your business, and that of all those who have the government in their hands, to unite your exertions to effect this object. You see what your station requires, and more imperiously demands of you, in return for the office which you hold by his favour. The chief authority is in your hand, confirmed both by the greatness of the honour, and the long established opinion concerning your prudence and integrity."

The enemies of Calvin at Geneva still continued to assail him. They heaped upon him every variety of insult. He caused them to be arraigned before the senate; and, in December, 1548, they renewed their oath to be

reconciled. "He had a keen controversy with Jerome Bolseck, a Carmelite friar, who impugned his peculiar doctrine of absolute predestination, and openly taught the sentiments on that subject, which were afterwards maintained by Arminius. They disputed the point in church; but Calvin displayed such a superiority in argument and erudition, that, in the judgment of all present, he obtained the victory; and, according to custom, his antagonist, who, besides his difference with Calvin, was of a troublesome temper, was first cast into prison, and then banished from the city."

Among other plans made use of at Geneva, for promoting the spread of the truth, it was decreed by the senate, that the ministers should, at stated times, visit every family, attended by the decurion of each ward, and a ruling elder, and question each person summarily, concerning the reason of his faith. This was followed by the best consequences.

In 1553, Michel Servetus, a Spanish physician, who had become notorious for sundry heresies, being condemned to death by the papists at Vienna, fled for his life. After wandering for some time as a fugitive, he arrived, at length, at Geneva. Calvin caused him to be apprehended and brought before the senate. The charges against him were, blasphemy and heresy. Calvin was appointed to hold a public disputation with him. The senate submitted to his choice, whether he would be sent back to the papists at Vienna, or abide by their decision. Servetus chose the latter; whereupon he was brought to trial. The charges against him were declared to be proved. From this judgment he appealed to the four Swiss churches; and to them the senate forwarded the charges, proofs and replies. They also decided against

him, and advised his execution; and, accordingly, on the 27th October, he was burnt. Calvin endeavoured to have the mode of his execution changed; but, as he said in his letter to Farel, he hoped the sentence, at least, would be capital. In viewing this event, we are led to regret that the principles of toleration were so little understood. Even the reformers appear not to have arrived at a perfect conviction that prayer and sound argument are the only legitimate weapons against heresy.

Bertilier, clerk of the council of Geneva, having been excommunicated by the consistory, appealed to the senate, and, that body deciding against him, he carried the subject before the council. There a decree was passed in his favour, in which the senate subsequently coincided. Calvin, who contended that the church alone had the power of spiritual censures, went to the church a short time afterwards, to administer the sacrament of the supper. Before proceeding to the distribution of the elements, he resolutely declared, "After the example of Chrysostom, sooner will I suffer death, than permit this hand to administer the holy things of the Lord to those who are lawfully condemned as despisers of God." Bertilier declined approaching the table, and the senate recalled their decree.

The persecution, which arose in England on the accession of queen Mary, having driven many of the reformers of that country to the continent, and, among those who took refuge at Frankfort, a difference of opinion arising on the subject of the liturgy, Calvin wrote exhorting them to peace. He advised them to make their liturgy as pure as possible, leaving out every thing that savoured of popery. A part of these exiles removed to Geneva.

In 1554, a controversy arose at Strasburgh on the subject of the eucharist. This Calvin endeavoured to allay. In a letter written to the pastor of the church of Strasburgh, complaining of the severity used toward a fellow minister, he says, "If that excellent servant of God, and faithful doctor of the church, Luther, was now living, even he would not be so severe or implacable, but that he would willingly admit this confession, that what the sacraments represent, is truly given us; and, therefore, in the Lord's supper we are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ. For, how often has he declared, that the only ground of his contention was, that it might be manifest, that the Lord did not trifle with us by empty signs, but that he effected within, what he proposed to our eyes, and thence the effect was connected with the signs. This is agreed upon among us, unless I am greatly deceived, that the Lord's supper is not a theatrical spectacle of the spiritual food, but that what is represented is really given; because, at the supper, the pious souls are fed with the flesh and blood of Christ." This controversy about the eucharist, was continued with various persons, even as late as 1561. Calvin wrote several tracts upon the subject, defending and explaining the articles of agreement entered into by the Swiss churches, &c. He had various other controversies, as, one with Gribauld, a heretic, who was banished from Geneva. Bolseck, who had before been banished from Geneva, being in the canton of Bern, and there attacking anew, the doctrine of Divine sovereignty, Calvin repaired thither to contend with him. The result was, that Bolseck was ordered to depart from the territory of that canton, as was also Castalio, another opponent of Calvin. The two senates of Bern and Geneva, entered into an

agreement, that those who, on account of heresy, were banished from the territory of one, should not be allowed to remain in the territory of the other.

In 1558, Calvin wrote to the landgrave of Hesse, entreating him to intercede with Henry II., the successor of Francis on the throne of France, in behalf of the protestants, who were persecuted with the utmost fury; twenty-one of them being burned alive at Paris. From year to year, the persecution continued to rage, and, at the same time, the truth continued to spread. Geneva itself was threatened, but the storm was averted.

In 1560, a new seminary was dedicated to the service of God, at Geneva. The buildings were large, and professors numerous. Calvin held the theological chair, and Beza was made president. This institution was intended as a means of spreading the doctrines of the reformation.

The persecution in France driving some of the protestants of that country to England, where Elizabeth now shielded the reformation, they were received with hospitality, and a place of worship appointed them, in which they might conduct their exercises according to the Genevese mode. Grindall, bishop of London, especially, became their friend. To him Calvin wrote in the most respectful and grateful terms. He also dedicated to Elizabeth the last edition of his *Institutes*.

Calvin's life drew near its close. In 1556, he was seized with a quartan ague, which continued its attacks until he was reduced to the greatest debility, insomuch, that, in 1558, he was obliged to omit his public sermons and lectures in theology, though he still devoted day and night to dictating and writing letters. "How unpleasant to me," he would say sometimes, "is an idle life." In a

letter to a friend, written in 1560, he informed him that he dictated from his bed, "where, according to my custom, I lie down one half of my time, that I may be able to improve with more strength, the remaining hours." His active mind rose superior to the sufferings of his body. When oppressed with head-ache, weakness of the bowels, and the pains of the gout, he would dictate till his amanuensis was wearied. On the 2d February, 1564, he preached his last sermon, and closed his theological lectures. The asthma had almost destroyed his voice. His end rapidly drew nigh. Amid the severest pains, he was patient and tranquil, often exclaiming, "How long, O Lord." He still continued his mental labours, and when his friends expostulated, he said, "What! would you that when the Lord comes, he should surprise me in idleness?" On the 27th of March, he was carried to the council chamber, where he presented Beza to the patronage of the senate. On the 2d of April, he was carried to the house of worship in an easy chair, and received, for the last time, the sacrament, from the hands of Beza. On the 25th, he made his will, commanding his soul to God. He gave his parting advice to the senators, and also to the ministers of the church. He had himself been perpetual moderator of the presbytery. "When I first came to this city," said he, "the gospel was indeed preached, but the affairs of religion were in a most disordered state, as if Christianity consisted in nothing but the destruction of images. There were many wicked men, from whom I suffered many extreme indignities; but the Lord God himself, so strengthened me, even me, I say, who am by nature so timid, (I speak as the fact is) that I was enabled to resist all their efforts." "Persevere then, my brethren, in your vocation," &c.

"After this, his few remaining days were devoted to prayer and meditation; and, on the 24th of May, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus."

CHAPTER XII.

England.—Henry VIII.—Cranmer.—Henry's Divorce.—Popery condemned.

AT the commencement of the reign of king Henry the VIII. England was reposing in the arms of papal Rome, implicitly yielding to her spiritual despotism. There had been some contests by preceding kings against the exactions of the papacy, but these had always ended in submission, and the Vatican reigned lord paramount over the souls and bodies of Englishmen. The shrines of saints were visited by adoring multitudes; the doctrine of purgatory was an inexhaustible fountain of supply to the coffers of the priesthood; bishops were established in their sees by bulls from his holiness; appeals to Rome held all spiritual decisions in durance; images, and reliques, and miracles abounded; the Bible was considered the source of heresy; and ignorance slept at the foot of superstition, while vice, in every variety, roamed unchecked through the land.

True, there were some who possessed copies of Wickliff's Bible, and received its doctrine rather than the decrees of cardinals. But they were poor. They were not in authority. They were persecuted by the dominant power; and, from their inability to act with efficiency, were hardly known to exist. True, also, when any see became vacant, the king seized on its temporalities, and did not deliver them to the bishop appointed of

Rome, until he had sworn allegiance; but Henry, as if to destroy this remnant of supremacy, surrendered it into the hands of his favourite Wolsey, who was the pope's legate.

Henry, however, appears to have been raised up by Providence to crush the power of papacy in England, and prepare the way for reformation.

In the fourth year of his reign, a law was passed subjecting the clergy to be tried by the civil courts. Heretofore, they had been amenable to none but ecclesiastical authority, and, such was the universal corruption, that, whatever crimes they committed, they usually escaped unpunished. This law was violently opposed by the whole clerical body, and nothing but the determined spirit of Henry, zealous for prerogative, carried it through. The pope was in trouble, and did not dare to resent the insult.

Yet, in all other matters, Henry continued a most faithful son of the see of Rome, during the first eighteen years of his reign; insomuch that pope Julius sent him a golden rose, and pope Leo X. gave him more roses, and made his favourite Wolsey a cardinal.

Wolsey, though a bad man himself, obtained a bull from the pope to reform the clergy. His real object was, to pave the way for suppressing several of the monasteries, and converting them into colleges, cathedrals, &c.

The convocation of England was usually summoned by the king; who, with the writs for a parliament, sent also a summons to the two archbishops of Canterbury and York, to call together the clergy of their respective provinces. But the cardinal, as legate, took this power into his own hands. In 1552, he summoned the convocation of Canterbury to Westminster, to reform abuses

in the church. Here he demanded a heavy supply for the king, viz. one half of the full value of all livings for one year, to be paid in five years. This, with great difficulty, was obtained; but it enraged the clergy against the cardinal. He, however, despised them, especially the monks, whom he looked upon as idle mouths, of no use to church or state. They were indeed numerous, and generally given up to idleness and pleasure. He resolved on suppressing a great number of their institutions, and in this found no difficulty; for the king, being a friend to learning, had no objections to his endowing colleges with the spoils of monasteries. The pope, too, consented; and, in the 18th year of Henry, the foundation of a college was laid at Oxford, and in the 20th, that of another at Ipswich.

The first dawning of reformation in England, may, doubtless, be traced to the days of Wickliff, 150 years antecedent to this time; for then, the clergy being obnoxious to the people, on account of the rapacity of their exactions, he propagated several opinions hostile to their power. He translated the Bible from Latin into English, and circulated it, with a preface reflecting severely on the existing corruptions, condemning the worship of saints and images, denying the corporal presence of Christ in the sacrament, and exhorting all people to the study of the scriptures. He died in peace, though his body was afterwards burned; but the followers of his doctrine, who were generally among the illiterate, were severely persecuted. In the reign of Richard II. a law was passed subjecting them to trial; and, by a statute of Henry IV. they were condemned to be burnt as heretics. Under this law many suffered. These martyrs were also called Lollards. In the first year of Henry, a considerable

number were arraigned, and some were burned.. The principal charges against them were, refusing to believe in transubstantiation, auricular confession, pilgrimages, worship of images, praying to saints, and purgatory.

The seeds sown by Wickliff, and now flourishing in the Lollards, caused the doctrines of Luther, which were spreading in Germany, to gain friends in England. Many of the books containing them were translated into English, and widely-circulated. This made the rage of persecution more violent. Great numbers were proceeded against. If a man uttered but a light word against the constitutions of the church, he was seized. If any taught their children the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and the apostles' creed, in the vulgar tongue, that was deemed a sufficient crime to bring them to the stake. For this offence, six men and one woman were burnt at Coventry, on the 4th of April, 1519.

Henry employed his pen, as well as his power, against the heretics. He wrote a book against Luther, on the seven sacraments, which was extolled as a model of excellence. For this work, he received a pompous letter, signed by the pope and twenty-seven cardinals, and the title of "Defender of the faith." But Luther treated his book with great contempt. William Tindal translated the New Testament into English, printed it at Antwerp, with some short comments, and sent it over for distribution, in 1526. This was denounced by the papists as an erroneous translation, and all persons who had copies of it were commanded to deliver them up, on pain of excommunication, and incurring the suspicion of heresy. Many other books were prohibited at the same time; most of them written by Tindal. Against some of these Sir Thomas More wrote. He was a man of learning,

and an enemy to the ignorance of the clergy, but a bitter persecutor.

About this time, king Henry disputed the validity of his marriage with Catharine his queen. She had been wife to Arthur his brother, but though, in consequence of that, he had procured a dispensation from the pope on marrying her, he now found out that it was unlawful for a man to have his brother's widow. He laid the question before the bishops of England, and they decided in favour of a divorce; and, though the pope, by a bull, had sanctioned the marriage, he hoped to succeed in convincing him that the bull was granted on wrong representations, and in inducing him to revoke it.

With this view, he sent a messenger to Rome, to make his application; directing him to secure all the friends he could around his holiness, by money and promises. The messenger found the pope imprisoned by the emperor. He presented the king's request, and received for answer, that the divorce should be granted. But, as soon as the pope was at liberty, he declined fulfilling his promise. The emperor, who was the nephew of Catharine, and violently opposed to the divorce, had him still in durance. His holiness, however, strove, by all the crooked arts of a most wily policy, to satisfy Henry that he was his friend, and that he only wished a little necessary delay. Messenger after messenger was sent by the king; bribe after bribe was given to the cardinals; subterfuge after subterfuge was resorted to by the pope; until, at length, two legates were appointed to try the question in England: viz. Campegio, who was despatched from Rome, and Wolsey. During the whole progress of the application, Wolsey was using all the earnestness fear could suggest; for he had pledged himself to effect the divorce,

and he well knew, from the temper of Henry, that, if he failed, he would be ruined.

In 1529, the legates sat in England. Instructed by his holiness, Campegio delayed the proceedings as much as possible, and when, at last, all things were ready for a sentence, he adjourned the court from July to October. Soon after, a messenger came summoning the cause to Rome. Henry could ill brook all this, but still he did not entirely break off from the pope. However, he denied his authority to cite him out of his kingdom.

To divert his mind, he made an excursion through his dominions. During it; he lay one night at Waltham. While there; his secretary and almoner, Gardiner and Fox, met with Dr. Cranmer, a fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge. Knowing his great learning and solid judgment, they pressed him for his opinion concerning the divorce. He modestly declined; but told them, it would be best to ascertain whether the marriage was unlawful by virtue of any divine precept, for, if so, the pope's authority could not make that lawful which God had declared unlawful. He thought; therefore, that, instead of a fruitless application at Rome, it would be better to consult all the learned men and universities of Christendom: for, if they pronounced in the king's favour, the pope must needs give judgment; or, if he refused, the marriage would be found sinful, notwithstanding his dispensation. With this proposition, Henry was delighted, and immediately sent for Cranmer, and received him to court.

Wolsey was ruined. He was attainted for treason, and shortly after died; declaring that, if he had served his God as he had served his king, he would not have been deserted in his grey hairs.

In the parliament that met in 1529, there were bills

passed against several abuses of the clergy, and many severe reflections were made upon their vices and corruptions. These were believed to flow from men who had Luther's doctrine at heart. The king promoted this attack, that he might show the pope what he could do if driven to extremity.

Pursuant to the advice of Cranmer, application was made to the various learned bodies for their opinions concerning the divorce. Oxford and Cambridge decided that the marriage was unlawful, as did also the universities of Padua, Bavaria, Orleans and Thoulouse: the divines of Ferrara; many of the Jewish Rabbins; the doctors of the Sorbonne; and a multitude of others, in Italy, and other parts of Europe. Zuingle united in the same decision. Calvin afterwards pronounced a similar sentiment.

These opinions being received, a letter was written to the pope, by the principal of the nobility, clergy, and commons of England, setting them forth; complaining of his conduct; and threatening that they must seek a remedy elsewhere, if he persisted in refusing a divorce. The pope answered, that, if the patient would hurt himself, it was not the physician's fault; and made new promises.

But the king, wearied with delay, published a proclamation against receiving bulls from Rome. He caused, also, the various arguments against his marriage to be drawn out, and published. He, moreover, brought all the clergy of England under a *premunire*.

There was an ancient law forbidding any one to exercise a legatine authority procured from Rome. Wolsey had acted as the pope's legate, and, of course, all who had transacted business in his courts were involved in his

guilt. Moreover, there were various other laws passed in previous reigns against procuring translations, bulls, &c. from Rome; all which had remained in the statute book, but, from the power of the papacy, were regarded as a dead letter. Against all these had the clergy transgressed: but they had done so with the king's knowledge, and oft by his command. However, it was in vain for them to frame excuses. Henry had determined to make the court of Rome feel the weight of his anger, and, therefore, he summoned them all to answer for their crime. They gladly compounded with him, and were pardoned, on paying a heavy sum of money; viz. the see of Canterbury one hundred thousand pounds, and of York, eighteen thousand eight hundred and forty pounds.

In 1531, the convocation gave the king the title of "Supreme head of the church in England;" and thus another blow was aimed at the pope.

In 1532, parliament passed a law against paying annates, or first fruits of ecclesiastical benefices, to the church of Rome. This law was left subject to the king's confirmation, which it received the next year.

The pope, seeing his power declining in England, resolved, at last, to do all he could to recover it. He cited the king to appear at Rome, to answer to an appeal from queen Catharine on the subject of the divorce. Henry sent an ambassador as excusator, with instructions to excuse his not appearing, and to insist on the prerogatives of the crown of England. A plea was drawn up, and debated in the consistory.

While this was in progress, a bull was obtained for suppressing several monasteries, and founding six new bishoprics.

November 14th, 1532, the king married Ann Boleyn.
VOL. II. 2 Z

In 1533, parliament passed an act against all appeals to Rome, declaring that the upper house of convocation should give final decision in all cases.

Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, dying, the king resolved to raise Cranmer to that see. Cranmer was then in Germany. He had made no application for the appointment, and, when he received intelligence of it, was much grieved. He travelled homeward by very slow journeys, that the king might have time to reflect maturely on the subject, and to select some other person. Henry, however, would accept none of his excuses; but was rather confirmed in the high opinion he entertained of him, by his great humility; and, at last, Cranmer was forced to yield.

Bulls were received from the pope for Cranmer's promotion; for, though it was contrary to law to ask for them, the king resolved not to break off entirely from Rome, until he was driven to it. The pope was not pleased with Cranmer as archbishop, for he knew him to be the familiar friend of the Lutherans, but he did not wish to precipitate the rupture with England by denouncing him. At his consecration, Cranmer refused to take the usual oath to the pope, without a full and formal protestation, that it should not bind him up from doing his duty to God, the king, and the church.

The question concerning the king's marriage was brought, once more, before the two houses of convocation, and the opinions of nineteen universities read against it; whereupon, a decision was given, declaring it contrary to the law of God; and, immediately after, the archbishop of Canterbury proceeded to pronounce sentence of divorce.

Rome declared this sentence null, and threatened the

king with excommunication if he acted upon it. The king appealed from the pope, to a general council; as did Cranmer, who, also, was threatened with a process. Bonner delivered this appeal to the pope, and he did it with so much vehemence and fury, that his holiness talked of throwing him into a caldron of melted lead, and he was glad to make his escape.

However, in consequence of the mediation of the king of France, Henry determined, once more, to submit to the pope, on receiving fresh promises that the divorce should be granted; but the imperialists precipitated a fresh decree against him, which separated him from Rome forever.

The pope's authority had been now, for four years, much examined and disputed in England. First, his power of dispensing with the law of God was controverted; then, the clergy were convicted of a *premunire*, for submitting to his jurisdiction; then, his right to annates and other exactions was questioned; then, all appeals to Rome were condemned:—So many branches of the tree being cut off, it only remained to strike at the root. Accordingly, the foundations of papal authority were scrutinized. For nearly a year, there were many public debates about it; and the subject was long agitated both in parliament and convocation. Several books were written; particularly “The institution for the necessary erudition of a Christian man;” concluded in convocation, and published by authority.

At length, after summoning all the proofs from scripture and primitive practice, it was decided, that the pope's power in England had no foundation, either in the law of God, the laws of the church, or of the land.

And thus did the Most High overrule the evil passions

of a wicked monarch, to a discovery of the rottenness of the root of that bohon upas, papacy, and prepare the way for delivering the realm of England from its deadly influence.

CHAPTER XIII.

Monasteries.—Six Articles.—Scotland.—The Bible.

THOUGH England had renounced the pope, the work of reformation progressed slowly. Henry had written in favour of Rome, and he wished to appear consistent. The clergy were generally unenlightened. Powerful enemies to the truth were active. Much, very much, remained to be done.

Cranmer promoted a visitation of monasteries. These were at an early age very numerous in England. They were robbed and ruined by the Danes in the 8th century, but king Edgar re-established them. During succeeding reigns, their number was increased, and, by every possible means, their coffers were enriched. Saying masses to relieve souls from purgatory, was a most lucrative source of revenue. So general was the belief in their virtue, that statutes in mortmain became necessary, in order to prevent the greater part of the estates in England being given to the brotherhood. The shrines, and images, and relics of saints, were, also, profitable: for, the multitude were persuaded, that, pilgrimages and presents to them, would secure an intercession in Heaven. But, the corruption of the monks became so excessive, that, from the 12th century downward, their reputation abated. As they lost ground, the orders of begging friars

rose. These, by great appearance of mortification, gained much esteem. They were not as idle and lazy as the monks, but went about, and preached, and heard confessions, and carried indulgences, with many other pretty little things,—Agnus Dei's, Rosaries, and Pebbles; which they made the world believe had great virtue in them. There was a firm union of their whole order; they having a general at Rome, and a provincial in each of their provinces. The school-learning was wholly in their hands, and they were great preachers. But they, too, had become extremely licentious; and, in secret, they plotted much against the king, opposing both his divorce and his supremacy.

Henry determined to suppress the houses of these monks and friars, not only on account of their extreme wickedness, and their enmity against him, but also, because, being afraid of a war with the emperor, he wanted money to fortify his ports; and, seeing the great advantage of trade, he resolved to encourage it by building harbours. Moreover, he intended, pursuant to the advice of Cranmer, to erect many more bishoprics; that, the dioceses being reduced to a narrower compass, bishops might better discharge their duties, and oversee their flocks; according to the scriptures and the primitive rules.

But Cranmer's object was, by the suppression of monasteries, not only to destroy the fountains of belief in purgatory, worship of saints, and pilgrimages, but, also, to obtain the foundation of theological seminaries for every diocese.

In the course of the visitation, abominations were discovered, so great, that we cannot stain our page with their recital.

In 1536, Cranmer moved in convocation, to petition the king for a translation of the Bible, to be set up in all the churches. This was violently opposed by the papists, who insisted upon it, that, all the heresies then existing, flowed from the use of the Bible by the people. But the petition passed, and the king gave orders for the translation to be made.

The suppression of monasteries was still going on, and, the farther the work advanced, the more iniquity was discovered. Many signed confessions of their guilt, of which one says, “for their past ill life the pit of Hell was ready to swallow them up—they had neglected the worship of God, and lived in idleness, gluttony, and sensuality.”

In one monastery were found as many relics as could be named in four sheets of paper; among which, was, an angel, with one wing, that brought over the spear’s head that pierced our Saviour’s side. There were also found some of the coals that roasted St. Lawrence, the parings of St. Edmund’s toes, St. Thomas a Becket’s penknife and boots, with as many pieces of the cross of our Saviour as would make a large whole cross, a piece of St. Andrew’s finger set in an ounce of silver, with a multitude of others of equal veracity. Many of the images were broken; among which was one, that, by means of springs, was made to move the head, hands, and feet; this had proved very profitable. Some of the blood of a duck was found in a phial, which was thick on one side and thin on the other; the people were taught to believe this was the blood of Christ, and, on their paying a considerable sum, the thin side of the phial was turned towards them, and they were permitted to see the blood. In Wales there was found a huge image of wood, which

was visited by five or six hundred pilgrims in one day; some carried oxen and cattle, and some money, to induce the image to deliver their souls from Hell. But the shrine of Thomas a Becket was most profitable. It was valued abundantly more than the shrine of the Virgin Mary, or of Christ; for, in one year, there was offered at Christ's altar $3l. 2s. 6d.$; at the Virgin's $63l. 5s. 6d.$; but at Thomas's $832l. 12s. 3d.$ —And, the next year, was offered at Christ's—**NOTHING**; at the Virgin's $4l. 1s. 8d.$; but at Thomas's $954l. 6s. 3d.$ A jubilee of fifteen days was ordained for Becket, by Rome, every fiftieth year, and *indulgence was granted to all that would visit his shrine.* In the sixth jubilee, in 1420, one hundred thousand strangers visited his tomb; and, with them, an immense wealth. Henry determined to unshrine and unsaint him at once, for, he caused his shrine to be broken down and carried away, his bones to be mingled with others, so that it would have been a miracle to have discovered them, and his name to be struck out of the calendar.

