

Book Eighth.

History of Protestantism in Switzerland from A.D. 1516 to its Establishment at Zurich, 1525.

Chapter I.

Switzerland—The Country and the People.

The Reformation dawns first in England—Wicliffe—Luther—His No—What it Implied—Uprising of Conscience—Who shall Rule, Power or Conscience?—Contemporaneous Appearance of the Reformers—Switzerland—Variety and Grandeur of its Scenery—Its History—Bravery and Patriotism of its People—A New Liberty approaches—Will the Swiss Welcome it?—Yes—An Asylum for the Reformation—Decline in Germany—Revival in Switzerland.

In following the progress of the recovered Gospel over Christendom in the morning of the sixteenth century, our steps now lead us to Switzerland. In England first broke the dawn of that blessed day. Foremost in that race of mighty men and saviours by whose instrumentality it pleased God to deliver Christendom from the thralldom into which the centuries had seen it fall, to ignorance and superstition, stands Wicliffe. His appearance was the pledge that after him would come others, endowed with equal, and it might be with greater gifts, to carry forward the same great mission of emancipation. The success which followed his preaching gave assurance that that Divine Influence which had wrought so mightily in olden time, and chased the night of Paganism from so many realms, overturning its altars, and laying in the dust the powerful thrones that upheld it, would yet again be unloosed, and would display its undying vitality and unimpaired strength in dispelling the second night which had gathered over the world, and overturning the new altars which had been erected upon the ruins of the Pagan ones.

But a considerable interval divided Wicliffe from his great successors. The day seemed to tarry, the hopes of those who looked for “redemption” were tried by a second delay. That Arm which had “cut the bars” of the Pagan house of bondage seemed “shortened,” so that it could not unlock the gates of the yet more doleful prison of the Papacy. Even in England and Bohemia, to which the Light was restricted, so far from continuing to brighten and send forth its rays to illuminate the skies of other countries, it seemed to be again fading away into night. No second Wicliffe had risen up; the grandeur, the power, and the corruption of Rome had reached a loftier height than ever—when suddenly a greater than Wicliffe stepped upon the stage. Not greater in himself, for Wicliffe sent his glance deeper down, and cast it wider around on the field of truth, than perhaps even Luther. It seemed in Wicliffe as if one of the theological giants of the early days of the Christian Church had suddenly appeared among the puny divines of the fourteenth century, occupied with their little projects of the reformation of the Church “in its head and members,” and astonished them by throwing down amongst them his plan of reformation according to the Word of God. But Luther was greater than Wicliffe, in that borne up on his shield he seemed not only of loftier stature than other men, but loftier than

even the proto-Reformer. Wicliffe and the Lollards had left behind them a world so far made ready for the Reformers of the sixteenth century, and the efforts of Luther and his fellow-labourers therefore told with sudden and prodigious effect. Now broke forth the day. In the course of little more than three years, the half of Christendom had welcomed the Gospel, and was beginning to be bathed in its splendour.

We have already traced the progress of the Protestant light in Germany, from the year 1517 to its first culmination in 1521—from the strokes of the monk's hammer on the door of the castle-church at Wittemberg, in presence of the crowd of pilgrims assembled on All Souls' Eve, to his NO thundered forth in the Diet of Worms, before the throne of the Emperor Charles V. That NO sounded the knell of an ancient slavery; it proclaimed unmistakably that the *Spiritual* had at last made good its footing in presence of the *Material*; that conscience would no longer bow down before empire; and that a power whose rights had long been proscribed had at last burst its bonds, and would wrestle with principalities and thrones for the sceptre of the world. The opposing powers well knew that all this terrible significance lay couched in Luther's one short sentence, "*I cannot retract.*" It was the voice of a new age, saying, I cannot re-pass the boundary across which I have come. I am the heir of the future; the nations are my heritage; I must fulfil my appointed task of leading them to liberty, and woe to those who shall oppose me in the execution of my mission! Ye emperors, ye kings, ye princes and judges of the earth, "be wise." If you co-operate with me, your recompense will be thrones more stable, and realms more flourishing. But if not—my work must be done nevertheless; but alas! for the opposers; nor throne, nor realm, nor name shall be left them.

One thing has struck all who have studied, with minds at once intelligent and reverent, the era of which we speak, and that is the contemporaneous appearance of so many men of great character and sublimest intellect at this epoch. No other age can show such a galaxy of illustrious names. The nearest approach to it in history is perhaps the well-known famous half-century in Greece. Before the appearance of Christ the Greek intellect burst out all at once in dazzling splendour, and by its achievements in all departments of human effort shed a glory over the age and country. Most students of history have seen in this wondrous blossoming of the Greek genius a preparation of the world, by the quickening of its mind and the widening of its horizon, for the advent of Christianity. We find this phenomenon repeated, but on a larger scale, in Christendom at the opening of the sixteenth century.

One of the first to mark this was Ruchat, the eloquent historian of the Swiss Reformation. "It came to pass," says he, "that God raised up, at this time, in almost all the countries of Europe, Italy not excepted, a number of learned, pious, and enlightened men, animated with a great zeal for the glory of God and the good of the Church. These illustrious men arose all at once, as if by one accord