In 1538, an edition of the Bible was finished in London, and the king gave his warrant, allowing all his subjects to read it, without control or hazard. Cranmer rejoiced that he saw this “day of reformation, which he concluded was now risen in England, since the light of God's word did shine over it without a cloud.” The printing of this edition was commenced in Paris, but, though the king of France gave his permission, the clergy caused the press to be stopped, and most of the copies to be seized, and publicly burnt: in consequence of which, the workmen and forms were carried over to England. Injunctions were given to all incumbent clergymen, to provide one of these Bibles, and set it up publicly in the church, and to encourage all to read it as the true and

lively word of God. All were exhorted not to contend about it. At the same time, it was ordained, that, in every church, there should be a sermon, every quarter of a year, at least, to declare to the people the true gospel of Christ, and to exhort them to the works of charity, mercy, and faith. Moreover, the clergy were directed to instruct the people in the principles of religion, by teaching the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, in English; and to inform them that they had better omit the prayers to the saints, than neglect the prayers to God.

In 1539, the papists succeeded in procuring the passage by parliament of six articles, asserting several of the worst doctrines of antichrist; and these articles, all were required to sign on pain of death. When this bill was about to pass the house of lords, the king, who knew how displeasing it was to Cranmer, desired him to withdraw; but that faithful soldier of Jesus humbly excused himself, for he felt bound in conscience to remain and oppose it.

While these things were proceeding in England, some light began to beam amid the cloud of superstition enveloping Scotland. Having received her learning and learned men from France, she still continued closely connected with that kingdom. True religion had, from age to age, been persecuted. In 1407, John Resby, a Wickliffe, was burnt; and, in 1432, John Crew, a Hussite. Toward the close of the 15th century, many Lollards were found in the western parts, bordering on England; among whom were several persons of quality: of these, some were questioned, but discharged. Patrick Hamilton, a man of noble blood, having adopted and preached Luther's doctrine, was burned, with many others.

But, notwithstanding these violent proceedings, the doctrines of reformation spread. Many, by reading the scriptures, arrived at a knowledge of the truth; and the noise of what was doing in England, led others to inquire concerning religion.

The Scotch king yielded himself a prey to luxury and extravagance. The popish priests, generally, were ignorant and dissolute. The bishop of Dunkeld, reproving one of his clergy for being a zealous preacher, told him, "he thanked God he had lived well these many years, and never knew either the Old or New Testament; and if the other would trouble himself with these fantasies, he would repent it when he could not help it." No pains were taken to instruct the people, and no children were catechised.

Henry repeatedly endeavoured to bring the king of Scotland into a league with him against the pope, but in vain. Persecution still raged; but "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church."

A new edition of the Bible was published in the 33d year of Henry, doubtless through the influence of Cranmer. Some of these Bibles were chained to pillars in the church at London, with an exhortation written, admonishing all that came thither to read, "that they should lay aside vain-glory, hypocrisy, and all other corrupt affections, and bring with them discretion, good intentions, charity, reverence, and a quiet behaviour, for the edification of their own souls; but not to draw multitudes after them; nor to make expositions of what they read; nor to read aloud, nor make noise in time of divine service; nor enter into disputes concerning it." But the people came, generally, to hear the scriptures read; and such as could read, and had clear voices, came often with great crowds

around them. Many sent their children to school, that they might carry them to St. Paul's, and hear them read the scriptures. And many could scarce refrain from disputing, especially when they read of the institution of the sacrament, and saw the command—*Drink ye all of this;* —a command which militated so directly against the popish mode of administration; also, when they saw Paul's discourse against having worship in an unknown tongue. Bonner complained, and threatened to remove the Bibles out of the church, if the people continued to abuse so high a favour.

CHAPTER XIV.

Blasphemy of Antichrist.—Cranmer.

CRANMER often pressed, with great vehemence, the drawing up a body of ecclesiastical laws for England; the canon law of Rome then in force, being, in many respects, not only improper, but blasphemous; as will be seen by the following extracts—viz:

“ He that acknowledgeth not himself to be under the bishop of Rome, and that the bishop of Rome is ordained by God to have primacy over all the world, is an heretic, and cannot be saved, nor is not of the flock of Christ.

“ All the decrees of the bishop of Rome ought to be kept perpetually of every man, as God's Word, spoken by the mouth of St. Peter; and whosoever doth not receive them, they blaspheme the Holy Ghost, and shall have no forgiveness.

“ The see of Rome hath neither spot nor wrinkle in it, nor cannot err.

“Nothing may be done against him that appealeth unto Rome.

“The bishop of Rome may be judged of none, but of God only; for although he neither regard his own salvation, nor no man’s else, but draw down with himself innumerable people by heaps unto Hell, yet may no mortal man in this world presume to reprehend him; forasmuch as he is called God, he may not be judged of man, for God may be judged of no man.

“The bishop of Rome may open and shut Heaven unto men.

“The see of Rome receiveth holy men, or else maketh them holy.

“It appertaineth to the bishop of Rome to judge which oaths ought to be kept, and which not.

“Whosoever teacheth or thinketh of the sacraments, otherwise than the see of Rome doth teach and observe, be excommunicate.

“He is no manslayer, that slayeth a man which is excommunicate.

“A penitent person can have no remission of his sin, but by supplication of the priests.”

Surely, this is “*exalting himself above all that is called God, and, as God, sitting in the temple of God.*”

In 1544, Henry ordered that the prayers for the processions, and the litanies, should be translated into English. This was peculiarly pleasing to the reformers, as they hoped that all the other offices would follow, and the whole service be enjoyed in the vulgar tongue.

In 1545, Cranmer was strengthened by the appointment of several reforming bishops.

In 1546, an arrangement was made, between the king and the French admiral Annebault, for carrying on the

reformation in both England and France. It was agreed, that the mass should be changed for a communion, and Cranmer was ordered to draw up a form of it; but this fell to the ground.

Amid all the violence of Henry's passions, he retained his respect for Cranmer. Whoever suffered, Cranmer was defended. This arose from no time-serving spirit on the part of the reformer. He not unfrequently threw himself between the monarch and the devoted victims of persecution. The Almighty arm of that God who designed Cranmer to be the distinguished instrument of good, interposed for his protection. Once Henry pretended to accede to the designs of Cranmer's enemies, that he might ascertain how far they would go. He gave permission for them to summon him before the council; but, during the night previous, sent for him, and made known the plot. Cranmer, with great candour and honest simplicity, offered himself for trial, and requested that judges might be appointed. The king told him, he was "a fool, that looked to his own safety so little: did he think false witnesses would not be procured?—therefore, since he did not take care of himself, he would see to it." He gave him his seal-ring, and directed him to show that to his enemies, if they proceeded improperly in council. In the morning, Cranmer was summoned. He was kept waiting at the door of the council chamber, until a message from the king made them call him in; but when, at length, he showed them the ring, they were thrown into great confusion, and ran instantly to the king, to beg his pardon. The king chid them sharply, and protested by the faith he owed to God, laying his hand on his Bible, that if a prince could be obliged by his subject, he was by the archbishop; and that he took him to

be the most faithful subject he had, and the person to whom he was most beholden: saying, moreover, he would not suffer men, who were so dear to him, to be handled in that fashion, and commanding them all to be reconciled to Cranmer.

Thus, while the lesser props of the reformation was assaulted without mercy, its main pillar was continually preserved. Truly, “it is the Lord’s doing, and marvellous in our eyes.”

At length, the long and eventful reign of Henry drew near its close. His arguments and his quarrels, with papists and with protestants, approached their final termination. In 1547, he died.

CHAPTER XV.

Edward.—Homilies.—Bishops.—Liturgy.—Anabaptists.—Ordination.

DURING the reign of king Edward, the reformation advanced with rapidity. Cranmer being chief in influence, the trumpery of will-worship was swept away with ease. Gardiner, Bonner, and some others, opposed, but without effect. One of the chief difficulties under which the reformers laboured, was the want of a sufficient number of pious, learned clergymen. To remedy this evil, they drew up several homilies, or sermons, on the most essential doctrines and duties of religion, in order that they might be read in the churches throughout England. They, also, endeavoured to supply the people with such other books, as might help to an understanding of the scriptures; besides, they selected the most eminent

preachers, and sent them to take the tour of the country. These preachers accompanied the visitors, who, after the example of those sent by Henry, traversed the dioceses, with injunctions to be obeyed, and articles to be observed.

The parliament, which sat in November, 1547, repealed all the severe laws on the subject of religion, especially those concerning Lollardies, and the act of the six articles.

Cranmer exhorted the clergy, in convocation, to give themselves much to the study of the scriptures, and to consider seriously what things were in the church that needed reformation, in order that all the popish trash, yet remaining, might be cast out.

The mode of choosing bishops was changed from *Conge d'Elire*, to appointments by king's letters patent: —after which they were to be consecrated.

In primitive days, bishops were chosen, and ordained, by other bishops, as Timothy and Titus by Paul. Afterwards, when the church was established under the emperors, the people voted by multitudes in the election of bishops. This being found a great inconvenience, from the tumults that occasionally took place, the inferior clergy chose their bishops; but, generally, the bishops of the province made the choice, yet in such manner, as to obtain the consent of the clergy and people, and subject to the will of the emperor. This dependence on the temporal prince, the pope destroyed, ordaining that the canons, secular and regular, should choose their bishops, and that this choice should be confirmed at Rome. King Henry had continued the mode of election by the clergy, only putting himself in the place of the pope, to confirm or annul; but now it was thought more ingenuous for the

king to nominate the bishops directly, than under the thin covert of an involuntary election.

The reformation of the service occupied much attention. "In the primitive church, after the extraordinary gifts ceased, the bishops of the several churches put their offices and prayers into such method, as was nearest to what they had heard as remembered from the apostles. And these liturgies were called by the apostles' names from whose forms they were composed; as that of Jerusalem carried the name of St. James," &c. "The council of Laodicea appointed the same office to be used in the mornings and evenings. The bishops continued to draw up new additions, and to put old forms into other methods. This was left to every bishop's care, until, in the days of St. Austin, it was found the heretics took advantage from some of the prayers used in some of the churches; upon this, he tells us, it was ordered that there should be no prayers used in the church, but upon common advice—after that, the liturgies came to be more carefully considered." At first, all was plain and simple; but, at length, the church of Rome began to make one addition after another, employing its fancy to find out mystical significations of every rite, and adding ceremonies thereupon, until the offices were swelled out of measure, and there were missals, and breviaries, and rituals, and pontificals, and partoises, and pies, and graduals, and antiphonals, and psalteries, and hours, and a great many more. All these it was determined to examine, and, whatever was rubbish, to cast out.

The reformers thought that praying with warm affection, and sincere devotion, was spiritual worship; therefore, they never agitated the question, whether they should have a liturgy or not; their only inquiry was, how

shall we best bring our liturgy back to the primitive standard. They resolved to change nothing for novelty's sake merely, or because it had been used by popery, but to retain all that the primitive church had practised; like skilful vine-dressers, applying the knife only to the useless branches, engrafted by later ages.

Retaining forms of prayer, and translating the liturgy into the vulgar tongue, they threw away the blessing of water, and salt, and bread, reputed charms against diseases and the devil; together with holy incense, holy ashes, and the whole multitude of heathen symbols, with which the church of Rome was defiled.

Some of the garments worn by the priests were retained, because it was thought they were decent in themselves; those who waited upon the Lord under the Mosaic dispensation having been thus clothed; white being the emblem of purity, &c. Moreover, it was supposed, that the Romish clergy having used them, was not a sufficient cause for throwing them aside.

Joan, of Kent, an anabaptist, received sentence of condemnation, which was executed. This shows that toleration was not fully understood, even by the reformed. But her errors threatened the state more than the church.

There was a class of anabaptists who were not so dangerous. They only denied infant baptism. Against these no severities were used. Books were written, showing they were wrong, and arguments inculcated, such as the following, viz:—The saying of Christ, “Suffer little children to come unto me,” appears to declare them proper subjects of baptism; for if they are fit for the kingdom of Heaven—the greater, certainly they are fit for baptism—the less. Paul calls the children of believing parents holy; and, in so doing, appears to describe such

a consecration of them as is made in baptism. All the Christians in existence at the present time have been baptized in their infancy, even the leaders of the anabaptist sect; so that, according to their views, no persons living have a right to baptize, for none have been properly baptized themselves. The uninterrupted practice of the church for fifteen hundred years is, in itself, a strong confirmation of infant baptism.

The doctrine of predestination was much abused. The reformers, generally, had taught it, and many made strange inferences, saying, that since every thing was decreed, and no decree could be frustrated, all should leave themselves to be carried on by the current of the decrees without making any exertion. The consequence of this was, that some fell into great impiety, and others into desperation. The Germans had much discussion on the subject. Melancthon wrote against it; Calvin and Bucer maintained it, only they warned the people not to endeavour to pry into it, since it was a secret none could penetrate. Hooper, and many other good writers, often exhorted the people not to enter into "these curiosities;" and a caveat to the same purpose was afterwards incorporated in the article of the church about predestination.

Those who were engaged in drawing up the form of ordination, found, on examining, that scripture required nothing besides imposition of hands and prayer; and that no more was recognised, by either the apostolical constitutions, or the primitive church; therefore, they rejected the vain novelties introduced by later ages, such as anointing, giving of consecrated vestments, and vessels for consecrating the eucharist; and agreed upon a mode of ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons, similar to that now

used by the church. They introduced the solemn questions and vows—solemn as the grave!—for instance, that searching interrogative, “Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God, for the promoting his glory, and for the edifying of his people?” Also, that weighty warning—“to teach the people committed to their charge, to banish and drive away all erroneous doctrines, and to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as the whole, within their cures.” Who is sufficient for these things? *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me*, said one of old.

On the 21st February, 1550, Ridley, being esteemed the most learned, and most thoroughly zealous for the reformation, was consecrated bishop of London and Westminster.

CHAPTER XVI.

Book of Common Prayer.—Articles.—Laws.—Catechism.—Death of Edward.

In preparing the Book of Common Prayer, it was determined to add to the daily service, a short, but simple, and most grave, confession of sins, in the use of which, the people were expected to make a sincere and hearty acknowledgment of all their iniquities, as well secret as open, unto God. To this was joined a general absolution, or pronouncing, in the name of God, the pardon of sin to all those who did truly repent and unfeignedly believe the gospel. It was thought, that, if the people se-

riously attended to these, they would cherish in their minds frequent reflections on their sins; and, moreover, that a general declaration of pardon, on condition of repentance and faith, was far preferable to the absolute and unqualified pardon which the priests were in the habit of giving in confession, by which the people were led to believe their sins were certainly forgiven; a delusion that lulled them in fatal security, and operated as a bounty to crime. Many were observed to come to the communion without due seriousness or preparation; whereupon, as a means of arousing the consciences of all, it was resolved to begin the office of administration with a solemn reading of the ten commandments, during which the congregation was to kneel, as if hearing the law anew; at the close of each commandment imploring mercy for past offences, and grace for the time to come. This was supposed calculated to excite remembrance of transgressions, and to prevent receiving the holy sacrament unworthily. Kneeling was considered the most appropriate posture in receiving the communion, and, therefore, continued; but, at the same time, it was declared that, that gesture was retained as the most reverent and humble way of expressing a sense of the mercies of God, vouchsafed through the death of Christ, and not as a sign of idolatrous adoration to the bread and wine. When the sacrament was first administered, it was no doubt in the table posture, lying along on one side. But the Jews appear to have changed the posture used in receiving the passover, from standing to lying; a change sanctioned by our Saviour; and, surely, it is equally correct to change the mode of receiving the eucharist from lying to kneeling, especially as the eucharist was instituted in the room of the passover; and as, moreover, kneeling is better suited to the

idea of an exalted, as lying was to that of a suffering Christ. Indeed, all denominations of Christians appear to be united in the opinion, that, they may safely change the posture, for all of them have discontinued that originally made use of, viz. lying along on one side.

Parliament ordained, January, 1552, that all men should attend divine service every Sunday and holy day, under pain of certain censures.

There was also an act passed concerning fasts and holy days. These, it was said, were established to afford greater opportunity of retiring from worldly pursuits, and devoting the soul to the service of God. As to Saints' days, they were not dedicated to the Saints, but to God in remembrance of them.

Great pains were taken in preparing the articles of religion, which at length were agreed to by the convocation; and thus was the reformation of doctrine and worship brought to its completion. No further change took place in them in the reign of Edward, and very little afterwards, except that some of the articles were put in more general terms in the days of Elizabeth.

Cranmer and his colleagues had long been anxious for the completion of a body of ecclesiastical laws, for the general regulation of the church in its various departments. He had pressed this subject in the reign of Henry. Under the present king, thirty-two persons were appointed to attend to it; and, subsequently, eight others, to prepare the work for their review. Of these, Cranmer was one; and he is stated to have drawn up nearly the whole; thus proving himself the greatest canonist in England. These laws were arranged under fifty-one titles, and were finished in February, 1552. A commission was appointed to revise and correct them, that they

might be presented to the king; but his death prevented their being established.

In 1553, the king, by letters-patent, authorized all schoolmasters to teach a new and fuller catechism, compiled, as is believed, by Poinet.

But the instruction of the young, as well as spreading the scriptures among the old, and indeed the whole system of the reformation, was now about to descend for a season to the grave. Edward, the hope of the church, the good, the pious king, became very ill. Having had the measles and then the small-pox, and having repeatedly taken cold from violent exercise, he approached the borders of the tomb.

During his illness, bishop Ridley preached before him, dwelling much on works of charity, and, especially, on the duty of men in high stations to be eminent in such works. The king felt this subject to the quick. He sent for the bishop, praying that he would direct him in the discharge of his duty. The bishop was deeply affected by this conduct in the young king, and burst into tears. He begged time for reflection, and asked leave to consult with the lord mayor and court of aldermen, which being granted, and the king having written, requesting that they would consult speedily how the poor should be relieved: in conclusion, he ordered the Gray Friar's church near Newgate, to be a house for orphans, St. Bartholomew's near Smithfield, to be an hospital, and gave his own house of Bridewell to be a place of correction and work for such as were wilfully idle. He also confirmed and enlarged the grant for the hospital of St. Thomas in Southwark, which he had erected and endowed in the previous August. And when, on the 26th of June, he set his hand to these foundations, he return-

ed thanks to God for prolonging his life to see their completion.

He expressed great submission to the will of God, and appeared glad at the approach of death, only saying that he was desirous of life for the sake of the church.

At length, on the 6th of July, he saw his end approaching, and composed himself to depart in a most devout manner. His whole exercise was in short prayers and ejaculations. The last that he was heard to use was in these words, “Lord God, deliver me out of this miserable and wretched life, and take me among thy chosen: howbeit, not my will but thine be done: Lord I commit my spirit to thee: O Lord, thou knowest how happy it were for me to be with thee; yet for thy chosen’s sake send me life and health that I may truly serve thee. O my Lord God, bless my people, and save thine inheritance. O Lord God, save thy chosen people of England. O Lord God, save this realm from papistry, and maintain thy true religion, that I and my people may praise thy holy name, for Jesus Christ his sake.” Discovering some persons near, he appeared troubled at the idea of their having heard him, but, with a pleasant countenance, said he had been praying to God. Soon after, the pangs of death coming on, he said to sir Henry Sidney, who was holding him in his arms, “I am faint;” and, with a prayer, “Lord have mercy on me and receive my spirit,” breathed out his soul. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours and their works do follow them.

CHAPTER XVII.

Mary.—Persecution.—Cranmer.—Disputation.

CONTRARY to the advice of Cranmer and the judges, Edward was induced on his death bed to make a will, passing over Mary, and settling the crown on the lady Jane Grey; but Mary took immediate possession of the throne, and in a very short time, displayed her opposition to the reformers. Gardiner was made chancellor. Bonner bishop of London. All preaching without the queen's license was prohibited, and that license was issued to papists.

Cranmer's friends advised him to fly beyond sea, but he refused, saying, that, as a persecution was rising, he would not dissuade others from flight, but, considering the station he occupied, and the leading part he had taken in the reformation, he thought it indecent for him to fly. From this opinion no entreaties could move him.

He had saved the life of Mary during the reign of her father, but this availed not now. He was sent to the Tower.

On the first of October, Mary was crowned with all the ceremonies of popery. On the tenth, parliament met. Two of the reformed bishops who attended, were deprived of their seats for refusing to worship the host. An act was passed confirming the marriage of king Henry to queen Catharine, and declaring the divorce unlawful. All the laws passed in the reign of king Edward on the subject of religion were repealed, and the service used in the last year of king Henry adopted.

Mary, forgetful of the readiness with which her sister,

Elizabeth, flew to her aid, when she was seeking the crown, treated her with roughness.

By a secret messenger, the queen signified to the pope her desire to bring back her kingdom to his sway, at the same time, requesting that her intention might not be divulged, lest it should create disturbance. She desired, however, that cardinal Pool might be sent over with a legatine power. This intelligence caused great joy at Rome.

The emperor proposed to Mary a match with his son Philip, to which she consented.

Seven bishops were deprived of their sees because they were married. Six were turned out for other reasons. These removals, with three deaths, paved the way for the appointment of sixteen new popish bishops.

This done, the bishops began to execute the queen's injunctions. The new service was every where cast out, and the old ceremonies set up. The most eminent preachers in London were put in confinement. A general assault was made upon the clergy throughout England, on account of their wives. Out of sixteen thousand, twelve thousand are supposed to have suffered. Some were deprived without conviction. Some were turned out without being cited to appear. Many, who were in prison, were cited and turned out, for not appearing when they could not. Some left their wives for their livings. They were all summarily deprived. And, moreover, after their deprivation, they were forced to leave their wives. This piece of cruelty was founded upon a pretence that they had made a vow. In order to justify all this, writings were published against the marriage of the clergy.

A disputation was held with the principal reformers at Oxford. Three questions were to be disputed, viz.

Whether the natural body of Christ was really in the sacrament?

Whether any other substance remained besides the body and blood of Christ?

Whether in the mass there was a propitiatory sacrifice, for the dead and living?

When Cranmer was brought forth, Weston, the prolocutor, exhorted him to return to the unity of the church. He answered, with great gravity and modesty, "I am as much for unity as any, but it must be a unity in Christ and according to the truth."

When the dispute with Cranmer began, Weston made a singular stumble in the opening of his speech. He said, "Ye are this day assembled to confound the detestable heresy of the verity of Christ's body in the sacrament." But, recovering himself, he proceeded. The dispute was carried on, Cranmer in the negative, answering all their arguments.

The next day, Ridley was brought before his antagonists. He maintained the same ground with Cranmer, until the prolocutor was tired, and called out to the audience to cry with him, "Truth has the victory."

When Latimer was brought forth, he told them he had not used Latin much these twenty years, and was not able to dispute; but he would declare his faith, and then they might do as they pleased. He denied the corporal presence, and lamented their changing the communion into a mass, taking the cup from the people, and having the service in an unknown tongue. Perceiving they laughed at him, he told them to consider his great age, and to think what they might be when they came to

it. They pressed him much to answer their arguments; he said his memory was gone, but his faith was grounded on the word of God.

During the whole disputation, there was, as Ridley states, great disorder, perpetual shoutings, tauntings, and reproaches; so that it looked rather like a stage, than a school of divines.

After it was over, the reformers were brought before the papists, and required to subscribe with them. This they refused, as the disputation had not been fairly conducted; whereupon, they were pronounced obstinate heretics, and declared to be no longer members of the church.

Upon which, Cranmer said, “From this your judgment and sentence, I appeal to the first judgment of Almighty God, trusting to be present with him in Heaven, for whose presence on the altar I am thus condemned.”

Ridley answered, “Although I be not of your company, yet I doubt not but my name is written in another place, whither this sentence will send us sooner than we should by the course of nature have come.”

Latimer answered, “I thank God most heartily that he hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may, in this case, glorify God with this kind of death.”

Weston replied, “If you go to Heaven, with this faith, then I will never come thither, as I am thus persuaded.”

After this, there was a solemn procession in Oxford, the host being carried by Weston.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Pool.—Rogers.—Hooper.—Taylor.

CARDINAL POOL, the pope's legate, formally received the English nation into communion with Rome, enjoining, as a penance, the repeal of the late laws, and granting full absolution in the name of his holiness.

Pool was friendly to more lenient measures, but Gardiner, a man more truly Romish, prevailed.

On the 4th of February, Rogers was led to Smithfield. He asked permission to speak to his wife, but this was denied him. Neither was he suffered to make any speech to the people. He said a few words, desiring all to continue in the doctrine he had taught them; a doctrine, for the sake of which, he not only had patiently endured all the bitterness and cruelty exercised upon him, but, also, now, most gladly, resigned his life, and gave his flesh to the consuming fire. He repeated the fifty-first psalm, and fitted himself for the stake. A pardon was offered him if he would recant, but he chose to submit to the severe, but short suffering before him, rather than, by apostacy, to run the risk of everlasting burnings. The fire was kindled, and he was consumed to ashes.

Hooper, after being degraded from his priestly office, was sent to his diocese of Gloucester, to be burnt there. At this he rejoiced, hoping by his death to confirm the faith of those over whom he had formerly been placed: One day's interval was allowed him, which he spent in fasting and prayer. Some came to persuade him to accept of the queen's mercy, since life was sweet and death bitter. He answered, "the death that is to come after is

more bitter, and the life that is to follow is more sweet.” Once, as his friends parted with him, he shed tears; “All my imprisonment,” said he, “has not made me do so much.” On the 9th of February, he was led to execution. Being denied leave to speak, but allowed to pray, he declared his belief in the strain of a prayer. The queen’s pardon being showed him, he desired them to take it away. He prayed earnestly for strength from God to endure his torment patiently, and then undressed himself and embraced the reeds. When he was tied to the stake with iron chains, he desired them to spare their labour, for he was confident he should not trouble them. The fire was kindled, but the wood, being green, burnt ill, and the wind blew away the flame of the reeds. He prayed oft, “O Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me and receive my soul,” and called to the people, for the love of God, to bring him more fire, for it was burning his nether parts, but did not reach his vitals. The fire was renewed, but the wind still blew it away and prevented its rising up to stifle him, so that he was long in torment. The last words he was heard to utter, were, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit!” One of his hands dropped off before he died; with the other he continued to knock on his breast for some time. He was near three quarters of an hour in burning.

Sanders was burnt at Coventry. He was condemned for preaching and refusing to conform to the new laws. A pardon was offered him also, but he said he held no heresies but the blessed gospel of Christ, and that he would never recant. When he came to the stake he embraced it, and said, “Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome everlasting life!” And so he was burnt.

Dr. Taylor, parson of Hadley, followed next in the throng of martyrs. Several of the neighbouring priests

going to say mass in his church, he went thither, and openly declared against it. Immediately, Gardiner sent for him to come to London. Some of his friends advised him to go out of the way, but he said, "He must follow Christ, the good shepherd, who not only fed his flock, but died for it. He was old, and thought he should never be able, at any other time, to do his good God such service as he was then called to." So he went with much cheerfulness. Gardiner treated him with his usual roughness. He was condemned and sent to Hadley to be burnt. All the way he expressed great composure. When brought to the stake, he told the people he had taught them nothing but God's holy word, and was now to seal it with his blood. One of the guard struck him on the head, and made him cease speaking. Then he went to his prayers, and so to the stake. He was put in a pitched barrel. As the wood was laying about, some one flung a faggot at his head and broke it. He bled profusely; but his only answer was, "Oh! friend, I have harm enough: what needed that?" He repeated the fifty-first psalm in English, at which one of the guard struck him on the mouth, and bade him speak Latin. He continued his ejaculations to God, until the fire was kindled, and one of the guard struck him in the head with his halbert, so that his brains fell out.—And is it possible that these persecutors could call themselves Christians!

The spirit of popery was now fully manifest, and the people could not but contrast it with that of the reformation. In the days of king Edward, the papists were merely turned out of their livings, and, in a very few instances, imprisoned: but now, the reformers were put to death with every variety of cruelty. Some were threat-

ened with having their tongues cut out, unless they would promise not to make speeches to the people at the stake.

Such was the astonishment of the nation at these cruelties, and such the disposition to charge them to him, that king Philip thought it expedient openly to disavow them. This startled the popish clergy a little; but they resolved to go on, and, rather than the heretics should escape, take the whole blame upon themselves.

CHAPTER XIX.

Martyrdom of Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer.—Death of Mary.

WE would fain pause amid this recital, and contemplate, for a moment, the desperately wicked character of the human heart; how entirely resigned to selfishness, and how utterly dead to all that is holy, except so far as influenced by the spirit of God. We have adverted to this repeatedly before, but it is useful to revolve the reflection again and again, as it may fasten upon our souls a deep sense of the importance of our securing the baptism of the Holy Ghost. These English, or rather Romish persecutors, of olden time, though they appear to our view reeking from their butcheries, are only exhibiting the same depravity of which we ourselves are sharers. If the blessed reformation, reflecting, upon our fathers and upon us, the unclouded light of the Bible, for centuries, has taught us better, we should remember, that, if left to ourselves, we should be prone to similar enormities. And though, like Hazael, we may each exclaim, “Am I a dog that I should do this thing?” we should rather inquire—were not these papists from the same

stock with us? inheritors of the same nature? united to the same fallen Adam? Have we not in ourselves the seeds of every evil passion? and, though our constitutions are cast in somewhat different moulds, and our sympathies are diverse in degree, would not those seeds, if unchecked, spring up to the perpetration of every variety of sin? Surely, then, it becomes us, while we are weeping for others, to weep also for ourselves. Surely it becomes us, while we are wondering at the depravity of human nature, to call to mind the fact, that we are partakers of the same human nature; and to ask our consciences the question, each and every one of us, Have I been born again? Am I a new creature? Have old things passed away, and all things become new in me? If this question cannot be answered in the affirmative, we are not fit for the kingdom of Heaven: so says He who has the key of that kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The dead body of a robber, at the time of his execution, uttered something which savoured of heresy. This circumstance having reached the ears of the council, they ordered Bonner to inquire into it, and proceed according to the ecclesiastical laws. He formed a process, and cited the body to answer; but, as it neither appeared nor answered, it was condemned and burnt.

On the 16th October, bishops Ridley and Latimer surrendered their lives at Oxford. A commission of sundry popish bishops was sent to try them. They refused to pay any respect to the authority of the pope, under which the commission acted; declaring, that, the bishops of Rome had been held in great esteem for the worthiness of their character, and the dignity of their city, but had no right to the supremacy claimed in latter ages. Great pains were taken to induce them to accept

of the queen's mercy, but they firmly refused. The night before their execution, Ridley was very joyful, and invited the mayor and his wife, in whose house he was kept, to be at his wedding next day; at which, when the mayor's wife wept, he said, he perceived she did not love him; he told her, though his breakfast would be sharp, he was sure his supper would be sweet. He was glad to hear that his sister would come and see him die; and was in such composure of mind that all were amazed. In the morning, as they were led out to the place of execution, they looked up to the prison where Cranmer was kept, to see him, but he was engaged in a dispute with some friars, and was not at his window. He looked after them with great tenderness, and, kneeling down, prayed earnestly that God would strengthen their faith and patience, in that, their last, but painful passage. When they came to the stake, they embraced each other with great affection, Ridley saying to Latimer, "Be of good heart, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flame, or enable us to abide it." Dr. Smith was appointed to preach, and took his text from these words—*If I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* He compared their dying for heresy to Judas hanging himself; and warned the people to beware of them, with as much bitterness as he could express. The best of it was, the sermon lasted not above a quarter of an hour. When he had finished, Ridley was going to answer him, and the lord Williams, who was appointed by the queen to see the execution, was inclined to hear him; but the vice chancellor said, "except he intended to recant, he must not be suffered to speak." Ridley answered, "he would never deny his Lord, nor those truths of His of which he was persuaded. God's

will be done in him. He committed himself to God, who would indifferently judge all." Then, addressing himself to the lord Williams, he said, "nothing troubled him so much as that he had received fines of some who took leases of him when he was bishop of London, which leases were now voided. He, therefore, humbly prayed that the queen would give order that those might be made good to the tenants, or, that the fines might be restored, out of the goods which he had left in his house, and which were of far greater value than the fines would amount to: also, that some pity might be had of Shipside, his brother-in-law, who was turned out of a place he had put him in, and had now attended on him with great care." After this, they both prayed and fitted themselves for the stake; Latimer saying to Ridley, "Be of good comfort, we shall this day light such a candle in England, as I trust, by God's grace, shall never be put out." Gunpowder being hanged about their bodies in great quantities to hasten their death, the fire was kindled. The powder taking fire, Latimer was, at the first flame, put out of pain. He died immediately. But Ridley suffered a more lingering torment, for they threw on the fire so much wood, that the flame could not break through it. His legs were almost consumed before this was observed; but then, a passage being opened to the flame, it put an end to his life.

Thus died these two excellent bishops. The one, for his piety, learning, and solid judgment, justly esteemed the ablest man of all who promoted the reformation; and the other, for the plain simplicity of his life, a truly primitive bishop and Christian.

Gardiner shortly after died also. He had great remorse of conscience on account of his life. Day, bishop

of Chichester, coming to him, and comforting him with the assurance of justification through the blood of Christ, he answered, “you may speak of that to me, or others in my condition, but, if you open that gap again, and preach that to the people, then farewell altogether.” He often repeated those words—*Erravi cum Petro, sed non flevi cum Petro*—I have erred with Peter, but I have not mourned with Peter.

On the 12th September, 1555, sundry commissioners from the queen, together with a sub-delegate from the pope, went to Oxford to judge Cranmer. When he appeared before them, he made a low reverence to those who sat in the queen’s name, but refused any homage to the pope’s delegate, inasmuch as he thought that would be paying respect to the pope. They made sundry speeches, charging him with heresy; after which, he kneeled down and said the Lord’s prayer; next, he repeated the creed; then he told them he never would acknowledge the bishop of Rome’s authority; declaring, that the bishops of Rome had made laws contrary to those of God—as, causing worship to be in an unknown tongue; denying the chalice to the people; pretending to dispose of crowns; and exalting themselves above every creature; all which proved them to be antichrists, since all was contrary to the doctrine of Christ. In conclusion, they cited him to appear before the pope within eighty days, to answer to the charges brought against him. This, he said, he was most willing to do, if the king and queen would allow it, but they detained him a prisoner.

He was sent back to his confinement, where he lay until the 14th February, 1556, when Bonner and Thirleby were sent to degrade him. In this task Bonner de-

lighted; and he performed it with much insult. Thirleby wept, and declared it was the most sorrowful action of his life, he having been formerly a friend of Cranmer. To Cranmer himself, it was no affliction.

Now new engines were contrived against him. We have, heretofore, seen him, like David, valiant for the truth; but we are called to contemplate him, like David, falling; and to behold, in him, another instance of the infirmity of poor human nature.

Many, both English and Spanish divines, had been sent to confer with him, and persuade him to recant. Hopes of life and preferment were given. At length, he was removed out of prison, to the dean's lodgings at Christ's church. All the arguments that could be invented were made use of to turn him; and, in conclusion, as St. Peter himself with curses denied his Saviour, so he, who had resisted now almost three years, was, at last, overcome; and human infirmity, the fears of death, and the hopes held forth, prevailed him to set his hand to a paper renouncing all the doctrines of the reformation, and acknowledging all the abominations of popery. This paper, which was as full as his enemies desired, they giving him no rest till he had completed it to their will, was immediately printed; and it occasioned, on the one hand, great insulting, and, on the other, great dejection. But the queen was not at all wrought upon by it. She now manifested, what she had before disowned, that her private resentments governed her in this affair; and, that the man who pronounced the judgment of divorce, must, at all hazards, be destroyed. She resolved that he should be burnt. The writ for burning was issued the 24th February. The long time that elapsed, previous to the execution, makes it not improbable that this writ

was made use of in first inducing him to recant: certain it is, that, when the second order was sent to Oxford, forbidding any longer delay, he was, with the death then threatening him if he refused, persuaded to renew in full his recantation. He did thus renew it; but, at the same time, he was jealous that his enemies intended to burn him, and he secretly prepared a paper containing a true confession of his faith, such as flowed from his conscience, and not from his weak fears. His fate being fixed, notwithstanding all promises, he was carried to St. Marie's church, and placed on a platform where he might be conspicuous. Cole, provost of Eaton, preached a sermon, during which was announced the fact that Cranmer was that day to suffer. At the close, he turned to Cranmer, and magnified his conversion, attributing it to the immediate hand of God. He gave him great hopes of Heaven, and assured him there should be dirges and masses said for his soul, in all the churches of Oxford.

During all this, Cranmer expressed great inward confusion; lifting up his eyes often to Heaven, and then letting them fall downward, as one ashamed of himself. Frequently he poured forth floods of tears. At length, when Cole bid him declare his faith, he first prayed with many moving expressions of deep remorse and inward horror; then he made his exhortation to the people, "not to love or set their hearts on the things of this world: to obey the king and queen out of conscience to God: to live in mutual love; and to relieve the poor according to their abundance. Then he came to that on which, he said, all his past life, and that which was to come, did hang—he being now to enter either into the joys of Heaven, or the pains of hell. He repeated the apostles' creed, and declared his belief of the Scriptures.

Then he spake of that which he said troubled his conscience more than any thing he had done in his whole life, which was the subscribing a paper contrary to the truth, and against his conscience, out of the fear of death, and the love of life; and, he said, he was resolved, when he came to the fire, that that hand which had signed it, should burn first. He rejected the pope as Christ's enemy and antichrist, and said he had the same belief of the sacrament which he had published in the book he wrote about it."

Upon this, there was a wonderful confusion in the whole assembly. Those who hoped to have gained a great victory on that day, seeing themselves discomfited, were in much disorder. They called to him to dissemble no more. He said he had ever loved simplicity, and, before his recantation, had never dissembled in his whole life. He was going on in his discourse, with abundance of tears, but they pulled him down and led him away to the stake. It stood in the same place where Ridley and Latimer were burnt. All the way the priests upbraided him for his changing, but he was minding another thing.

When he came to the stake, he first prayed, and then undressed himself, and, being tied to it, as the fire was kindling, he stretched forth his right hand toward the flame, never moving it, save that once he wiped his face, till it was burnt away. It was consumed before the fire reached his body. Here he discovered, that, if, like David, he sinned, like David also he repented. He expressed no disorder at the pain he endured: sometimes saying, "That unworthy hand;" and oft crying out, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" He was soon after quite burnt, except his heart, which was found whole among the ashes!

Thus, on the 21st March, 1556, died Thomas Cranmer, in the 67th year of his age. He was a man raised of God for great services, and well fitted for them. He was naturally of a mild and gentle temper, not soon heated, nor apt to give his opinion rashly of things or persons. Though his gentleness exposed him to the ill usage of his enemies, who well knew he would forgive them, it did not lead him into such a weakness of spirit as to consent to every thing that was uppermost, for he stood firmly against the six articles in the reign of Henry, notwithstanding all that king's heat for them; he opposed the duke of Somerset and the duke of Northumberland, in the days of king Edward; and now resisted unto blood, giving his hand to the flame with the utmost resolution; so that his meekness was, as all true meekness is, a virtue, and not a pusillanimity of temper. He was a man of great candour. He never dissembled his opinion, nor disowned his friend—two rare qualities in an age when the whole English nation appeared to be going backward and forward, like a wave of the sea, as the court directed. He stood by queen Anne, and Cromwell, and the duke of Somerset, in their lowest fortunes; and saved Mary herself from the rage of her father. His diligence was wonderful. He drew out of all the authors that he read, every thing remarkable, digesting these quotations into common places. Often did king Henry test him in this respect; and, whenever he applied to him for the opinions of the fathers and doctors on any particular subject, Cranmer usually furnished them in two or three days. He laid out all his wealth on the poor, and for pious uses. He had hospitals and surgeons in his house, for the king's seamen. He gave pensions to many of the reformers who fled from Germany to England; and kept

up that which is hospitality indeed at his table, inviting great numbers of his honest and poor neighbours, instead of having the luxury and extravagance of great entertainments. He was so humble and affable, that he carried himself, in all conditions, in the same manner. His last fall was the only blemish of his life, but it was succeeded by a sincere repentance, and a patient martyrdom. He had been the chief promoter of the reformation in his life, and God so ordered it, that he gave no small confirmation to all who had received his doctrine, by the constancy with which he sealed that doctrine with his blood.

King Henry was full of the opinion that Cranmer would at last die a martyr, and, therefore, directed him to change the arms of his family from cranes to pelicans; intimating thereby, that, as the pelican fed her young with her blood, so he would give his blood for the good of the church.

The day after Cranmer's martyrdom, Pool was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury. He appears to have been too anxious for Cranmer's death, insomuch that the words of Elijah to Ahab were applied to him—“Thou hast killed and taken possession.”

The proceedings of Mary were well calculated to accelerate the reformation. She burnt up all attachment to popery, in the fires that consumed the martyrs, and thoroughly purged the nation of all hankering after the tender mercies of Rome.

So blind was the fury of persecution, that even the dead bodies of protestants who died before the reign of terror were burnt. The remains of two eminent men, Bucer and Fagius, were thus treated.

A writ was brought from London on the 6th Febru-

ary; their bodies were taken up, carried in coffins, and tied to stakes, with many of their books, and other heretical writings, and all were burnt together. A similar farce was played at Oxford, where the body of Peter Martyr's wife was taken up, and buried in a dungbill. These bones, however, were collected in the days of Elizabeth, and mingled with the bones of a popish saint, that they might be secured from all future insult.

And now the dark features of popery began to show themselves in still bolder relief. Nothing less than the inquisition appeared in view. This grand engine of Satan, which was first set up in Thoulouse to extirpate the Albigenses, and, afterwards, introduced into Spain to discover the Moors, had lately been found a most effectual means of preserving the Romish faith among the Spaniards; and, in consequence, the pope was anxious for its establishment throughout Christendom. The question about erecting it in England, began to be agitated. Some openly advised it, and, in February, 1557, a commission was issued to a considerable number of persons, empowering them, or any three of them, by any means they thought best, to search for and punish all heretics. Every thing was surrendered to their discretion, and they were at liberty to summon before them, as witnesses, whomsoever they chose. This was paving the way, if no more.

Still did the burnings continue. One man was put to the rack to make him discover who attended the private assemblies. A proclamation was issued, subjecting all to martial law who read heretical or treasonous books. In Smithfield, it was proclaimed that none should pray for those who were about to be burnt, nor speak to them, nor say God help them. Bonner, not satisfied with burn-

ing, scourged some with rods, till he was weary. Many died in bonds, and many were vexed with long and grievous imprisonment. At length, the people began to hate popery beyond all expression.

One man, on the fire touching him, cried out, "I recant," and was released from the stake; but he was afterwards burnt, so that the object appeared to be, not so much the conversion as the destruction of heretics.

At length, on the 17th of November, 1558, Mary departed this life.

CHAPTER XX.

Elizabeth.—Parker.—Nag's Head Ordination.

IMMEDIATELY on the death of Mary, Elizabeth was proclaimed queen, to the universal joy of the nation. On her way to London, she was met by the bishops. "She expressed to all of them sentiments of regard, except to Bonner, from whom she turned aside, as from a man polluted with blood, who was a just subject of horror to every heart susceptible of humanity."

The reformation of religion came at once under consideration. The queen had been trained up in a hatred of popery, but she had received impressions in favour of such old rites as her father had retained; moreover, she loved state and magnificence; therefore, she inclined to a sort of half-reformation. She thought Cranmer and his colleagues, in the days of king Edward, had disrobed religion of external ornaments too much, and had made their doctrine too narrow in some points. She wished a few things explained in more general terms, such as,

Christ's presence in the sacrament, &c. Moreover, she was disposed to keep images in the churches.* Her object appeared to be to please both parties, and carry the whole nation with her, papists as well as protestants. But, blessed be God, her plans did not prevail.

The result of the consultation on the subject was, that, the alterations intended to be made, should be brought about gradually, and that, in the mean time, the way should be paved for them as surely as possible. The pope and the priests were disposed to embroil the nation, and it was thought necessary to use some caution.

Several learned men were appointed to meet and consider the book of service; and, to encourage the people with the hope of reformation, it was resolved that the communion should be administered in both kinds.

As soon as Elizabeth's coming to the crown was known, all who had fled to foreign countries returned, and those who had lived in secret corners came forth. Many, having notice of the queen's intentions, could not contain themselves, but began immediately to pull down images, and set up king Edward's service. Perceiving this, she made a more full discovery of her wishes, and gave order that the gospels and epistles, the Lord's prayer, the apostles' creed, the ten commandments, and the litany, should be used in English; and, at the same time, forbade the priests to elevate the host at mass: after

* "It is probable, that, whatever favour the queen may have been disposed to show to images in the beginning, it was the result of an acknowledged maxim of the first years of her reign, to conciliate the more moderate of the Roman Catholics. For we find from Strype's Annals, that some time after her discharging of the images, at the instance of archbishop Parker, and Cox, bishop of Ely, she expressed great dislike even at a common Prayer Book with pictures; and said expressly to dean Nowell, who laid the book upon her cushion,—'You know I have an aversion to idolatry, to images and pictures of this kind.'"

which, she made proclamation against all unauthorized changes, and required her subjects to use no other forms of worship than those established in her chapel, until parliament should appoint otherwise.

On the 5th December, the queen performed her sister's funeral rites with much magnificence.

Great anxiety existed as to the choice of persons to fill the vacant bishoprics. Parker was selected for the See of Canterbury, but there was much difficulty in persuading him to accept. He was a man of an humble temper, and loved privacy. He begged that he might not be thought of for any public employment, as the infirmities contracted by flying about in the nights in queen Mary's time had very much disabled him. But, he had been chaplain to Ann Boleyn, and, at her request, had instructed Elizabeth in the principles of the Christian religion. The queen had now a grateful remembrance of his services, and, moreover, Bacon, the chancellor, had a high opinion of him; so that it was determined to overcome his modesty, and, after nearly a year's importunity, he yielded.

On the 12th January, 1559, Elizabeth was crowned. As she went into her chariot, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, and blessed God, who had preserved her to see that joyful day, and saved her, as he did the prophet Daniel out of the mouth of the lions. She acknowledged that her deliverance was only from him, and to him she offered all the praise. She passed through London in great triumph; all the way, by her winning and cheerful address, delighting the people. As she went under one of the triumphal arches, there was a rich Bible let down to her, as from heaven, by a little child representing Truth. With great reverence, she kissed both her

hands, and, receiving the Bible, kissed it, and laid it next her heart.* This drew tears of joy from the eyes of the spectators.

On the 25th January, parliament met. Bacon opened it with a long speech. He exhorted them to consult about religion without heat or partiality, not to use any reproachful term, as papist or heretic, but endeavour so to establish every thing, as that there might be a uniformity and a cordial agreement.

The first bill passed was for restoring the tenths and first fruits to the crown. Then followed sundry other bills, the amount of all which were, making the state of religion similar to what it was in the days of king Edward, abolishing the power of the pope, and establishing the English service. The queen's supremacy was asserted, and a high commission court established for the execution of it.

But the popish clergy began every where to preach against innovation and heresy, insomuch that, early in March, the queen forbid all preaching, except by such as had license under the great seal.

A public conference on the subject of religion was, by order of the queen, held in the abbey church of Westminster. Nine protestants and nine papists were appointed to engage in it. A great concourse attended, and the conference continued for some time, until, at length, the papists refusing to proceed, it was broken up.

Some alterations were made in the communion service in the liturgy of king Edward, that it might express in more general terms the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament.

* "She also," says Collier, "promised to read it, and returned the city more thanks for this present, than for all the rest of great value she had already received."

The popish bishops, refusing to take the oath of supremacy, were imprisoned for a short time, but soon released, except Bonner, White, and Watson. Charges were preferred against all three of them, and those charges Elizabeth promised to attend to as soon as they should be substantiated. She appeared anxious to gain a little time, that the edge might be taken off men's spirits; for she was not disposed to proceed severely against any, being naturally merciful, and, moreover, taught by the gospel not to render evil for evil.

All the leading papists were allowed to go where they pleased, and those who chose to remain in England, were permitted to enjoy the free exercise of their religion. Most of the monks returned to a secular course of life, but the nuns went beyond sea.

Elizabeth continuing anxious to have images in the churches, all the reformed bishops and divines opposed it vehemently. At length, she yielded to their wish, and, in the injunctions sent forth, gave orders that they should be taken down.

By these injunctions, the common prayer book and litany were directed to be used in all churches on Wednesdays and Fridays. Slanderous words, as papist, heretic, schismatic, or sacramentary, were forbidden under severe pains. All were directed to kneel during prayer, and to show reverence at the name of Jesus. As to the queen's supremacy, it was declared, that, she did not pretend to any authority for the ministering of divine service in the church, but, only to such a sovereignty or rule over all manner of persons, under God, as precluded the authority of every foreign power.

Bowing at the name of Jesus was deemed a suitable

expression of reverence, manifesting an acknowledgment of him as the Saviour, and an owning his divinity.

Commissions were issued for visiting all the churches in England, in order to establish the new book of service, and, in general, to carry into effect the newly adopted regulations. It was directed, that, pensions should be reserved for such clergymen as would not continue in their benefices, but left them by resignation. Those found in prison on account of their religion were to be discharged, and, all such as had been unlawfully turned out in the late reign were to be restored to their cures. Unworthy clergymen were to be deprived, and others put in their places, and such as were obstinate were to be tried.

When the visitors made their report to the queen, it was found that, out of nine thousand four hundred beneficed men in England, only fourteen bishops and one hundred and seventy-five others, resigned their livings on account of their religion.

On the 17th December, 1559, Parker was consecrated in the chapel at Lambeth, by four bishops, viz. Barlow, Scory, Coverdale, and Hodgkins; according to the book of ordination made in the reign of king Edward.

Having been thus consecrated himself, Parker afterwards consecrated bishops for the vacant sees, and, among the rest, Jewel, bishop of Salisbury, the great ornament of his age for learning and piety.

About forty years after this, a foolish story was set afloat, that Parker was not truly consecrated, and a miserable fable created by one Neale, who had been chaplain to Bonner, about what was called the nag's head ordination. This notion was not thought of during the reign of Elizabeth, or the enemies of the reformation would

undoubtedly have spread it abroad. But it pleased God that, when the story was invented, there was one witness living able to contradict it, viz. the earl of Nottingham, who saw the consecration. Nor was this all, for the registers of the see of Canterbury, and the records of the crown, being examined into, fully set the question at rest, and declared the validity of the consecration. Moreover, the original instrument of archbishop Parker's consecration, still lies among his other papers in the library of Corpus Christi college at Cambridge. The object in forging this tale, undoubtedly was to assault the validity of ordinations in the church of England, by endeavouring to show that the chain of descent from the days of the apostles had been broken; but, like slanders in general, it ended in nothing but the confusion of its authors.

Thus were the sees filled, the worship reformed, and the queen's injunctions sent over England. Three things remained to be done, viz. setting forth the doctrine of the church, translating the Bible and publishing it with short notes, and regulating the ecclesiastical courts. About these the bishops set to work.

The articles proposed were the same with those of the days of king Edward, except some slight alterations, especially leaving the doctrine of the real presence untouched. The bishops prepared a confutation of it, but the queen and the council appear to have dashed it out. The translation of the Bible was committed to sundry bishops and others, a portion being assigned to each. The first impression of it is supposed to have been published in 1561. As for the canons and rules of church government, they were not soon prepared. Some came out in the year 1571, and more in 1597. "But this part of the reformation is not yet finished, for penitentiary

canons have not been set up, and the government of the church is not yet brought into the hands of churchmen."

And thus was the light of truth made to shine once more over England.

Unfortunately, the heats that had been engendered beyond sea, during the reign of Mary, caused, at length, some divisions at home. A few sparks had been kindled in king Edward's reign, about clergymen's habits; but these were buried in the ashes of Hooper and Ridley. However, they broke forth again, and manifested themselves in objections against the vestments of the inferior clergy, and, at length, against bishops. These differences were craftily managed by some, who were anxious to improve them to obtaining a division of the church lands, and, for the sins of the nation, they were allowed to continue.

CHAPTER XXI.

Faults on both Sides.—Grindall.—Associations of the Clergy.—Tyranny of Elizabeth.—Whitgift.

Too great severity was used in England against those who refused to conform to the established religion, and too little regard paid to their scruples. They might have been retained in the bosom of the church without the sacrifice of any thing important. They considered the church as sound in the essentials of religion; they objected not against episcopacy; they would have used a liturgy; but those at the head of affairs were unwilling to yield a single iota. Faults there were on both sides. The puritans were wrong in considering things sinful

which were in themselves indifferent; the queen and her archbishop erred in pressing indifferent rites with severity. A separation began which might easily have been made up at first, but which grew wider by time and by degrees, until it was made permanent.

Elizabeth was a true daughter of Henry VIII. and resolved that her will should be obeyed. She urged on the ejectment of ministers who refused to conform in every respect. Her orders went beyond the disposition of the commissioners appointed to execute them. Cecil, her secretary, was afraid to oppose her, and even the house of commons was intimidated.

Two successive bishops of London, Grindall and Sandys relaxed the persecution against the puritans, and would not go to the extent desired. The bishop of Durham declared that he would throw up his bishopric rather than permit such severities in his diocese. But there were too many willing to obey the court.

After the death of Parker, Grindall succeeded him. He had ever manifested an opposition to the queen's severity. Among other means of advancing the knowledge of the truth, he promoted certain associations in the different dioceses, the principal design of which was to stir up an emulation in the clergy to study the scriptures. These commenced under archbishop Parker. Such was the want of discipline and of able preaching, they were connived at by the commissioners who were appointed to inquire into all novelties. At length after they had been carried on above three years in several dioceses, under the title of prophesyings, with great success, they began to give offence. The queen was told by the archbishop, that these meetings were no better than seminaries of puritanism; that they tended to popu-

larity; and made the people so inquisitive, that they would not submit to the orders of their superiors, as they ought to do. The diocese of Norwich had more of these associations than any other, as being most favoured by that bishop; and there several of the clergy had disused the habits, and made the discipline of the church the subject of their discourses. Upon this information, her majesty ordered the archbishop to suppress these meetings of the clergy in every diocese, and to begin with Norwich, which his grace complied with.

Grindall entertained a very different opinion of these associations (which went by the name of prophesyings) from archbishop Parker. He apprehended the design to be very serviceable to the interests of religion, by improving both the clergy and the people in the knowledge of the scriptures, and the defence of the reformation. In order therefore to prevent the disorders which had been complained of in those meetings, the archbishop drew up certain regulations for them.

Her majesty having sent for Grindall, and exclaimed against the prophesyings, as illegal, and of a dangerous tendency to the state as well as the church, for which she said it was good to have but three or four preachers in a county, commanded him peremptorily to put them down.

The queen was vehement in giving her orders, and refused to hear the prelate's answer, with apparent tokens of great displeasure. But the archbishop though he had complied with her injunctions, and now and then, as he was in a manner forced, assisted in the high commission, yet could not go this length against his judgment. Instead therefore of giving directions to his archdeacon, and vicar general to execute the queen's command, his

grace wrote her a letter, becoming the rank he held in the church, in order to inform her majesty, of the usefulness and necessity of preaching in all churches, and of the subserviency of the exercises to qualify the clergy for this purpose, which were not illegal as her majesty had apprehended. The letter is too long to be here inserted, but it does so much honour to the archbishop, that I cannot omit a short extract from it, in order to give the reader a clearer idea of this prelate's integrity, and of the arbitrary humour of this queen. After making an excuse for the length of his application, he humbly desires her majesty to afford some consideration to the two following requests which he has to lay before her. The first was, that she would not interpose her prerogative in ecclesiastical matters, nor carry her supremacy so far into the church, as to decide, in her own person, points of doctrine and discipline, without the advice and approbation of her bishops. The other was, that when she did interpose in matters of faith and religion which touch the church of Christ, she would not pronounce so resolutely and peremptorily, as she might do in secular business. By this means, he tells her, she would not only consult her own repose, the service of God and the benefit of her people, but would also avoid many instances of erroneous conduct on the subject of religion. He calls upon her to remember her mortal state, and not to be too much dazzled with her crown and purple; and that in things of this nature, the will of God, and not that of any earthly creature, is to govern. He assures her, that it was owing to his conscience only, that he had not executed her commands in this affair; and he was very willing to resign his see with all humility if it was her majesty's pleasure. There was a spirit in this letter

which Elizabeth had not been used to see in any subject, and which she would not bear from any of them. Even the primate of all England should not dare to write to her with that honest freedom, to give his advice in affairs merely religious, or to dispute her all-wise commands. Inflamed therefore with this letter, she determined to make an example of the archbishop, as a terror to all others; and the honest prelate, when he was proceeding in his metropolitical visitation, was by an order of the star-chamber confined to his house, and sequestered from his jurisdiction for six months. Here was a display of the royal supremacy with a vengeance; when the head of the church, who was a woman, thus took upon her to decide so peremptorily in an affair merely spiritual, without consulting the bishops or the clergy in convocation, and to imprison and tie up the hands of the primate, because he disapproved her decision; though he is the first director under the prince in all ecclesiastical administration. Before the six months were lapsed, the archbishop was advised to make his submission to the queen, which he did as far as was consistent with his station and integrity: but not being willing to retract his opinion, or to confess his sorrow for the counsel he had given her majesty, there was some talk of depriving him, which being thought too severe, his sequestration was continued. Thus ended the religious exercises of the clergy, so well calculated to promote useful knowledge and piety, at a time when not only they were both at a low ebb in England, but when the popish missionaries from abroad were very busy, and with great success, in drawing many people from church. The truth is, the queen, whose piety had been sounded very high, apprehended the people would be put upon making inquiries into every thing,

and to see and judge for themselves, in consequence of these meetings; and she was of opinion that knowledge and learning in her laity, would indispose them for an absolute submission to her will in the business of religion. Notwithstanding all her piety therefore, she would not permit the exercises to be continued, wisely regulated as they were by the archbishop; and when there were daily complaints made in the city of London, and almost every county in England, of the scarcity of the word of God.*

After the death of Grindall, who never recovered the queen's favour, Whitgift succeeded him. He enforced the queen's will at all hazards. Not a week had he been in power before he began. Two hundred and thirty clergymen were suspended at his first visitation.

He drew up four-and-twenty articles, concerning which the lord treasurer wrote him, "that he was daily charged by the privy council, and public persons, with neglect of his duty in not staying his grace's vehement proceedings against the clergy, whereby papists are greatly encouraged, and the queen's safety endangered." He tells his grace further, "that he has read his four-and-twenty articles in a Romish style, of great length and curiosity, and so full of branches and circumstances, that he thinks the inquisition of Spain, used not so many questions, to comprehend and to trap their priests." But "his grace" persisted. Eight lords of the council joined in a letter to him, but in vain.

In consequence of this unwarrantable tenacity, great warmth was excited in parliament, which met immediately after, and the puritans gained ground. But for

* Warner, vol. ii. p. 448-50.

the present prerogative prevailed.* At the prorogation of the parliament, her majesty made a short, but an extraordinary speech to the two houses. She took notice “that some people had been very busy in finding fault with the clergy, which was a censure that reflected upon herself: for since God had made her an over-ruler of the church, her negligence could not be excused, if any schism or heresy was connived at. Some misbehaviour and omission there might be amongst the body of the clergy, and such miscarriage is common to all considerable offices: all which, says she, if you my lords of the clergy do not amend, I mean to depose you. Look you therefore well to your charges.”

She determined at length to proceed by canon and not by statute with reference to ecclesiastical matters, and even rejected an act enjoining greater obedience to the 4th commandment, under pretence that the passing it was an invasion of her prerogative.

In 1588, the archbishop presented sundry orders to convocation, which he hoped would be approved. The first related to the constant residence of those who had but a single benefice, with an exception to prebendaries, chaplains, and those who were allowed non-residence by act of parliament; compelling them however in these cases to keep a licensed preaching curate. The second obliged those, who had two benefices, to reside an equal proportion of time on their respective livings, and provide a licensed curate on each whilst they were absent. Whoever was absent an hundred and twenty days, was to keep a licensed curate. The fourth order directs all

* In giving these accounts, I am guided very much by a work recommended to me by one whose knowledge of ecclesiastical history is entitled to more respect than that of any other man in our communion.—B. A.

scandalous clergymen, guilty of notorious crimes, to be removed, and never admitted to any cure again. Unlearned ministers, not qualified to catechize, are barred admission to any cure. Lastly, no clergyman is allowed to entertain, or displace a curate, without authority from the metropolitan or bishop, of the diocese. These seasonable and prudential orders were agreed to by both houses of convocation, who promised to obey them in every part.

CHAPTER XXII.

Calvinism.—Lambeth Articles.—Opinion of a Clergyman of the Church of England concerning Churchmen and Puritans.

ALL the protestant divines in England, as well puritans as others, had hitherto appeared to be of one opinion about the doctrines of faith: but now there arose a party which were first for softening, and then for overthrowing, the received opinions about predestination, perseverance, free-will, effectual grace, and the extent of Christ's redemption. The articles of the church of England, though they do not countenance the severest notions of zealous Calvinists, yet had hitherto been thought to favour the Calvinian system; on the side of which all the puritans to a man declared, as well as the greatest number of the established clergy. The Arminian tenets, as they were called afterwards, were looked upon at first as bordering upon popery, which made them much disliked: but as they grew into repute, the Calvinists were reckoned old fashioned divines; whilst they in return looked on the others as little better than novelists. The

controversy began at Cambridge; where one Barret, fellow of Caius college, declared himself against Calvin's doctrine of predestination and falling from grace; for which he was called before the vice chancellor and some of the heads, and obliged to retract his opinion in St. Mary's church. An application having been made by both parties to the archbishop, Barret was sent for to Lambeth, and having been reprimanded for his errors, and exhorted to confess his ignorance and mistakes, he chose rather to quit his fellowship; and soon after turned papist. To put an end to these disputes, the university sent Whitaker the queen's professor, and some other eminent predestinarians, to the archbishop, who calling in some bishops and divines to his assistance upon these points, they concluded upon some propositions strictly Calvinistical, called the Lambeth articles, to which the scholars in the university were to submit. When the queen was informed of what they had done, she was extremely disengaged at so public a resolution: and had it not been for the interest of some of the archbishop's friends, and the particular regard which her majesty had for this prelate, she had ordered all that met on this occasion to be prosecuted to a prelature. However she ordered Sir Rob. Cecil to acquaint his grace by letter, "that she very much disliked that any allowance had been given by him and his brethren, for any such points to be disputed, being a matter tender and dangerous to weak ignorant minds; and thereupon commanded him to suspend the urging them publicly, or suffering them to be debated in the pulpit." The archbishop excused himself by alleging, that they were not intended as any new laws, or decrees, but only as an explication of certain points, which they apprehended to be true, and corres-

pondent to the doctrine professed in the church of England. But if this had been the general doctrine of the English reformation, the homilies on Christ's nativity, and the resurrection, would have spoke another language than they have, about the extent of his redemption, and falling finally from grace. The Calvinistical system however, it must be owned, seems at that time to have been the general and governing persuasion of both the universities, and of the greatest part of the clergy, though the church reformed upon different principles, and though the articles were compiled with a latitude to admit subscription by persons of other sentiments.*

The writer from whom we continue to extract, thus expresses himself, with reference to the dispute between the church and the puritans. His views are here presented as those of a respectable clergyman of the church of England, in the reign of George II. Adverting to the fact, that toward the close of the reign of Elizabeth, both opposition and persecution began to relax, he says, indeed it was high time that these contests subsided; for whilst each side was thus busied in disputing about the form, the power of godliness in this kingdom was almost at an end. The established clergy generally lost ground; the diligence of the popish missionaries, who took advantage from these disputes, revived the catholic religion with great success; and in the remoter countries and villages the people were either papists, or had no religion at all. Thus whilst the two parties were striving for victory, they were inattentive, or rather they sacrificed willingly the common interest of religion; and let in popery, and immorality, to destroy them both. I believe I do not censure them more severely than they deserve,

* Warner, vol. ii. p. 467.

when I say that both parties were striving for the victory; the governors of the church in the beginning, and the puritans in the progress of this controversy. The queen and her bishops had set out upon right and undoubted principles; that where there is no contradiction to the laws of God, the church, like other societies, has a power to make what laws she apprehends to be decent and necessary for her well being and government; and where the scripture is silent, human authority may interpose.

But these principles, in the reason of things did not carry them, and in fact should not have carried them, the lengths they went, in not tolerating or conniving at tender consciences. Had they not contended for the victory and to procure an universal submission, the way at first was short and plain; and to have dispensed only with a few indifferent things, during the lives of the incumbents who had been exiles, taking care that none of the rising generation should have been tainted with these prejudices, would have prevented this flame, which has had such fatal consequences, and which will probably be never quite extinguished but together with the church itself. This lenity and indulgence was granted afterwards, but it was then too late to become a remedy and to prevent a separation already formed. The puritans, on the other hand, in getting far enough from popery, ran weakly and enthusiastically into the other extreme; and with their prejudices, which were not to be overcome with severity, they had their passions and perverseness in common with other men. When the governors of the church had divested themselves of their understanding, and intended to compel the judgment, the puritans, by a natural consequence, grew more obstinate; and the same men, who at first had but few objections

to the establishment, were not satisfied till they had wholly separated from it, framed a wild tyrannical system of government and discipline of their own, which they wanted to get established, and at the hazard of their lives maintained it. * * * * In short, the one side was uncharitable, the other was perverse, and both sides were weak. I take this to be the candid, impartial, state of the case between them.

Seventeenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

James.—Bancroft.—Plot.—Translation of the Bible.—Want of Toleration.—Archbishop Abbot.

KING James the First, who regarded nothing so much as being esteemed the Solomon of the age, seemed to expect that all would submit to his superior wisdom. He appointed a conference between sundry churchmen and puritans at Hampton Court, at which he himself largely assisted. The result was, a declaration in favour of the church. Time was given the puritans to conform, and some of their objections were shown to be groundless: as, for instance, baptism by midwives, though practised, was stated to be not *allowed by the church*, and therefore not with propriety brought as a charge against

her: confirmation it was proved was not considered necessary to the *completion of baptism*, but as distinct therefrom, and having its peculiar use: moreover, it was shown to have existed in the Christian church from the earliest ages.

Bancroft, bishop of London, was translated to the See of Canterbury, after the death of Whitgift. He was the first man who preached up the divine right of episcopacy in England.

Encouraged by him, James endeavoured to exalt his prerogative above law, and thus excited an increasing hostility against himself.

The papists sought a summary way of destroying all effects of the reformation in England, by means of the famous gunpowder plot; but this, as is well known, was frustrated.

It was in the reign of James, the translation of the Bible now used in England and America, took place. The work was assigned to fifty-four of the most eminent divines in the two universities, divided into six companies, and it was executed by them with the utmost care. Indeed the result of their labours is not only regarded as a remarkably correct translation of the sacred word, but as the very finest specimen of the English tongue. Their language, at the age of a century, has all the freshness of youth.

The spirit of the reformation was perfect mildness when compared to that of popery, and the latter slew thousands where the former put to death one; yet the duty of toleration was not thoroughly understood even by protestants. What Collier calls the “unrelenting strictness” of Bancroft, proved this. And James was not slow in

discovering it. His aim to deprive the clergy of the benefit of statute law and keep them dependant on prerogative alone, his violence toward here and there an Arian, and his treatment of non-conformists, show that he needed the charity of the gospel. His disregard of the positive command of the decalogue was equally manifest. He even, in 1617, published a declaration called a "book of sports," the object of which was to prove that pastimes on Sunday were allowable. He gave as a reason, that the papists would gain proselytes if the church was too strict. His conduct in this respect excited great dissatisfaction. Archbishop Abbot, who succeeded Bancroft, forbade its being read. Several other bishops manifested their opposition, and had the king pressed the reading of it under severe penalties, violent convulsions would have arisen.

The archbishop of Canterbury, Abbot, not approving of the king's arbitrary measures, was reckoned among the puritans; and the papists were countenanced and received into favour. A marriage was proposed between prince Charles and a daughter of Rome. But in obedience to the summons of a monarch more powerful than the children of men, James descended to the dust, leaving to his son a tottering throne.

CHAPTER II.

Charles I.—Discontents.—Archbishop Abbot.—Laud.

THE first thing that we meet with relating to the church in the reign of Charles, was the regulation of his chaplains; of whom, Laud, bishop of St. David's, whom the

duke of Buckingham had made his privy counsellor for the church, was ordered to make a list, distinguishing the Arminians, who were called orthodox, and the Calvinists, who went under the name of puritans. At the same time, Laud had orders to consult with bishop Andrews, in what manner to manage with respect to the five distinguishing points of Calvinism, in the ensuing convocation.

Parliament complained to the king of the encouragement shown to papists, their great resort to the city, the education of the children of the realm in foreign lands, and the various other insidious means by which the Jesuits were gaining influence for Rome, and making proselytes. His majesty made sundry promises, but little was done to prevent the continuance of the evils complained of.

An assize sermon having been preached by a Dr. Sibthorp, in which passive obedience was inculcated, the king sent directions to archbishop Abbot to license it. The archbishop had too much sense and honesty and regard for the laws and liberties of his country, to obey the king's command. Whereupon, Laud was employed to make some corrections, and it was licensed by the bishop of London. The king was so much offended with the archbishop for his faithfulness, that he banished him from Canterbury.—How are these records full of proof of the awful consequences of uniting church and state!

Laud was declared prime minister in church and state, and Dr. Manwaring, who was sentenced by parliament for preaching arbitrary notions, was pardoned and advanced. These circumstances increased the growing discontent. His majesty dissolved the parliament with

the highest marks of his displeasure. It became now a warm contest between prerogative and freedom. The king resolved not to surrender his claim, and the people resolved not to yield their rights. Laud, who, on the death of Abbot, was made archbishop, was so wedded to the childish multiplication of rites, and so rigorous in insisting upon new observances, he was by no means calculated to heal the opening breach between Charles and his people. Though the general humour of the nation was then in the opposite extreme to superstition, and it was with difficulty that the ancient ceremonies, to which men had been accustomed, and which had been sanctified by the practice of the first reformers, could be retained in divine service, yet this was the time which the bishop chose, to introduce some new observances, which gave the English church an air of resemblance to the Catholic superstition; and which he imposed with a pride and petulance, that were well nigh as offensive as the things themselves. The holy see itself gained hopes of regaining its authority in the island, and an offer was twice made to Laud in private of a cardinal's hat, in order to forward his good intentions: but his answer was, as he says himself, "that something dwelt within him, which would not suffer his compliance, till Rome was other than it is." It is very certain, that it was the opinion of many people at that time, that this prelate's scheme was to lead the English by gradual steps back to popery. Thus the earl of Devonshire's daughter, having turned Catholic, and being asked the reason of it by Laud, she said "it was chiefly because she hated to travel in a crowd; she perceived his lordship, and many others, were making haste to Rome, and therefore in order to prevent her being crowded she had gone before them."

I find no evidence to convince me, that he had any design of re-establishing the Roman Catholic religion in England; unless we confound, as many did in those days, high church with popery, through a pure spirit of party. His conduct however afforded his enemies a great handle against him. Several divines of the university of Oxford were expelled, for preaching against Arminianism; many others were silenced, suspended, or imprisoned by the high commission for the same offence, and for preaching against pictures and images in churches. Thus by the fatal policy and indiscretion of this hot and furious prelate, many people, well affected to the church of England, but enemies to Arminianism, or to arbitrary power, were driven in spite of themselves to join with the puritans, in order to strengthen their party, and to enable them to oppose the illegal measures of the government.

CHAPTER III.

Sunday Sports.—Long Parliament.—Dissenters.—Persecution by the Puritans.

To the horror of the sober part of the nation the book of Sunday sports was again published. The king also consented that the queen should have an agent from the pope for directing her affairs in religion.

At length, on the third of November, 1640, began the sessions of that famous parliament which not only asserted the freedom which the Bible teaches us belongs to man, but threw both church and kingdom into a state of anarchy. The men who by study of the sacred volume had found out their inalienable rights, contended for

those rights as it became them: but a wild licentious spirit was generated in the contest, more unreasonable than the spirit of Charles himself. A new tyranny was introduced, the tyranny of fanaticism.

In the reign of queen Mary, differences arose among the refugees at Frankfort, which laid the foundation of subsequent divisions in Scotland as well as England. Some, who had been in the habit of using the English liturgy at home, thought that, while they continued in foreign lands, they ought to use the liturgy of the country where they sojourned; and hence, instead of their own, adopted, for the time, a liturgy similar to the Geneva and French forms. Others were of opinion, that, as those in England who compiled the liturgy, were confirming what they had done with their blood, it was a contempt of them, and of their sufferings, to depart from their forms. This dissention, like all others, went farther than was at first intended; for, those who were merely for exchanging the English for the Genevan liturgy while they were abroad, began, at length, to quarrel with some things in the English liturgy itself. Knox, being a man of hot temper, engaged in this dispute warmly, and procured his friend Calvin, to write against those obnoxious parts. Knox himself was banished by the senate of Frankfort, for writing indecently of the emperor; whereupon he and his party went to Geneva. Another difficulty arose on the subject of discipline; some of the people wishing to take the punishment of offenders out of the hands of the ministers, and share it among the whole congregation. The views of Knox became the views of Scotland, and the injudicious efforts made from time to time to *drive* the Scotch to the adoption of episcopacy and a liturgy, fixed them more firmly

in opposition. These too were connected with other efforts, which aimed at civil liberty. The church has ever suffered most from the injudicious conduct of violent friends.

The Scotch entered into a covenant filled with invectives, against all that they chose to think savoured of popery. By this covenant they bound themselves to resist innovations, and to defend each other against all opposition whatsoever.

In both kingdoms, therefore, there rose a violent assault upon Charles. His chief counsellor, Laud, was sent to the Tower.

Parliament endeavoured to deprive the bishops of their vote in the house of peers, and such were the assaults made upon them, they saw it was no longer safe for them to go to the house. The archbishop of York and twelve of his brethren signed a protestation against all proceedings that should take place during their violent expulsion. They were accused of high treason by the commons, and sent to the Tower. After this the puritans succeeded in obtaining a vote of both houses, depriving all the bishops of their seats in parliament.

Had the commons gone no farther than the separation of churchmen from the cares and duties of political life, they would have achieved a great good: but they aimed at a change in the internal regulations of the church itself. They sought the abolition of episcopacy, as a form of church government. They denounced all the episcopal clergy as ignorant and vicious. In the course of the war which took place between them and the king, they turned about two thousand out of their livings. To gratify the Scotch, they determined to establish a presbyterian church government. They imposed, as a test, upon all

persons above eighteen years of age, a “solemn league and covenant,” similar to the Scotch. Clergymen who refused it were turned out of their livings; and it was wielded as a weapon against all who would not believe with its authors. One hundred and ninety-five graduates were expelled the university at Cambridge, for refusing this test.

An assembly of such divines as the knights and burgesses thought proper to recommend, was gathered together for the purpose of acting in ecclesiastical affairs under the direction of parliament. Of above an hundred and twenty, of which that assembly was to consist, there were not above twenty, says lord Clarendon, “who were not declared and avowed enemies to the doctrine and discipline of the church of England, some of them infamous in their lives and conversations, and most of them of very mean parts in learning, if not of scandalous ignorance.” But as Mr. Neal, and others, have objected to the noble historian’s testimony as a prejudiced person, the reader shall see what is said of them by the famous Milton, a known republican, and enemy to the king. “If the state were in this plight, religion was not in a much better: to reform which a certain number of divines were called, neither chosen by any rule nor custom ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety, or knowledge, above others left out. The most part of them were such, as had preached and cried down, with great show of zeal, the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates, that one cure of souls was a full employment for one spiritual pastor, how able soever, if not a charge above human strength. Yet these conscientious men ere any part of the work was done for which they came together, and that on the public salary, wanted not bold-

ness, to the ignominy and scandal of their pastor-like profession and especially of their boasted reformation, to seize into their hands, or not unwillingly to accept, besides one, sometimes two, or more, of the best livings, collegiate masterships, in the universities, rich lectures in the city, setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms.—But while they taught compulsion without convincement, which not long before they complained of, as executed unchristianly against themselves, these intents are clear to have been no better than antichristian; setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power to the advancing of their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioners to punish church delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognizance.—Looking on the churchmen whom they saw under subtle hypocrisy, to have preached their own follies, most of them, not the gospel; time servers, covetous, illiterate persecutors, not lovers of the truth, and like in most things whereof they accused their predecessors.”

Before the meeting of this assembly the king forbade it by a proclamation; declaring that the acts done by them ought not to be received by his subjects, and threatening to proceed against the divines with the utmost severity of the law. Nevertheless, sixty-nine assembled in Henry the Seventh’s chapel according to their summons, having few or no episcopal divines among them.

After succeeding against the church, the body of puritans began to manifest divisions, which before were comparatively secret. These divisions were three: presbyterians, erastians, and independents. The former had taken their plan from Scotland, and had now advanced it into a “divine institution,” derived expressly from

Christ, and his apostles: but this met with as much opposition from the other sectaries as episcopacy itself. The erastians, who believed the government of the church to be a creature of the state, would not admit the pastoral office to be any thing more than persuasive; and denied any spiritual jurisdiction or coercive power over the conscience, or that any one form of church government was prescribed in scripture, as a rule to future ages. For this opinion they had the authority of many of our first reformers.

The independents made a third party; the political principles and genius of which were not understood by lord Clarendon, Rapin, nor Mr. Hume. The fathers of this sect were divines who had fled from England, under the prosecutions of Elizabeth and in the reign of James, and had settled at Rotterdam, and in Guelderland: where, to use their own language, “they looked upon the word of Christ, as impartially and unprejudicedly as men are ever like to do; the place they went to, the condition they were in, and the company they went with, affording no temptation to any bias.” The principles upon which they founded their church government, were to confine themselves to scripture precedent, without any regard to ancient practice, or modern innovations; and not to tie themselves up to their present resolutions, without room for alteration upon any further views and inquiry. On these principles they built a system, “that every particular congregation of Christians has an entire and complete power of jurisdiction over its members, to be exercised by the elders thereof within itself.” But they did not claim such an entire independency with regard to other churches, as that an offending church is not to submit to an open examination by other neighbouring

churches, who may renounce communion with it for persisting in their error; which was all the ecclesiastical authority which they thought could be exercised, without calling in the civil magistrate, for which they found no ground in scripture. They practised no church censures but admonition, and upon obstinate offenders for crimes of the last importance, excommunication. They professed an agreement in doctrine with the articles of the church of England; and their officers and public rulers in the church, were pastors, teachers, and elders, being all ecclesiastical persons separated to that service, and deacons. Though they did not approve of a prescribed form of worship, yet they thought public prayers should be framed by the meditation and study of their ministers: and they offered up public prayers for kings and all that were in authority, read the scriptures of the Old and New Testament in their assemblies, administered the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, sung psalms, and made a collection for the poor every Sunday. In short, though they did not admit of persons unordained to any office, except as probationers for the ministry, yet they did not think "preaching so peculiarly confined to pastors and teachers, but that others also gifted and fitted for it by the Holy Ghost, and approved, being by lawful ways and means called thereunto by Providence, may publicly, ordinarily, and constantly perform it, so that they give themselves up thereunto." As to their political principles, which our historians have misunderstood, they set forth a declaration, "that as magistracy and government in general is the ordinance of God, they do not disapprove of any form of civil government, but do freely acknowledge that a kingly government, bounded by just and wholesome laws, is both allowed by God, and

a good accommodation unto men." I have been the more particular in giving the reader this account, not only as the party of the independents grew up into an establishment on the ruins of the rest, but also as almost all the historians, besides those I have mentioned, have confounded them with the anabaptists, who at this time appeared in England, who were republican in their principles of civil government, and had no regard to learning, or ordination, in their teachers.*

The assembly of divines having given their advice to the parliament in what manner to provide for a succession in the ministry, the two houses passed an ordinance, in October, 1644, for ordination; appointing ten of the members of the assembly, and thirteen presbyters of the city of London, to examine, and ordain by imposition of hands, all those whom they thought qualified to be admitted. Seven of these divines were to make a quorum; and "all persons ordained by them, were to be reputed ministers of the church of England, sufficiently authorized for any office or employment, and capable of all advantages appertaining to the same." The point of ordination being thus settled, the assembly proceeded next to settle a form of public worship: for though the liturgy had been set aside above a year before, yet there was no other form appointed in its stead.

At last came out "a directory for public worship," established in January, 1645, by an ordinance of the two houses; allowing full indulgence to the public teachers in their prayers and sermons.

The ordinance for establishing this directory repeals the acts of Edward and Elizabeth, by which the liturgy had been established; and forbids the use of it in every

place of public worship throughout England and Wales. But it was a considerable time before this great revolution in the form of public worship took place over the kingdom. In some parts of the country, the church wardens could not procure a directory; in others they despised it, and continued the common prayer book; some would read no form, and others would read one of their own. In order, therefore, to give life to their establishment, the parliament, in the following summer, called in all the common prayer books, and imposed a fine upon such ministers as should read any other form than that contained in the directory. The same ordinance forbids the use of the common prayer book in any private place or family, under the penalty of five pounds for the first offence, ten pounds for the second, and for the third a year's imprisonment. Whosoever did not observe the directory was to forfeit forty shillings, and those who wrote, preached, or printed any thing in derogation of it, were to forfeit not less than five, nor more than fifty pounds, to the use of the poor. Here was liberty of conscience indeed, when the liturgy was forbidden to closets and private families!

The anabaptists, too, were imprisoned and otherwise treated with great rigour.

Archbishop Laud was tried and executed.

We see from these accounts, that when men are not renewed by the Spirit of God, it matters not what principles they declare, they will persecute. We may usually judge of their principles by the degree in which they persecute; but though the benevolence of the gospel be on the tongue, the heart that is unsanctified will crush the opponents who are in its power. Heathen Rome devoured like a tiger: Christian Rome did the same. The

reformed have ever been far, very very far behind these, but when we look at the conduct of the English church and state against the nonconformists, and of the nonconformists against all who differed from them, we are constrained to confess that the heart of man is desperately wicked. The puritans were the fathers of political liberty in these latter days. What lover of freedom but must hail them as such. And who that rejoices in American privileges but must look to them, as, under God, in great measure, the source. We are not, however, to palliate their faults, nor to say that the spirit with which they treated those who differed from them on the subject of religion was the spirit of the gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

Contests.—Toleration.—Quakers.

“THE great officers of the army, of which Cromwell was at the head, though Fairfax was the general, being of the party of independents, disliking the presbyterian government as more tyrannical than the episcopal, and having but few preachers amongst them, undertook now themselves to preach, and pray publicly to the troops; and even the common soldiers, as well as the officers, not only prayed, and preached publicly among themselves, but also went up into the pulpits, in all the churches where they were quartered, and harangued to the people with great fervour. The army consented that presbytery should be the national religion; but insisted on a toleration of all Christians in the enjoyment of their religious

rights. But the presbyterians proceeded with equal bitterness against the several sects, as they had done, and continued to do, against the church of England; little doubting but they should be able, by the power and authority they had in the two houses, to get the better of the army, and new model it again. They had even determined to seize the person of Cromwell, whose disimulation was now discovered; but, having notice of their design the night before, he made his escape. At the same time, the army took the king by violence out of the custody of the parliament; and began to be more brisk and contumacious with the two houses than they had been before."

But parliament taking courage, passed an ordinance against heretics, which bespeaks the character of its authors. It ordains, that all persons who shall maintain, defend, or publish, by preaching, or writing, the heresies which are after mentioned, with obstinacy, shall be committed to prison without bail till the next jail delivery, and if the indictment shall then be found, and the party not abjure, he shall suffer the pains of death as in the case of felony.

The assembly of divines continued its sessions at Westminster.

After the death of Charles, the small remains of a house of commons, about eighty members, all independents, framed a new test, called "the engagement," the character of which was such that many presbyterian clergymen surrendered their pulpits. But sufficient has been stated to show the state of the times, and we may well pause to meditate on the corruption of human nature.

There were those who then professed, that all sorts of

iniquity were "in their own nature as holy and righteous as the duties of prayer, preaching, or giving thanks to God; that happiness consisted in the commission of such crimes; and that there was really no such thing as heaven or hell, nor any unrighteousness or sin independent of conscience and opinion." Miserable and distracted indeed was the state of religion at this time in England; "when the church was defaced and overspread with errors and blasphemies, defiled with abominations, rent in pieces with divisions, and so swallowed up in confusion and disorder."

About this time we are to date the rise of the people called quakers, from an obscure individual, "bred a shoemaker, who pretended that all the qualifications necessary for ministers were the anointing of the spirit: "that the people should receive the inward divine teachings of the Lord, and take that for their rule." He apprehended the Lord had forbade him to put off his hat to any one, and that he was to speak to the people without distinction, in the language of thee, and thou. In these particularities many of the enthusiasts of this time concurred; and Fox had soon a great number of followers. Whenever he spoke in public, it was with convulsive agitations and shakings of the body, asserting it to be the character of a good man to tremble before God: and from hence the name of quakers was given to these sectaries. Their public meetings were occasional, at which one or another spoke, as they were moved from within: and sometimes they departed without any one's being moved to speak at all. They denied the holy scriptures to be the only rule of faith; and maintained that every man had a light within himself which was a very sufficient rule. They were great disturbers of the public religion

at that time: but of late years they are become inoffensive people;" and, it may now be added, 'they are honourably distinguished by their abstinence from external immoralities; by the peaceful and useful tenor of their lives; by the subjugation of their tempers; by their industry, frugality, love of order, and benevolence; and by the manly and consistent testimony they have uniformly borne against certain prevalent and crying evils.' It is matter of deep regret however that they lay aside the sacraments commanded by the Redeemer. Sacraments were appointed in the garden of Eden, and certainly we are not now under a more spiritual dispensation than that which separated to a religious purpose the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*—Who but must lament the facility with which an individual of talents and perseverance may in the lapse of time create a new division of the body of believers!

Cromwell having taken the power into his hands, declared a toleration for every thing but popery, prelacy, and immorality. Far greater liberty of conscience was permitted by him than by the parliament.

CHAPTER V.

Charles II.—King's Declaration.—Act of Uniformity.—Test Act.

ON the coming of the second Charles to the throne, attempts were made to unite the churchmen and the presbyterians. It is to be feared that the minds of nei-

* Let any person who desires to read a dispassionate and perfectly satisfactory view of the principles of Friends read the *Christian Observer*, for December, 1824.

ther party were then in a temper for charity and condescension. A declaration was issued by the king, with a view of uniting all parties. He promised that he would encourage the public exercises and observation of the Sabbath, and that insufficient and scandalous clergymen should not be admitted into the church; that he would prefer none but men of learning and virtue to the prelacy, who should be frequent preachers: that in extensive dioceses, he would appoint a sufficient number of suffragans: that no bishop should confer ordination, or exercise any episcopal jurisdiction, without the advice and assistance of presbyters chosen by the diocese: that the preferments of deans and chapters should be given to the most learned and pious presbyters of the diocese: that confirmation shall be rightly and solemnly performed, by the information, and with the consent of the minister of the place; who shall admit none to the sacrament till they have made a credible profession of their faith: that all diligence shall be used for the instruction and reformation of scandalous offenders, who shall not partake of the Lord's supper till they have testified their repentance, provided there be place for appeals to superior power: that every rural dean, assisted by three or four of the clergy to be elected by a majority of the deanry, shall meet once a month to receive complaints from the ministers and church wardens of parishes, and to compose such differences as shall be referred to them by arbitration, reforming such things as are amiss, by their admonition, or presenting them to the bishop: that no bishop shall exercise any arbitrary power, or impose any thing on his clergy and people, but according to the law of the land: that the liturgy shall be reviewed with an equal number of divines of both persuasions, and such

alterations made in it as are thought necessary, and in the mean time none to be troubled or punished for not using it: that none shall be compelled to receive the sacrament kneeling, nor to use the cross in baptism, nor to bow at the name of Jesus, nor to use the surplice, except in the royal chapel, and in cathedral and collegiate churches: that subscription and the oath of canonical obedience should not be required at present, for ordination or institution, only the oaths of allegiance and supremacy: that none should be deprived of their preferments for not declaring their assent to the thirty-nine articles, provided they read and declare their assent to all the doctrinal articles, and to the sacraments.

" This was the declaration which his majesty published, and to which " he conjured all his loving subjects to submit, and acquiesce, concerning the differences which have so much disquieted the nation at home, and given offence to the protestant churches abroad." Though the high presbyterians, whom nothing would satisfy but the covenant, were displeased with this declaration, yet all the others were content: and had the bishops been possessed of that spirit of wisdom and charity which this declaration breathed, it would in a great measure have prevented the separation which followed, to the disturbance of the church, and the dishonour of true religion. I lay this at the door of the leading bishops, because my lord Clarendon, as well as the king, was at that time thoroughly on the side of the declaration."

A report being made of a conspiracy against the state, a bill was enacted, ordaining that no person should be elected magistrate in any corporation, who did not take an oath, declaring it unlawful to take arms against the king, and also receive the sacrament according to the

rites of the church of England. Thus was the Lord's supper made "a picklock to a place."

The liturgy underwent a review, and the office for adult baptism was added, with the prayer for all conditions, and the general thanksgiving. Under a pretence of conspiracies and plots against the government, the act of uniformity took its rise, by which the forms of admission into the church of England, were much stricter than they were before the civil war. The truth is, that the papists, and those who disguised their principles of that sort, as the king himself did, animated the chief men of the church to carry the points of conformity as high as possible, that there might be a great number to stand out, and to make a toleration necessary, under which popery might be favoured. The act passed the house of commons by a majority only of six, and not without many long and warm debates. It received the royal assent on the nineteenth of May, 1662, and was to take place on the 24th of August following, without making any provision for the maintenance of those who were to be deprived; which was a severity not to be justified. The account is much exaggerated when it is said, that there were two thousand ministers ejected out of the church by virtue of this act: their hard usage however cannot be remembered without regret; those who quit their interests are certainly in good earnest, and deserve a charitable construction. "Here were many men," says bishop Burnet, "much valued, some on better grounds, and others on worse, who were now cast out ignominiously, reduced to great poverty, provoked by much spiteful usage, and call upon those popular practices that both their principles and circumstances seemed to justify, of forming separate congregations, and of di-

verting men from the public worship, and from considering their successors as the lawful pastors of those churches in which they had served."

The cry of conspiracy against the government was still continued, and in 1664 it was enacted, that if any one above sixteen years of age was present at any meeting under a pretence of exercise of religion, in any other manner than was allowed by the liturgy of the church of England, where there were five more than the family, for the first offence should suffer three months imprisonment or pay a fine of five pounds, for the second offence six months or ten pounds, and for the third should be banished to the plantations in America.

There were attempts made to pass what was called an act of comprehension, embracing many of the nonconformists, satisfying their scruples, and bringing them into the church. But these did not succeed. The great object of the court was to favour popery, and some men high in the church wanted charity. There was an act passed, chiefly against the rapidly increasing papists, by which all holding offices of honour or profit under government, were obliged to take the sacrament according to the forms of the church of England, and to declare against transubstantiation. This was called the test act.

Though the protestant religion stood in need of the united strength of all its professors against popery, and of all the securities of a civil nature that could be given for the preservation of church and state, yet I presume to say, that it is not only a great prostitution of the sacrament, to make it a qualification for civil offices and employments, but an infatuation to suppose that it can be any security for our religion.*

* Warner, Rector of Queenhithe, London, vol. ii. p. 621.

In 1680 parliament passed an act repealing some of the severities against the protestant dissenters; but the king eluded the signing of it.

The happy escape from popery under James II. is well known, as well as the preservation of protestantism in England by means of the revolution. Attempts were made to bring the dissenters into the church again, immediately after William and Mary were seated on the throne; and Tillotson, Burnet, and others, laboured much in it; but they were defeated by the Jacobites, who raised a cry that the church was about to be destroyed. These friends of James and the pretender continued in successive reigns to oppose the true principles of the church, and by their extravagant notions sought to destroy every hope of union. In spirit they were papists, but by pretending an attachment to the church they were enabled to do more injury than the papists themselves.

The inclination of the Jacobites to a nearer approach to the church of Rome, was more manifest in the beginning of the 18th century. We are told by bishop Burnet, that "one Dodwell gave rise to the conceit of the invalidity of lay baptism." "He," continues Burnet, "seemed to hunt after paradoxes in all his writings. He thought none could be saved but those who by the sacraments had a federal right to it, and that these were the seals of the covenant; so that he left all who died without the sacrament to the uncovenanted mercies of God. And to this he added, that none had a right to give the sacraments but those who were" episcopally ordained. "The bishops thought it necessary to put a stop to this new and extravagant doctrine: so a declaration was agreed to, first, against the *irregularity* of all baptism by

persons who were not in holy orders; but that yet, according to the practice of the primitive church, and the constant usage of the church of England, no baptism, in or with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, ought to be reiterated." The house of bishops, with only one dissenting voice, passed this declaration.*

CHAPTER VI.

Arminianism.

THE views of doctrine held by James Arminius, professor of divinity at Leyden, in the commencement of the 17th century, excited great attention. The followers of Calvin were divided into two classes. The greater part were of opinion that God only *permitted* the first man to fall into transgression; while a smaller number maintained that from all eternity God *decreed* the fall of Adam. The latter were called supralapsarians, the former sublapsarians. In opposition to these, the Arminians believed "I. That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those whom he foresaw would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishments on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist unto the end, his divine succours.

"II. That Jesus Christ, by his death and sufferings, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular:—that, however,

* Burnet's History of his Own Times (year 1712).

none but those who believe in him can be partakers of their divine benefit.

“ III. That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free-will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing any good thing; and that therefore it is necessary to his conversion and salvation, that he be regenerated and renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God, through Jesus Christ.

“ IV. That this divine grace, or energy of the Holy Ghost, which heals the disorder of a corrupt nature, begins, advances, and brings to perfection every thing that can be called good in man; and that, consequently, all good works, without exception, are to be attributed to God alone, and to the operation of his grace; that, nevertheless, this grace does not force the man to act against his inclination, but may be resisted and rendered ineffectual by the perverse will of the impenitent sinner.

“ V. That they who are united to Christ by faith, are thereby furnished with abundant strength, and with succours sufficient to enable them to triumph over the seduction of Satan, and the allurements of sin and temptation; but that the question, whether such may fall from their faith, and forfeit finally this state of grace? has not been yet resolved with sufficient perspicuity; and must, therefore, be more carefully examined by an attentive study of what the holy scriptures have declared in relation to this important point.”

Calvinism being at this time in a flourishing state in Holland, the sentiments of Arminius had many enemies. The leader of these was Francis Gomar, his colleague,

A long, tedious, and unprofitable controversy was carried on. The Arminians asked for toleration. The Calvinists contended that the ruin of religion was threatened. At length a synod was convoked at Dort, in the year 1618, for the purpose of deciding concerning the points in dispute. By this synod the Arminians were pronounced guilty of pestilential errors, and were condemned as corrupters of the true religion. The sentence was followed by excommunication, suppression of their religious assemblies, and deprivation of their ministers. Fines, imprisonment, exile, and other marks of ignominy succeeded. Some of the persecuted exiles retired to Antwerp; others fled into France.

CHAPTER VII.

The Tender Mercies of Rome.

WE read of persecutions carried on by one division of protestants against another, and as we read we feel how weak is human nature, how prone to err! We read of persecutions carried on by the papacy against protestants, and we exclaim, surely men have been transformed to fiends! In comparison, the persecutions of protestants are but as friendly chastisements: the persecutions of papists are like the ragings of the bloodhound. The truth of this was experienced in France. Henry IV. had by the edict of Nantz granted certain privileges to the reformed, in the possession of which they reposed in peace, enjoying the benefits of the gospel, and contributing most essentially to the wealth of the state. It

was, at last, however, resolved to ruin at one blow the cause of the reformation in France. In order to this the edict which granted them toleration was revoked. An order was issued to all the reformed churches to embrace the Romish faith. This order was followed by fire and sword. Multitudes emigrated, but their emigration was opposed. The brutal rage of an unrelenting soldiery was let loose upon them, and they were assailed by every barbarous form of persecution.

"The ministers and members of the reformed church were thickly clustered throughout the territories of France, forming one twelfth part of the population: they were natives of the country; were peaceful and loyal; not addicted to sedition or turbulence; they were a source of immense wealth to the nation: they did not aspire to those dignities from which their government had seen fit to exclude them, but were content and happy with their lot. Whatever advantages they possessed were rather *de jure*, than *ex gratia*, for the immunities granted by Henry IV. were but the price at which he purchased their assistance in his plans of foreign enterprise; and yet, in the midst of their quiet and unobtrusive possession of their comforts, and in the very face of all these considerations, a cold and bloody decree is framed, by which they are despoiled of all that was valued by them, and hunted like noxious beasts from the earth. Louis had not even

— “Necessity,
The tyrant's plea, to excuse his devilish deeds.”

Many were burnt alive. To the survivors, some unsrequent grot, or the depth of some forest, was as a palace. The persecution proceeded with great rapidity; the soldiers hurrying from village to village, destroying

the habitations, and squandering the property of such as would not be converted, and compelling the protestants to become fugitives over the whole country, “fleeing as birds to the mountains.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Moravians.

THE ancestors of the Moravian brethren had been a church of martyrs for many ages before the reformation. Originally descended from the Sclavonian branch of the Greek church, they never implicitly submitted to the authority of the pope, though their princes, from the year 967, adhered to the Roman communion; but they resolutely retained the Bible in their hands, and performed their church service according to the ritual of their fathers, and in their mother tongue. For these heresies, as they were deemed, they were persecuted without mercy, and almost without intermission; many were punished with death, more with the spoiling of their goods, and multitudes with imprisonment and exile. In their sufferings were literally exemplified the declarations of the apostles concerning the ancient worthies: “They had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, were tempted, were slain with the sword; being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy,) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.”

Among these confessors and martyrs in the fourteenth century, appeared John Huss, who was condemned to

the flames as a heretic. During the war that ensued after his death, the church of the united brethren, under its present name, was formed by those who chose rather to suffer as witnesses of the truth, than defend the truth by the temporal weapons of warfare. A sanguinary decree was issued against them, at the diet in 1468, and was commanded to be read from all the pulpits in the land. The prisons in Bohemia were crowded with the members of their church, and their first bishop, Michael, remained in close confinement until the death of the king Podiebrad. Many perished, in deep dungeons, with hunger; others were inhumanly tortured. The remainder fled to the thickest forests, where, fearing to be betrayed in the day time, they kindled their fires only at night, round which they spent their hours in reading the scriptures and in prayer. When they afterwards obtained some respite from persecution, they were the first people who employed the newly invented art of printing for the publication of the scriptures in a *living tongue*, and *three editions of the Bohemian Bible were issued by them before the reformation*.—When Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer, and Calvin, at length arose to testify more successfully than *they* had been able to do against the errors and usurpations of the church of Rome, to each of these illustrious men the Moravians submitted their doctrinal tenets, their church discipline, and the records of their affairs; and from each in return they received assurances of cordial approbation, and the kindest encouragement.

But as the reformation did not penetrate into the recesses of Bohemia and Moravia, they had to suffer renewed and aggravated persecution; till, towards the close of the seventeenth century, they were so hunted down, and scattered abroad, that they ceased to be known pub-

licly as an existing church. Their devotions, at the peril of life and liberty, were performed by stealth in private dwellings, in deep forests, and in lonely caverns, a few only daring to assemble in one place and at one time. Previous to this dispersion, their bishop, Amos Comeneus, one of the most distinguished scholars of that age, published their history, with a dedication (which he calls his last will and testament) to the *church of England*, bequeathing to it the memorials of his people in the following affecting terms:—"If, by the grace of God, there hath been found in us (as wise and godly men have sometimes thought,) any thing true, any thing honest, any thing just, any thing pure, any thing lovely and of good report; if any virtue and any praise, care must be taken that it may not die with us when we die; and at least that the very foundation be not buried under its present ruins, so that generations to come may not know where to look for them. And, indeed, this care is taken, and provision is made on this behalf, by this our trust, committed to your hands." Sixty years after this period, the church of the brethren was raised from its depression by a persecution intended to crush its last remnant in Moravia. Some families, flying from thence, found a refuge on the estates of Count Zinzendorf, in Lusatia, where they built a humble village (Herrnhut,) which is now the principal settlement of the brethren. As their countrymen, together with some pious people from other quarters, joined them, their congregations gradually multiplied through Germany, and a few were established in Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Holland, and North America. The brethren first appeared in England about the middle of the last century, where, (though the most malignant calumnies were circulated against them) in the simplicity

of conscious innocence they laid their case before parliament. Their doctrines, discipline, character, and history, were scrupulously examined, in committees of both houses, and a bill, exempting them from taking oaths and bearing arms, was carried with the unanimous consent of the bishops: indeed, all opposition to it was abandoned after the final investigation of their claims: and they were fully acknowledged by the British legislature, to be “an ancient protestant and *episcopal church.*”

CHAPTER IX.

Societies in England.—Antichrist.

MEN are social, and if they do not associate for good, they inevitably will for evil. This has been proved in all ages. We cannot therefore but read with great interest the account given by bishop Burnet of sundry societies which existed in England at the close of this century. I shall give an account, says he, of more promising beginnings and appearances, which though they are of an elder date, yet of late (1702) they have been brought into a more regulated form. In king James's reign, the fear of popery was so strong, as well as just, that many, in and about London, began to meet often together, both for devotion, and for their further instruction: things of that kind had been formerly practised, only among the puritans and the dissenters. But these were of the church, and came to their ministers, to be assisted with forms of prayer and other directions: they were chiefly conducted by Dr. Beveridge and Dr. Hor-

neck. Some disliked this, and were afraid it might be the original of new factions and parties; but wiser and better men thought, it was not fit nor decent to check a spirit of devotion, at such a time: it might have given scandal, and it seemed a discouraging of piety, and might be a mean to drive well meaning persons over to the dissenters. After the revolution, these societies grew more numerous, and for a greater encouragement to devotion, they got such collections to be made, as maintained many clergymen to read prayers in so many places, and at so many different hours, that devout persons might have that comfort, at every hour of the day. There were constant sacraments every Lord's day in many churches: there were both greater numbers and greater appearances of devotion at prayers and sacraments, than had been observed in the memory of man. These societies resolved, to inform the magistrates of swearers, drunkards, profaners of the Lord's day, and of lewd houses; and they threw in the part of the fine, given by law to informers, into a stock of charity: from this, they were called societies of reformation. Some good magistrates encouraged them; but others treated them roughly. As soon as the late queen heard of this, she did, by her letters and proclamations, encourage these good designs, which were afterwards prosecuted by the late king. Other societies set themselves to raise charity schools, for teaching poor children, for clothing them and binding them out to trades; many books were printed, and sent over the nation by them, to be freely distributed: these were called societies for propagating Christian knowledge: by this means, some thousands of children are now well educated and carefully looked after. In many places of the nation, the clergy met often together,

to confer about matters of religion and learning; and they got libraries to be raised for their common use. At last a corporation was created by the late king, for propagating the gospel among infidels, for settling schools in our plantations, for furnishing the clergy that were sent thither, and for sending missionaries among such of our plantations, as were not able to provide pastors for themselves. It was a glorious conclusion of a reign, that was begun with preserving our religion, thus to create a corporation, for propagating it to the remoter parts of the earth, and among infidels: there were very liberal subscriptions made to it, by many of the bishops and clergy, who set about it with great care and zeal. Upon the queen's accession to the crown, they had all possible assurances of her favour and protection, of which, upon every application, they received very eminent marks.

Fruits of the labours of the society for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, are manifest in the United States to the present day. The missionaries of that society are recollect ed with gratitude by some of the oldest now living. They bore the standard of the cross into regions of our country, which, but for them, would have remained long desolate.

How different these societies in England, from some of those established by Rome. In 1622, the congregation de propaganda fide, was founded by Gregory XV. If by this the faith of Christ had been propagated, every one would be bound to contemplate it with joy; but when, instead of the faith of Christ, the dogmas of Rome, born in the brains of popes and cardinals, and existing only in the absence of the scriptures—when these were the chief things circulated, and the inculcation of these

was the paramount aim, who but must weep at such perversion.

The following are among the ascertained principles of the chief and most active Roman missionary society.

“ That those persons may transgress with safety who have a probable reason for transgressing, i. e. any plausible argument or authority in favour of the sin they are inclined to commit.

“ That actions intrinsically evil, and directly contrary to the divine laws, may be innocently performed by those who have so much power over their own minds as to join, even ideally, a good end to this wicked action, or (to speak in the style of the Jesuits) who are capable of directing their attention aright:

“ That philosophical sin is of a very light and trivial nature, and does not deserve the pains of hell.” By a philosophical sin is meant an action contrary to the dictates of nature and right reason, committed by a person ignorant of the written law of God, or doubtful of its true meaning.

“ That the transgressions committed by a person blinded by the seduction of lust, agitated by the impulse of tumultuous passions, and destitute of all sense or impression of religion, however detestable and heinous they may be in themselves, are not imputable to the transgressor before the tribunal of God; and that such transgressions may often be as involuntary as the actions of a madman:

“ That the person who takes an oath, or enters into a contract, may, to elude the force of the one and the obligation of the other, add to the form of words that express them, certain mental additions and tacit reservations.”

The conduct of the Romish missionaries bespoke their character. They engrafted Christianity upon pagan rites; aimed at convincing the heathen there was little difference between their idolatry and the gospel; pampered the passions of those who had influence; and aimed evidently at acquiring wealth and power. The political machine they endeavoured to get wholly into their hands. The power of the civil magistracy was roused to self-defence against them, and kings and governors banished them because of ambitious intermeddling in state affairs. Their conduct savoured by no means of the spirit of Him whose kingdom was not of this world.

CHAPTER X.

American Colonies.

THE revolutions and intolerance of Europe drove many from the land of their birth to this new continent. Here they sought an asylum, and, scattered in colonies from north to south, they laid the foundations of a mighty empire. The independents established themselves in New England. Their first landing was at Plymouth, in Massachusetts, on the 22d December, 1620.

In 1629, June 29, a body of emigrants arrived at Salem. These were speedily followed by others. But though their sufferings for conscience sake had been so considerable, they were unwilling to tolerate any opinions but their own. Two men of note among the settlers at Salem being found guilty of attachment to a liturgy, were expelled the society and sent to England. Williams, a

minister highly esteemed, was banished in 1634, and with his followers settled at Providence. Another body, disgusted with certain proceedings on account of the opinions of a Mrs. Hutchinson, retired to Rhode Island. With Mr. Hooker, an eminent minister of Massachusetts Bay, who was anxious for a distinct province, a hundred families went in 1636, and settled Connecticut. These, with their coadjutors in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, devoted early their care to the education of the young. As early as the 8th of September, 1630, a sum of money (£400) was voted by the general court at Boston toward the commencement of a college. This sum being increased by the will of the Rev. John Harvard, the foundation of Harvard university was laid. A similar spirit pervading all the colonies, in process of time more abundant provision for instruction was made in New England than in any other part of the world.

The churches planted by these pilgrims have spread with an increasing population even to this day. They still flourish. But there have been among them great diversities of doctrine, and in, alas! how many instances, a following in the way of Cain, by a denial of the atonement—a trampling under foot the Son of God.

We have spoken of persecutions among the puritans. This was extended to the followers of George Fox. They were banished, scourged, and in some instances put to death. This was the consequence of the spirit of popery yet lingering among the puritans. Toleration was not understood.

In 1607, the first settlement was made at Jamestown in Virginia. The church of England was established in this colony by law, and the people in general conformed

to it.* The number of parishes in the colony became at last one hundred.

We are told by Burnet, that in 1693, Mr. Blair, a very worthy man, came over from Virginia, with a proposition for erecting a college there. In order to which, he had set on foot a voluntary subscription, which arose to a great sum: and he found out some branches of the revenue there, that went all into private hands, without being brought into any public account, with which a free-school and college might be well endowed. The endowment was fixed, and the patent was passed for the college, called from the founders, the William and Mary college.

Maryland was settled chiefly by Roman Catholics, 200 families of whom landed near the mouth of the Potomac, in 1633.

* As we may judge by the following curious extract from a very ancient writer:

"They have in each parish a convenient church, built either of timber, brick, or stone, and decently adorned with every thing necessary for the celebration of divine service.

"If a parish be of greater extent than ordinary, it hath generally a chapel of ease; and some of the parishes have two such chapels, besides the church, for the greater convenience of the parishioners. In these chapels the minister preaches alternately, always leaving a reader, to read prayers and a homily, when he cannot attend himself.

"The people are generally of the church of England, which is the religion established by law in that country, from which there are very few dissenters. Yet liberty of conscience is given to all other congregations pretending to Christianity, on condition they submit to all parish duties. They have no more than five conventicles amongst them, namely, three small meetings of quakers, and two of presbyterians. It is observed, that those counties where the presbyterian meetings are, produce very mean tobacco; and for that reason cannot get an orthodox minister to stay amongst them; but whenever they could, the people very orderly went to church. As for the quakers, it is observed, by letting them alone, they decrease daily.

"The maintenance for a minister there, is appointed by law at 16,000 pounds of tobacco per annum."

The Swedes and the Dutch formed settlements on the banks of the Delaware and the Hudson; the former bringing with them their episcopal, and the latter their presbyterian mode of church government.

In 1682, William Penn led a large number of colonists to the state which now bears his name. He and his friends had adopted the sentiments of George Fox, and, though himself devoted to the Stuarts, he knew enough of persecution to desire to plant an asylum. Universal freedom of religion was established in his colony.

Carolina was settled by emigrants of different religious sentiments, and an attempt on the part of the government to create a uniformity, produced nothing but discord. The attempt was abandoned.

Thus did the hand of Providence scatter over the face of this new world the seeds of civilization and of piety, and they have continued to flourish until the fruits they produce are the admiration of the globe. The principles of civil liberty flowing from the Bible, ascertained by a diligent perusal of that charter of human hope, here find their dwelling; and we of a late generation may look back to the refugees from European tyranny as the founders of our political and ecclesiastical freedom.

The diversities of religious opinion among the first settlers continued, and there being little to call the attention of their descendants to the correctness of church order, the habit was created of receiving their creed as they received their estates,—making it a part of their patrimony.

We know there is a peculiar sacredness thrown around every thing that appertained to our remote ancestry, and especially when they stood firm amid a tempest, do we hold their peculiarities in high veneration. Our very

pride leads to this. We imitate what we admire. We forget that whatever there was excellent in our ancestors sprang from the gospel, and that whatever was eccentric in them was no part of that gospel. We adopt their eccentricities as gospel itself. We thus perpetuate their faults. What they happened to think we still think, and not because the Bible teaches it to us. We are papists because our fathers were; or we are presbyterians, or we are friends. We change our doctrines, because about them we inquire. Our forms and modes we retain as they were handed down to us, because about them we do not inquire. Be they scriptural or unscriptural, we cleave to them. Multiplied as we now are by the unexampled prosperity attending free institutions, our different denominations bear much the same relative proportion that they did in the 17th century. We are to avoid angry controversy, but calm dispassionate inquiry, concerning discipline as well as doctrine, is the duty of every man.

Eighteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Missions.

THE 18th century opened with more encouraging prospects for the cause of Christ than any that preceded it, except primitive days. The light of the sacred volume had free course over England and America. The re-

formed were numerous on the continent of Europe. "The beast"^{*} was wounded, and, according to the promise of God, began to fail. The human mind, freed from his despotism, enjoyed a new era; an era of unrestrained improvement. Missions were carried on. For these the Moravians were remarkable. When the Moravian refugees, on Count Zinzendorf's estates, scarcely amounted to 600 persons—when they had only just found rest from suffering, and were beginning to build a church and habitations, where there had previously been a desert—so great was their ardent piety and zeal for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, that in the short period of eight or nine years, they had sent missionaries to Greenland, to the Indians in North and South America, to many of the West India Islands, to Lapland, to Algiers, to Guinea, to the Cape of Good Hope, to Ceylon, and subsequently to Labrador, to Tartary, to the Nicobar islands, to Persia, and to Egypt. In 1732, pitying the condition of the Negroes in the West Indies, two brethren sailed to the Danish island of St. Thomas; and such was their devotedness to the work, that having heard that they could not have intercourse with the slaves unless they themselves became slaves, they went with that full purpose, that they might have the opportunity of teaching the Africans the way of deliverance from a far worse captivity than that of the body, the captivity of sin and Satan. Although this sacrifice was not eventually required of them, sacrifices scarcely less painful were cheerfully endured for many years, during which they had to maintain themselves by manual labour under a tropical sun, while every hour of leisure was employed in conversing with the heathen. The fruits of their zeal

* See Revelations.

and perseverance in due time appeared; and in the West Indies (Danish and British,) there are now more than 23,000 Negroes joined to their congregations, and a vast number have entered into eternal rest, steadfast in the faith of Christ. Not a step behind these in ardour and self-denial were the first missionaries that went to Greenland in 1733. These were plain men, who knew only their native tongue, and who, in order to acquire one of the most barbarous dialects on the earth, had to learn the Danish language first, that they might avail themselves of the grammar of the Rev. Mr. Egede, a Danish missionary then in that country. Now, the principal part of the population of Greenland is become Christian, and the state of society wonderfully changed, and instruction, through the medium of the Danish as well as Moravian teachers, is at least as universal in that inhospitable clime as in our own country. In 1734, some brethren went among the Indians of North America. Their labours, their trials, their sufferings, and their success, were extraordinary even in missionary history. Many thousands of these roving and turbulent savages, of all other perhaps the most haughty and untractable, were converted from the error of their ways, and adorned the doctrines of God their Saviour, both in their lives and by their deaths. On one occasion, ninety-six men, women, and children, being treacherously made prisoners by white banditti, were scalped and tomahawked in cold blood, and, according to the testimony of their murderers, with their latest breath gave affecting evidence of their faith. At another time, eleven missionaries were burnt alive in their dwellings, or massacred and thrown back into the flames, in attempting to escape, by a troop of Indians in the French service.

All may contemplate with pleasure the missions of the United Brethren; they manifest so fully the spirit of the gospel. But others early shared in the labour of essaying the conversion of the heathen. The Christian Knowledge Society, and the Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, both connected with the church of England, sent forth the light of the gospel with the very dawn of the century, and continued to diffuse it to its close. By the former of these more especially, schools were established, and Bibles, prayer books, and tracts* were circulated. The Danish missionary society also sent forth labourers. As early as 1600, missionaries were sent to Lapland; and in 1640, thirteen Christian congregations were established. Hans Egede, and others entered on the work of christianizing Greenland. But a more important mission was that to India, established by the Royal College of Copenhagen, and the Orphan's House at Halle. The work commenced in 1706. So great was the success, and so important the field, the English Society for promoting Christian Knowledge offered assistance and support. The venerable name of Swartz shines bright on the list of labourers in the east. Hundreds of thousands of natives are said, by the blessing of God on their efforts, to have been brought to the reception of the truth.

* As an encouragement to the circulation of tracts, the writer would observe that he saw some time since, a tract published by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which had been preserved sixty years.

CHAPTER II.

Methodists.

THIS new denomination was founded in England in the year 1729, by one Mr. Morgan, and Mr. John Wesley. In the month of November of that year, the latter being then fellow of Lincoln college, began to spend some evenings in reading the Greek Testament, with Charles Wesley, student, Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ church, and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton college. Not long afterwards, two or three of the pupils of Mr. John Wesley, and one pupil of Mr. Charles Wesley, obtained leave to attend these meetings. They then began to visit the sick in different parts of the town, and the prisoners also, who were confined in the castle. Two years after they were joined by Mr. Ingham of Queen's college, Mr. Broughton, and Mr. Hervey; and, in 1735, by the celebrated Mr. Whitfield, then in his eighteenth year. At this time their number in Oxford amounted to about fourteen. They obtained their name from the exact regularity of their lives, which gave occasion to a young gentleman of Christ church to say, "Here is a new sect of Methodists sprung up;" alluding to a sect of ancient physicians who were called Methodists, because they reduced the whole healing art to a few common principles, and brought it into some method and order.

They were patronized and encouraged by some men eminent for their learning and virtue; so that the society still continued, though they had suffered a severe loss, in 1730, by the death of Mr. Morgan, who, it is said, was the founder of it. In October, 1735, John and

Charles Wesley, Mr. Ingham, and Mr. Delamotte, son of a merchant in London, embarked for Georgia, in order to preach the gospel to the Indians. After their arrival they were at first favourably received, but in a short time lost the affection of the people; and, on account of some differences with the storekeeper, Mr. Wesley was obliged to return to England. Mr. Wesley, however, was soon succeeded by Mr. Whitfield, whose repeated labours in that part of the world are well known.

On Mr. Wesley's return from Georgia, he paid a visit to Count Zinzendorf, the celebrated founder of the sect of Moravians or Hernhutters, at Hernhut in Upper Lusatia. In the following year he appeared again in England, and with his brother Charles, at the head of the Methodists. He preached his first field sermon at Bristol, on the 2d of April, 1738, from which time his disciples have continued to increase. In 1741, a serious altercation took place between him and Mr. Whitfield. In 1744, attempting to preach at an inn in Taunton, he was put to silence by the magistrates.

After Mr. Whitfield returned from America in 1741, he declared his full assent to the doctrines of Calvin. Mr. Wesley, on the contrary, professed the Arminian doctrine, and had printed in favour of perfection and universal redemption, and very strongly against election; a doctrine which Mr. Whitfield believed to be scriptural. The difference, therefore, of sentiments between these two great men caused a separation. Mr. Wesley preached in a place called the Foundery, where Mr. Whitfield preached but once, and no more. Mr. Whitfield then preached to very large congregations out of doors; and soon after, in connexion with Mr. Cennick, and one or

two more, began a new house, in Kingswood, Gloucestershire, and established a school that favoured Calvinistical preachers. The Methodists, therefore, were now divided; one part following Mr. Wesley, and the other Mr. Whitfield.

These two presbyters of the church of England, were undoubtedly instruments of great good. When they began their labours, a torpor seemed to have seized the religious world. Though like comets in their movements through the ecclesiastical system, they roused to such an extent as to prove a blessing.

After the death of Mr. Wesley his people divided, but this division, it seems, respects discipline more than sentiment. Mr. Wesley professed a strong attachment to the established church of England, and exhorted the societies under his care to attend her service, and receive the Lord's Supper from the regular clergy. But in the latter part of his time he thought proper to ordain some bishops and priests for America and Scotland; but as one or two of the bishops have never been out of England since their appointment to the office, it is probable that he intended a regular ordination should take place when the state of the connexion might render it necessary. During his life, some of the societies petitioned to have preaching in their own chapels in church hours, and the Lord's Supper administered by the travelling preachers. This request he generally refused, and, where it could be conveniently done, sent some of the clergymen who officiated at the New Chapel in London to perform these solemn services. It was with the greatest reluctance he undertook to create a bishop. His right to do so he denied; and in the commission to

Coke he styled himself “presbyter of the church of England.”*

The Calvinistic Methodists are not incorporated into a body as the Arminians are, but are chiefly under the direction or influence of their ministers or patrons. Of the latter, Lady Huntingdon was the most distinguished. She patronized them to a very great extent.

The labours of the Methodists extended to Barbadoes, St. Vincents, Dominica, St. Christopher's, Nevis, Antigua, St. Eustatia, Tortola, and St. Croix, where good has been done. Among the Calvinistic Methodists there are also a considerable number of preachers, whose con-

* The following is an extract of a letter written by Dr. Coke to the bishop of the diocese of Pennsylvania, after his arrival in America :

“ Right Rev. Sir,—Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance.

“ You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think to bigotry in favour of it: but through a variety of causes or incidents, to mention which would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went farther in the separation of our church in America, than Mr. Wesley, from whom I had received my commission, did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, as far as he had a right so to do, with episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that an entire separation should take place. He, being pressed by our friends on this side of the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them, (there being very few clergy of the church of England then in the states,) went farther, I am sure, than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed. And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

“ But what can be done for a reunion, which I much wish for; and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley, I have no doubt, would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers, and most of the people, is very strong towards him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily and to the utmost be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the protestant episcopal church to reunite.”

[The particular terms of union proposed were inadmissible.—See Bishop White's History of the Protestant Episcopal Church.]

gregations and societies are very extensive: some of their chapels in London are the largest and best attended in the world: it is almost incredibie to see the numbers of people who flock to these places. In North Wales also they have become numerous.

The wish of the great founder of the Methodists to remain in communion with the church of England having been departed from by very many of his followers, divisions and subdivisions have multiplied. One departure from primitive church order oft paves the way for a hundred new sects.

CHAPTER III.

Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States.

FROM circumstances already stated, the greater part of the settlers in North America were presbyterians and congregationalists. But there was a goodly number attached to episcopacy. Of these the Swedes continued to receive ordination from Europe. The Moravians procured for themselves bishops from their parent establishment. The large remainder, descended from members of the church of England, or themselves originally attached to it, associated as an American church. The practice of these had been to receive ministers already ordained, from England, or to send candidates for orders to the bishop of London. Immediately after the war of the revolution, several young men went from the south to receive ordination. They were citizens of an independent empire, and disposed to own allegiance to no other. They went to receive appointment to the ministry of a kingdom not of this world. The existing laws

of Great Britain were in their way. The bishop of London could ordain none who did not acknowledge the supremacy of his government. Of course the candidates were obliged to wait until parliament could pass a law allowing the bishop to exercise his spiritual authority independent of political considerations. This law the bishop obtained. But while the question was depending, Mr. Adams, American minister at the court of St. James, having asked the Danish minister whether the bishops of Denmark would not ordain the candidates, if requested to do so, the Danish minister wrote home on the subject, and an answer was received some time after, stating that they would.

It was, however, resolved to obtain the episcopate, that the American church might be complete within itself. The first application for this was made by the clergy of Connecticut, joined by some of those of New York. The Rev. Samuel Seabury, D.D. was recommended by them for consecration, in 1783. A difficulty similar to that just adverted to, occurring in England, he was consecrated by the bishops of Scotland, on the 14th November, 1784.

In September, 1785, a convention of clerical and lay delegates from seven of the thirteen United States, held in Philadelphia, after so revising the book of common prayer as to accommodate it to the improved state of civil government, resolved on an application to the bishops of the church of England, to consecrate to the episcopacy such persons as should be recommended to them by the churches of the several states. This application was forwarded, accompanied by certificates from the executives of the states, that it was perfectly consonant with the civil constitutions of the land. It contemplated no union with government, either foreign or domestic. It was a mere seeking of the church of England, as a spi-

ritual body, that ministry which might have been obtained in equal validity from the church of Scotland, of Denmark, or of Moravia. The British parliament granted the necessary permission to consecrate bishops, without the ordinary oaths of allegiance being taken, and on the 4th February, 1787, the Rev. Wm. White, D.D. was consecrated bishop of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. Samuel Provost, D.D. bishop of New York. On the 19th September, 1790, the Rev. James Madison, D.D. was consecrated bishop of Virginia.

There were now four bishops of the protestant episcopal church in the United States. In all respects, therefore, the church became a whole: having within itself the power of transmitting its ministry.*

A constitution was adopted; some alterations made in the liturgy; the necessary canons enacted; and the church commenced that harmonious career for which it has been distinguished to the present time.

Assembled in chief judicature, the bishops of this church form one house, and the clerical and lay delegates from the respective dioceses, another. The vote of both these houses is necessary to the passage of any act.

In each diocese, a convention of the bishop, clergy, and lay delegates from the respective vestries, is held every year. The general convention, or highest judicature of the church, is triennial.

Diversities of sentiment are to be expected, but of this church there has been as yet no division; and such is the preserving power of a scriptural liturgy, not one of

* The whole number of bishops of the protestant episcopal church up to the present date is twenty; of whom the second in order of consecration, the Right Rev. Bishop White, is yet living. July 4, 1825.

her congregations has departed to heresy since her first organization. Prosperity has attended her. Decayed altars have been rebuilt. Desolate wastes have been revived. She has lengthened her cords and strengthened her stakes, and even to the present hour she has continued to rejoice under the blessing of the Almighty. May that blessing increase.

CHAPTER IV.

Infidels.

THESE have existed in every age; for the heart being corrupt, has always opposed the law of God. Herbert, Bolingbroke, and especially Hume, in Great Britain, sought to pour an Egyptian darkness into the whole region of morals. The last of these declared adultery no crime. But the blasphemies of the continent of Europe were still worse. Voltaire and his fellows entered into a league to destroy religion. It is to be said for them, that they were trained in the habit of contemplating the monstrous corruptions of popery, and not the simple gospel. Had they lived in more favoured lands they would doubtless not have been as unblushing as they were.

Pirie, in a lecture on the mother of harlots, expresses himself in the following remarkable words: "But you will now ask me, who is this mistress, and what her charms, that can engage the affections of so ferocious a savage? A daughter of Babylon the Great, you may be sure, as she is the mother of all the harlots of the last times. She calls herself in French, *Mademoiselle Raison*,

in English, *Miss Reason*, and claims an heavenly origin. Like Diana of Ephesus, she says, she is ‘a goddess that fell down from Jupiter,’ and upon this descent she deems herself entitled to the worship of Europe, and of the whole world. Her real name, however, is *Infidelity*, begot by false philosophy, and born of the false church in whose secret recesses she had been long hatching, until her full time came. The characteristic of Rome is superstition, and superstition naturally produces infidelity. So soon as one unenlightened by the gospel discerns the cheat a false religion or superstition has put upon him, he instantly becomes an infidel.”

But the champions of infidelity were among the chief promoters of the gospel. Their assaults called forth a weight of argument on the side of the sacred volume, which all the ingenuity of hell cannot refute. They roused a new energy in Christendom. That energy has ever since been going on in a course of illustrious achievement. So true is it God will make man’s wrath to praise him.

Nineteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

Bible Society.

WE need no other proof of the fact that the attacks of infidels have been overruled to the promotion of the cause of the Redeemer, than a view of the stupendous works commencing with the nineteenth century.

There had existed in England, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which, along with other books, distributed the Bible to great extent; the Canstein Institution at Halle, in Saxony, had published, since the year of its formation, 1712, two million of Bibles, and one million of Testaments; but there needed an association which should combine within itself the energies of the faithful. Such an institution arose in that wonder of the age, the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"In the month of December, 1802, the Rev. Thomas Charles, B.A. of Bala, an ordained minister of the established church, but officiating in connexion with the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists—a man of zealous piety and indefatigable exertion, and by his habit of itinerating and promoting Sunday schools, rendered intimately familiar with the wants of his countrymen—was in London; when he proposed a contribution, in aid of the plan for printing and distributing the scriptures among them. On the 7th of that month, the subject having been introduced by Mr. Joseph Tarn, the present assistant secretary and accountant to the British and Foreign Bible Society, in a circle of friends who had met to transact a different business, Mr. Charles preferred his suit on behalf of his countrymen, describing the want of Welsh Bibles, and the failure of all attempts to obtain them in the usual channel, and urging with importunate earnestness the necessity of resorting in this painful extremity to 'new and extraordinary means.'

"This proposition gave rise to a conversation of some length, in the course of which it was suggested, that, as Wales was not the only part of the kingdom in which such a want as had been described might be supposed

to prevail, it would be desirable to take such steps as might be likely to stir up the public mind to a *general dispersion* of the scriptures. To this suggestion, which proceeded from the Rev. Joseph Hughes, a baptist minister, one of the society's present secretaries, and which was warmly encouraged by the rest of the company, we are to trace the dawn of those measures, which, expanding with time, and progressive discussion, issued at length in the proposal and establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society."

In the year 1808, a number of Christians at Philadelphia, with the senior bishop of the protestant episcopal church of the United States at their head, organized the first American Bible society. In the year 1812, a Russian Bible society was established. In the year 1816, a national Bible society was established in the United States. And now we have the delight of beholding societies for the free distribution of the sacred volume actively engaged throughout the world.

We are astonished—to use the eloquent language of that invaluable champion of sound truth, the Christian Observer—we are astonished, in surveying the history of this institution, to see that the Bible, which had hitherto been a sealed book to three-fourths of the world, is at once, as if by an authority as paramount as that which said, "Let there be light, and there was light," diffusing over the world. We are astonished to see nations hitherto occupied chiefly in forging instruments of reciprocal injury and warfare, at once, as by that force of adhesion which binds together the discordant and centrifugal elements of the globe, brought to co-operate and to assist each other. We are astonished to see that those religious, or rather irreligious, feuds which had hitherto

constituted stronger lines of separation than the physical boundaries of nature or the artificial barriers of political society, have at once sunk and disappeared in the presence of this institution. We look for them, but, like some of the inhabitants of those volcanic countries who search in vain to day for an island which they beheld yesterday, we see them no more. We are astonished to find that the principle of universal love, hitherto of the slowest growth in the soil of human nature—hitherto flourishing only in the little area of some devout mansion, or in the courts of some retired temple—has now shot deep roots and protruded giant branches, and scattered its seed in all countries; and, what is more, has found, in all countries, a soil, and atmosphere, and cultivators congenial to its health and growth;—that, in fact, the figurative language of scripture is realized, and the “grain of mustard seed” is becoming a great tree, and the birds of all countries settle on its branches. We are, moreover, astonished at the rapidity of this transformation. Prejudice, selfishness, indolence, covetousness, the spirit of nationality, of monopoly, and what has been called by a great and good man that “nasty little corporation spirit,” which ties our hands and freezes our hearts, and makes self the centre and circumference of all our desires and feelings, had, up to this period, proved to be principles of tough, unbending, unaccommodating texture—principles, which have a thousand times turned back, blunted and dishonoured, every weapon that truth and beneficence could aim at them. We are as much astonished that this zeal should have diffused itself among all ranks of the community. Hitherto it had been a sufficient apology for the infidelity or indifference of the great, that the common people believed in or advocated

any particular truth. Nor were the poor less indisposed to participate in the projects of enterprises of the great. A wall, as wide and strong as that of China, was built up between the various classes of society—and a sort of caste contrived, by which all community of interest and feeling between the poor and rich was destroyed. But now, high and low, rich and poor, forgetting, on the one hand, their elevation, and, on the other, their depression, have “met together,” as the servants of that God who “is no respecter of persons,” to discharge their part in this great work—none disdaining or refusing to be hewers of wood, or carriers of water in this sanctuary.

Against this society the pope has issued his bull, calling it an agent of the devil, and the Grand Seignior has sent forth his firman, and some crowned heads, who have begun to discover that despotism and the Bible cannot exist together, have threatened their hostility; but it rests upon the promise of Omnipotence, “the gates of hell shall not prevail.”

CHAPTER II.

Sunday Schools.—Tracts.—Missions.—The Jews.—Syrian Christians.

BEFORE the close of the last century, Robert Raikes of Gloucester, in England, was the honoured instrument of commencing schools for the instruction of the rising generation in the truths of the Lord, on the Lord's day. As early as 1785, a society was formed in London, under the patronage of a number of the leading clergy of the church of England, for the encouragement of Sunday schools in the different counties in England; and in 1811,

300,000 children were thus instructed, in the various parts of Britain. The system of Sunday school instruction has increased in efficiency every year since, and now promises to change the face of society in Christendom.

Tract societies, though by no means new, have within the quarter of a century greatly increased in number and efficiency.

The same may be said of missions. These have been blessed to the evangelizing of the Society isles, of Greenland and Labrador, of parts of the continent of Africa and of Asia, and indeed of almost all the dark corners of the earth. The beams of the morning are evidently breaking on the world; and though an eclipse may be experienced, we know from what we see, as well as from prophecy, that the knowledge of the Lord shall be universally diffused.

The order of promise is, that the *receiving* of the Jews shall be to the rest of the nations *as life from the dead*. With peculiar joy, therefore, we record that efforts are making to diffuse among them the knowledge of the Messiah.

It is not among the least encouraging circumstances of the age, that the remnants of those churches scattered in the lands where the apostles laboured, are beginning to retrace their steps toward the purity and simplicity of primitive days. Of these we have a most interesting specimen in the Syrians of Malabar.

These interesting disciples were visited by Claudius Buchanan, that distinguished herald, who made known to Europe her path of duty, and proclaimed to Asia a brighter era. He gives this account of them:

The Syrian Christians inhabit the interior of Tra-

vancore and Malabar, in the south of India, and have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity. The first notices of this ancient people in recent times are to be found in the Portuguese histories. When Vasco de Gama arrived at Cochin, on the coast of Malabar, in the year 1503, he saw the sceptre of the Christian king; for the Syrian Christians had formerly regal power in Malay-ala.* The name or title of their last king was Beliarte; and he dying without issue, the dominion devolved on the king of Cochin and Diamper.

When the Portuguese arrived, they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of a hundred Christian churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. "These churches," said the Portuguese, "belong to the pope." "Who is the pope," said the natives, "we never heard of him?" The European priests were yet more alarmed, when they found that these Hindoo Christians maintained the order and discipline of a regular church under episcopal jurisdiction: and that, for 1300 years past, they had enjoyed a succession of bishops appointed by the patriarch of Antioch.—"We," said they, "are of the true faith, whatever you from the west may be; for we come from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians."

When the power of the Portuguese became sufficient for their purpose, they invaded these tranquil churches, seized some of the clergy, and devoted them to the death

* Malay-ala is the proper name for the whole country of Travancore and Malabar, comprehending the territory between the mountains and the sea, from Cape Comorin to Cape Illi or Dilly. The language of these extensive regions is called Malayalim, and sometimes Malabar. We shall use the word Malabar, as being of easier pronunciation.

of heretics. Then the inhabitants heard for the first time that there was a place called the inquisition; and that its fires had been lately lighted at Goa, near their own land. But the Portuguese, finding that the people were resolute in defending their ancient faith, began to try more conciliatory measures. They seized the Syrian bishop Mar Joseph, and sent him prisoner to Lisbon: and then convened a synod at one of the Syrian churches called Diamper, near Cochin, at which the Romish archbishop Menezes presided. At this compulsory synod, one hundred and fifty of the Syrian clergy appeared. They were accused of the following practices and opinions: "That they had married wives; that they owned but two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper; that they neither invoked saints, nor worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory: and that they had no other orders or names of dignity in the church than bishop, priest and deacon." These tenets they were called on to abjure, or to suffer suspension from all church benefices. It was also decreed that all the Syrian books on ecclesiastical subjects that could be found, should be burned; "in order," said the inquisitors, "that no pretended apostolical monuments may remain."

While the churches on the sea-coast yielded to the compulsion, those in the interior proclaimed eternal war against the inquisition; they hid their books, fled occasionally to the mountains, and sought the protection of the native princes, who had always been proud of their alliance.

Two centuries had elapsed without any particular information concerning the Syrian Christians in the interior of India. Buchanan discovered them. They had not heard of the reformation, and knew nothing of the

novelties which sprang up during its progress. Amid the fastnesses of their retirement they clung to their primitive modes, strangers to all beside save popery and heathenism. But they had fallen into a degree of luke-warmness. The copies of the scriptures among them were few. They needed a revival. This, through the instrumentality of various means judiciously established for their benefit, is going on; and there is reason to hope they will yet arise strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

We behold abundant proofs of the faithfulness of our God, as we contemplate his presence with his church. He has permitted her to pass through various trials, but his own right arm has always defended her. In the storm of heathen persecution, he supported and strengthened his people. Amid the insidiousness of heresy, he raised up firm defenders of the truth. In the darkest periods of popery, he was not without tens of thousands who refused to bow the knee to Baal. The valleys of Piedmont bore testimony to his love. When corruption had run its course, and, as is always the case, when it is permitted so to do, had displayed its deformity, he gave to shine, like stars to a midnight sky, Wickliff, Cranmer, Luther, Calvin, and all those who revealed the long hidden light of truth. He has preserved his cause even amid the errors of his servants, and in these latter years he has so poured out his Spirit from on high, and so aroused and directed the energies of Christendom, that he has added proof to promise, that all shall know him from the least to the greatest.

A view of the progress of the church, gives us at the same time the strongest evidence of the depravity of man. Who that sees the corruptions men have introduced, who

that marks the errors with which they have deformed the fair aspect of truth, who that reads of the massacres* and inquisitions of Rome, of the intolerance of the protestants,† of the attempts to deny Christ's essential glory, who that reads of these but must confess that man is desperately wicked.

* Seventy thousand were slain during the one massacre of St. Bartholomew's, in France.

† Seven thousand clergymen were ejected by the puritans when they came into power: 2000 afterward by the church of England.—See Christian Observer: Review of Southey's Book of the Church.

END OF VOLUME II.

INDEX.

A.

Athens, 36—8.
Alexandria, 113. 157. 245.
Arianus, 114.
Andrew, 114.
Atonement, 8. 11. 12. 15. 17. 20. 21.
136—149. 169. 181—5. 197. *See Justification by Faith.*
Alexander, 43.
Adrian, 152.
Aristides, 154.
Alia, 157.
Antoninus Pius, 160.
Antioch, 129.
Ægesippus, 218.
Athenagoras, 225.
Arius and Arianism, 346, &c.
Athanasius, 353, &c.
Abbyssinia, 368.
Armenia, 371.
Anthony, 371.
Antioch, Council of, 382.
Ambrose of Milan, 385. 393.
Augustine, 419. 435.
Adrian, ii. 10.
Ado, ii. 14.
Alfred, ii. 15.
Adelbert, ii. 23.
Anselm, ii. 29. &c.
Abelard, ii. 41.
Antichrist, ii. 67. *See every thing concerning Rome, Papal.*
Albigenses, ii. 70.
Arsenius, ii. 92.
Aquinas, Thomas, ii. 110.
Adrian VI. ii. 313.
Anabaptists, ii. 340. 376.
Associations, ii. 409.
Abbot, ii. 421.
Arminianism, ii. 442.
America, ii. 453.

B.

Barnabas, 16. 25—8. 31. 113.
Baptism, 13. 14. 19. 20. 21. 23. 27. 28.
34. 35. 42. 168. 253. 257. 309. 358.
477. ii. 53.

Berea, 36.
Blandina, 205.
Bardasanes, 220.
Bartholomew, 246.
Bulls, 418.
Boniface, 482.
Bede, ii. 3.
Blasphemies of Rome, ii. 15. 36. 212.
285. 370—1.
Bernard, ii. 38.
Brown, John, ii. 146.
Bull of Leo X., ii. 277.
Becket, ii. 367.
Bancroft, ii. 420.
Bible Society, ii. 469.

C.

Cromwell, ii. 433.
Charles II., ii. 436.
Councils, 30, 31. *See names of places, where held.*
Church Government. *See Government.*
Caligula, 86.
Claudius, 87.
Church of Christ, 102—4.
Clemens, 105—12.
Corinth, 38. 106—12.
Constantinople, 114.
Cerinthus, 115. 121.
Cornelius, 22.
Confirmation, 19.
Commodus, 226.
Clemens Alexandrinus, 247.
Cyprian, 264—297. 306. 314—20.
Catechist, 247. 436.
Child, Fortitude of, 321.
Constantine, 340.
Constantius, 359.
Constans, 361.
Constantinople, Council of, 390. 487.
Catechumen, 396.
Chrysostom, 409.
Cœlestius, 430.
Common Prayer. *See Liturgy.*
Catechising, 436.
Clovis, 453.

Columban, 480.
 Charlemagne, ii. 10. &c.
 Culdees, ii. 14.
 Claudius of Turin, ii. 17.
 Crusades, ii. 32. 35.
 Cathari, ii. 43.
 Celestine, 5. ii. 99.
 Cajetan, ii. 100.
 Cobham, ii. 124—42.
 Constance, Council of, ii. 150.
 Cajetan, ii. 249.
 Consubstantiation, ii. 317.
 Calvin, ii. 336.
 Cranmer, ii. 347. 359. 394, &c.
 Charles I., ii. 421.

D.

Divinity of Christ, 7. 8. 18. 112. 115. 136—148. 181. 184—5. 197—9. 200. 201. 209. 216. 218. 225. 229—30. 237—9. 240. 292. 307. 319. 326. 338. 352. 389. 395. 441. 485. ii. 4. 30—1. 62. 109.
 Deacons, 17—19. 258. 277. 286. 291. 296. 312. 314. 329. 335. 337. 363. 383. 396.
 Domitian, 105. 117.
 Docetæ, 121. 189.
 Depravity, 8. 9. 18. 20. 39. 68. 74. 124. 174—7. 206. 266. 403. 419. &c. 429. &c. ii. 15. 21. &c. 63. 87. 103. 219. 269. ii. 354. 390.
 Dionysius, 221.
 Demetrius, 249. 252.
 Dionysius of Alexandria, 298.
 Dioceses, Primitive, 330.
 Diocletian, 332.
 Donatus, 347.
 Doxology, 396.
 Donatists, 435.
 Denmark, ii. 31. 314.
 Dominic, ii. 98.
 Diet of Worms, ii. 285.
 Dodwell, ii. 441.

E.

Ephesus, 42—4. 123.
 Ebionites, 118. 122.
 Enodius, 129.
 Epaphroditus, 73.
 Ephraim the Syrian, 405.
 Epiphanius, 453. ii. 11.
 Eutyches, 458. 484.
 Ethelbert, 470.
 Edwin, 476.
 Erasmus, ii. 234. 321.
 Eckius, ii. 261—6.
 England, ii. 354. &c.
 Edward VI., ii. 373.
 Elizabeth, ii. 401.

F.
 Frumentius, 368—9.
 Faustus, 423.
 Franciscans, ii. 88.
 Faith. *See Justification by*
 Francis, ii. 97.
 Friars, ii. 101.
 Fanatics, ii. 309.
 Friends, ii. 435.

G.

Government of the Church, 11. 13. 17. 31. 33. 104. 109. 114. 117. 129. 133—5. 136—148. 151. 158. 168. 187. 209. 218. 221. 226. 247. 255. 264—5. 273—5. 287. 295—6. 309. 314. 317. 325. 329—31. 337. 349. 443. ii. 313. 340. 374.
 Gnostics, 121.
 Gallio, 40.
 Gratian, 389.
 Games of Chance, 418.
 Germanus, 448.
 Gregory I., 462.
 Great Britain, 468. 475.
 Grossteste, Robert, ii. 100—110.
 Gustavus Vasa, ii. 315.
 George Duke, ii. 326.
 Gardiner, ii. 389. 391.
 Grindall, ii. 408. &c.

H.

Hosius of Corduba, 361. 364.
 Huss, John, ii. 150—196.
 Herman Tast, ii. 314.
 Henry VIII., ii. 354.
 Homilies, ii. 373.
 Hooper, ii. 387.

I.

Ignatius, 129—148. 187.
 Irenæus, 234.
 India, 246.
 Infant Baptism, 309. ii. 53. 377.
 Idolatry, ii. 6. 7. 10. 16.
 Images, ii. 7. 10.
 Inquisition, ii. 71.
 Indulgences, ii. 215—25.
 Independents, ii. 429.
 Infidels, ii. 468—9.

J.

Jesus, 7—12.
 James, 24. 77.
 James, Bishop of Jerusalem, 76—80.
 Jerusalem, its Destruction, 85—102.
 Josephus, 97.
 John, 115—19.
 Justification by Faith, 12. 15. 29. 30.

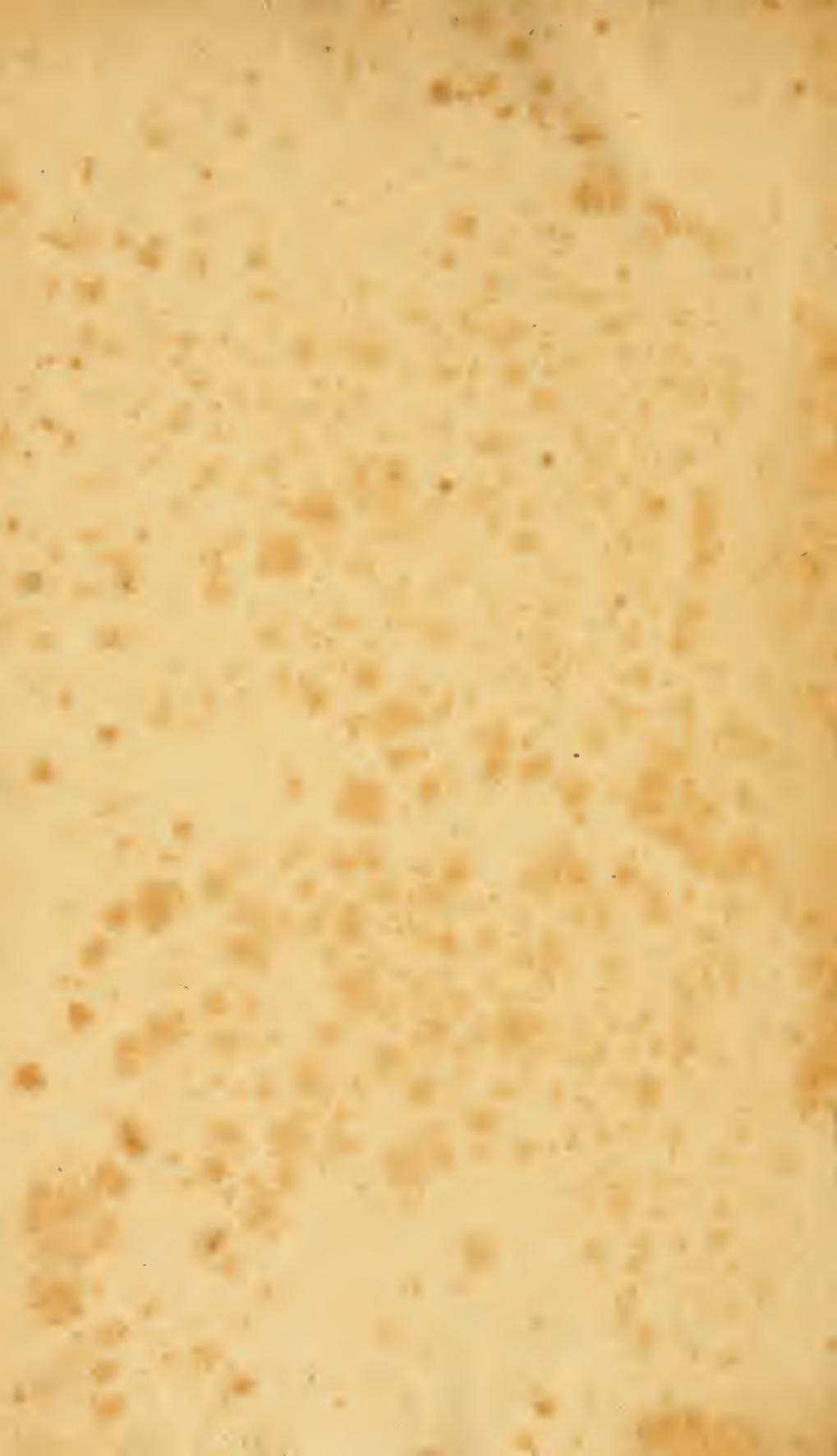
32. 35. 42. 136—49. 168—182. 258.
327. 427. ii. 5. 25—6. 30. 41. 59. 62.
90. 109. 232. 254. 271. 345.
- Justin Martyr, 160. 178.
Jerusalem, Gentile Church of, 297.
Julian, 373—8.
Jovian, 378.
Jerom, 446.
Justinian, 461.
John of Gaunt, ii. 119.
Jerome of Prague, ii. 150—196.
James I., ii. 419.
Jacobites, ii. 441.
Jesuits, ii. 452.
- Kilian, 481.
Knox, ii. 425.
- Luke, 63.
Linus, 104.
Laying on of Hands, 17. 19. 25. 33. 42.
Lord's Supper, 46. 169. 170.
Lord's Day, 46. 170.
Liturgy, 169. 396. 473. ii. 29. 346. 375.
378. 425. 439.
Lyons, 201.
Laodicean Council, 381.
Litany, 474.
Lanfranc, ii. 29.
Lollards, ii. 124—150.
Luther, ii. 208. &c.
Leo X., ii. 216.
Latimer, ii. 386. 396.
Lambeth Articles, ii. 416.
Laud, ii. 422.
- Marc, 26. 113.
Marcion, 163. 188.
Marcus Antoninus, 172.
Melito, 218.
Miltiades, 220.
Montanus, 232.
Manes, 327.
Maximin, Death of, 344.
Macedonius, 367.
Missionaries, 368.
Monasticism, 371. ii. 364.
Manichees, 421.
Mahomet, 485.
Miltitz, ii. 272.
Munzer, ii. 318.
Melanchthon. *See Luther*, ii. 327.
Monasteries, ii. 364. 366.
Mary, Queen, ii. 383.
Moravians, ii. 446.
Missions, ii. 457.
Methodists, ii. 461.
- Nerva, 125.
Narcissus, 254—5.
Novatus, 293.
Novatian, 294.
Nicene Council, 349.
Nestorius, 458. 484.
Nicene Council, 2d, ii. 10.
Norway, ii. 32.
Nag's Head Fable, ii. 406.
Nantz, Edict Revoked, ii. 444.
- Origen, 247—54. 298.
Orange, Council at, 461.
Oswald, 479.
- Peter, 24. 80—85.
Paul, 26—9. 38. 41—76.
Poppea, 72.
Philemon, 72.
Persecutions, Roman, 74. 105. 128.
142. 150. 154. 200. 248. 255—262.
272. 299. &c.
Persecutions, Papal. *See Rome, Papal.*
Parthia, 114.
Polycarp, 115. 131. 187. 239.
Patmos, 116.
Pliny, 126.
Prayer, 24. 25. 34. 168. 242—3. 401.
442. ii. 62.
Paphos, 26.
Parental Instruction, 32.
Persia, 457.
Pella, 103.
Pothinus, 208.
Praxeas, 241.
Pantænus, 245—7.
Presbyters, 291. 296. 314. 329. 383.
Poor, 321.
Paul of Samosata, 324.
Predestination, ii. 328. 351. 377.
Pilate, 87.
Priscillian, 391.
Pelagianism, 429.
Patrick, 451.
Phocas, 482.
Pelagius of Spain, ii. 5.
Pepin, ii. 9.
Paulicians, ii. 15. 45.
Peter the Hermit, ii. 33.
Pool, ii. 387.
Parker, ii. 406.
Puritans, ii. 417. 428. 433. 454.
Protestant Episcopal Church, ii. 465.
- Quadratus, 153.

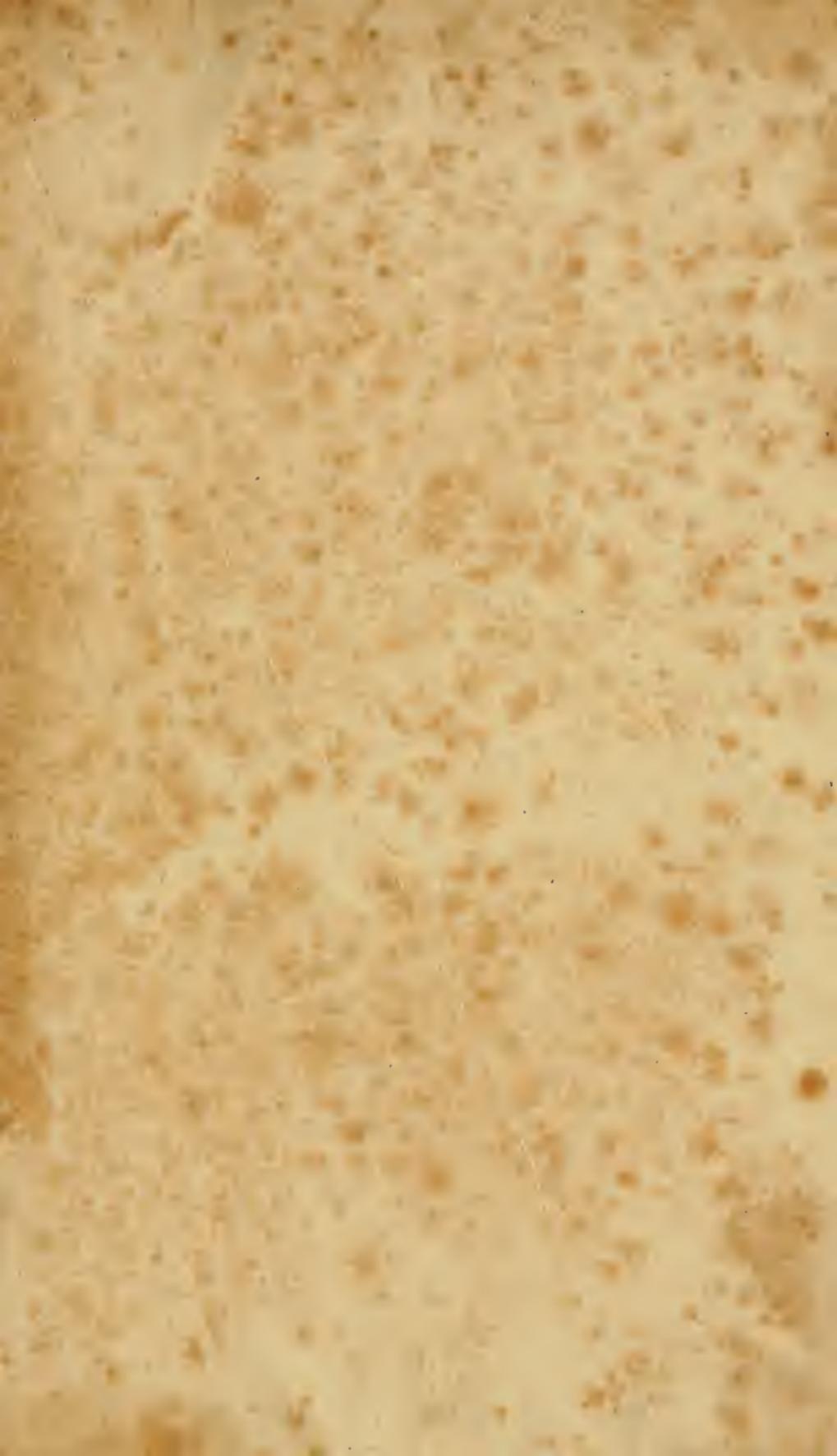
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|---|--|
| <p>R.</p> <p>Rome, Heathen, 68—76.
 Rome, 273—6. 287.
 Readers, 287.
 Rome, as Antichrist, 459. ii. 6. 7. &c.
 &c. through great part of the Second
 Volume.
 Ravenna, ii. 9.
 Rome, Papal, its Persecutions, ii. 15.
 through great part of the Second
 Volume.
 Russia, ii. 19.
 Ridley, ii. 378. 386. 391.
 Rogers, ii. 387.</p> <p>S.</p> <p>Spirit, Influences of, 13—16. 23. 112.
 136. 202—3. 220. 236—7. 267—8.
 Saul, 20—21.
 Simeon, 104. 150.
 Schism, 108.
 Simon Magus, 19.
 Syrian Christians, 114. ii. 474.
 Scythia, 114.
 Stachys, 114.
 Sadducees, 15, 16.
 Smyrna, 150, 187.
 Severus, 248. 262.
 Sabellianism, 323.
 Socinianism, 326.
 Saints, Worship of, ii. 16.
 Sweden, ii. 20.
 Simon of Montfort, ii. 75—6.
 Switzerland, ii. 331.
 Servetus, ii. 349.
 Six Articles, ii. 368.
 Scotland, ii. 368.
 Sunday Sports, ii. 424.
 Societies in England, ii. 449.
 Societies, ii. 471.</p> | <p>Sunday Schools, ii. 473.</p> <p>T.</p> <p>Timothy, 32. 45. 75.
 Tacitus, 74.
 Titus, 45. 90.
 Thomas, 114.
 Trajan, 125—8. 130. 151.
 Tertullian, 240.
 Trinity. <i>See Divinity of Christ, and
 Spirit also</i>, 240. 441.
 Theatres, 310.
 Theodosius, 398.
 Trosle, Council of, ii. 22.
 Theophylact, ii. 25.
 Transubstantiation, ii. 16. 48. 131.
 Tracts, ii. 473.
 Tetzel, ii. 218.
 Taylor, Dr., ii. 389.</p> <p>U.</p> <p>Urban, ii. 33—5.</p> <p>V.</p> <p>Vienna, 201.
 Victor, 231.
 Valentinian and Valens, 381.</p> <p>W.</p> <p>Waldo, ii. 48—52.
 Waldenses, ii. 48—87.
 Wickliff, ii. 113—123.
 Wesselus, ii. 204.
 Wolsey, ii. 354.
 Whitgift, ii. 413.
 Westminster Assembly, ii. 429.</p> <p>Z.</p> <p>Zisca, ii. 188.
 Zwingle, ii. 331.</p> |
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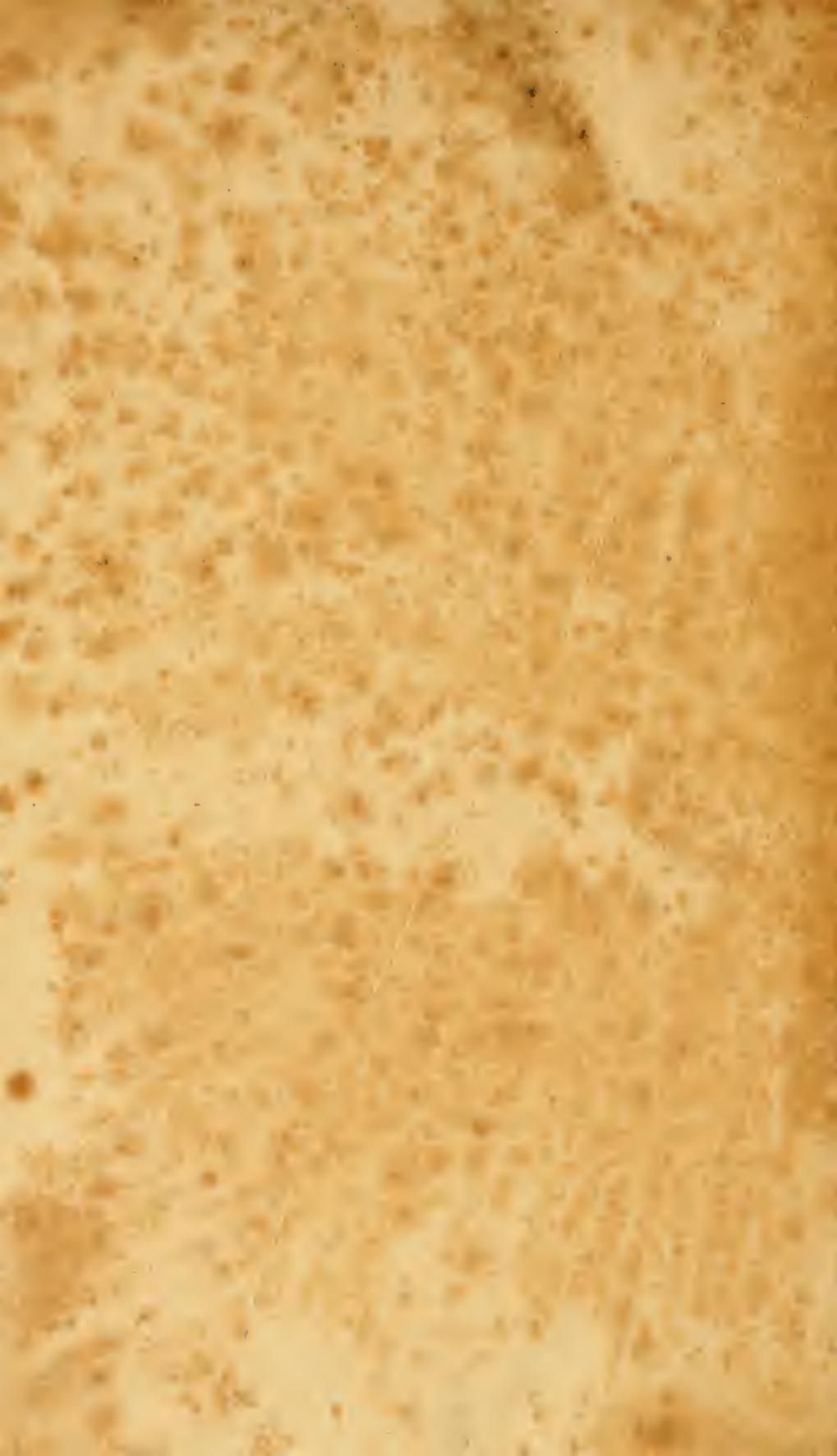


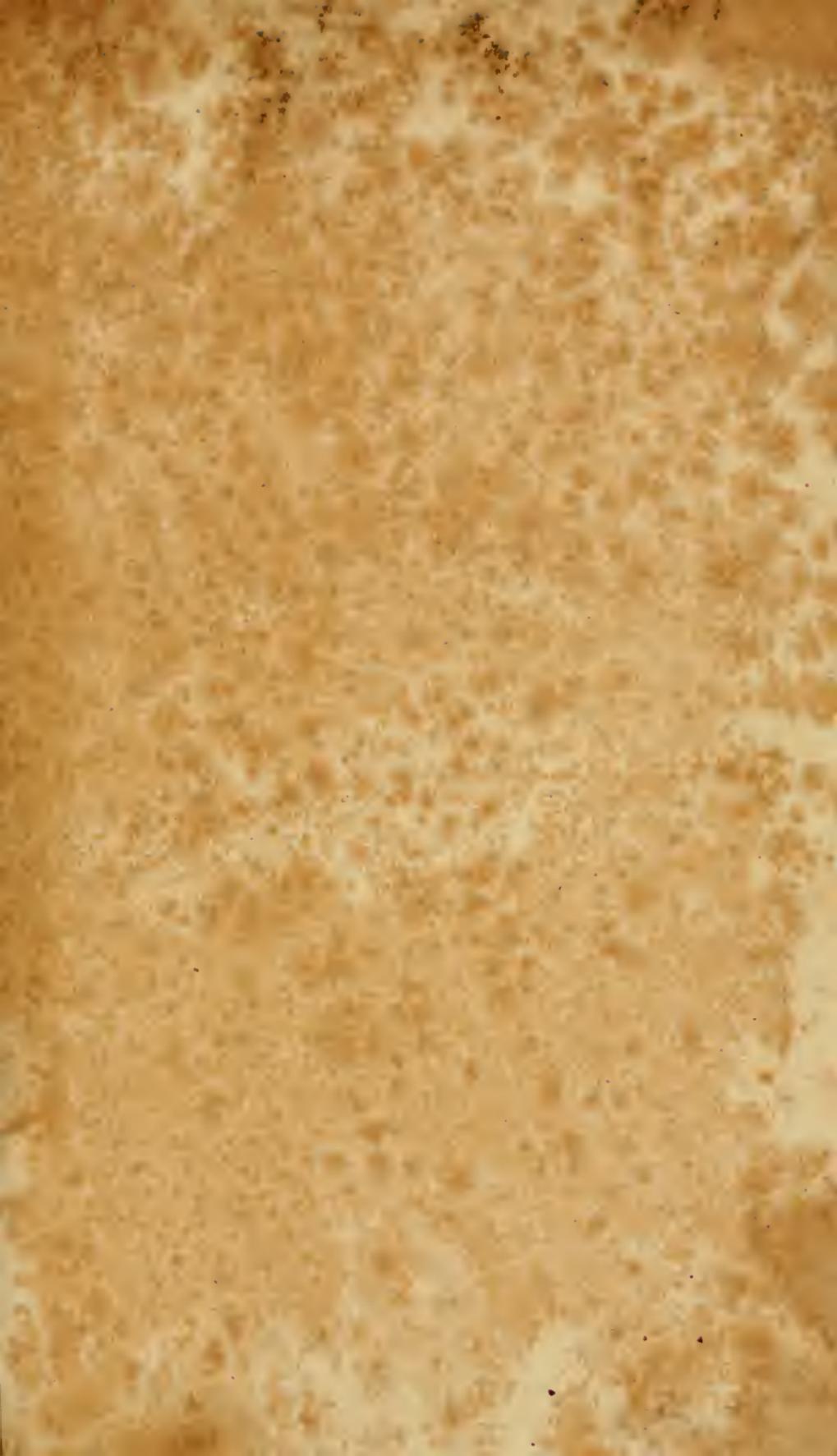


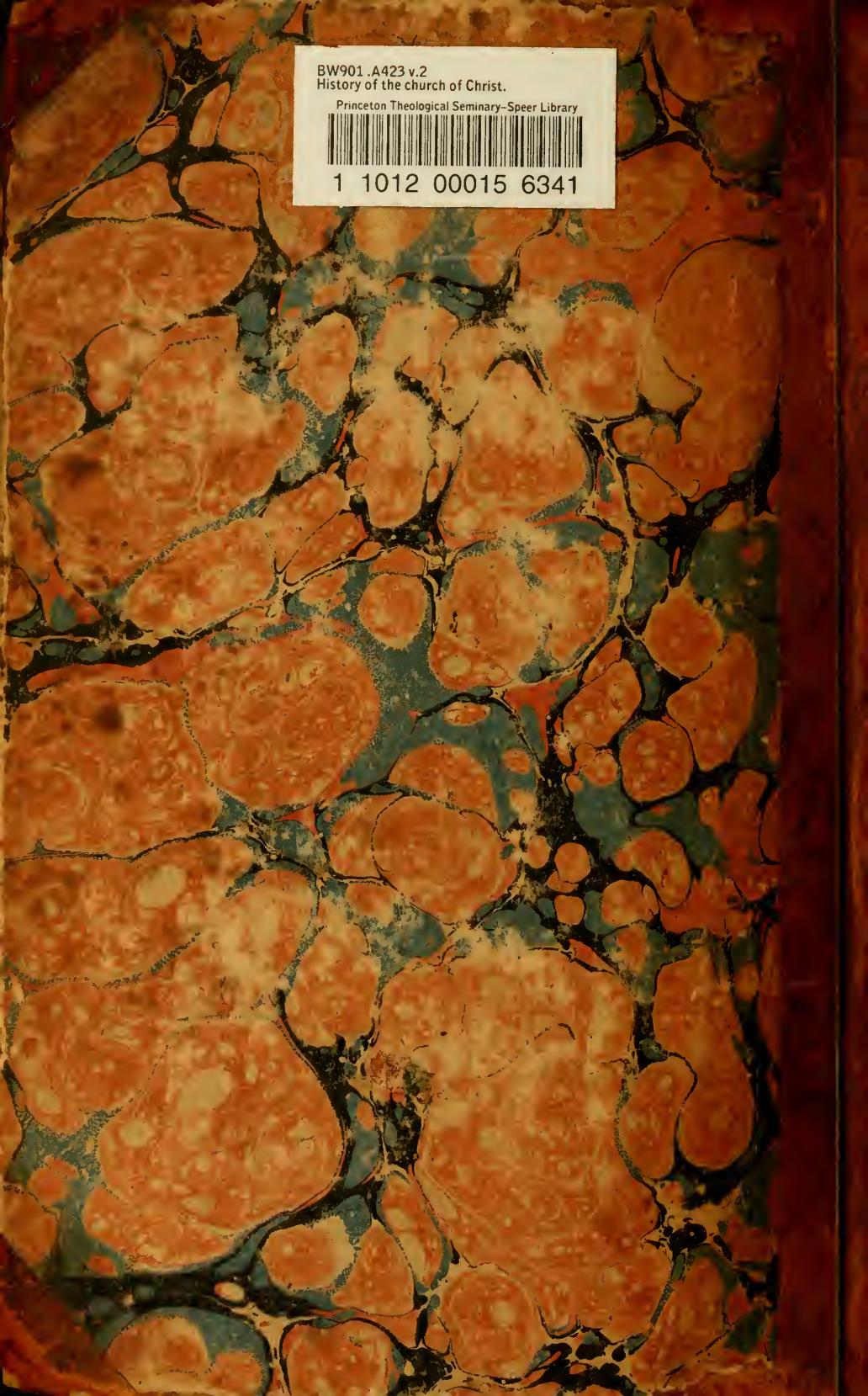












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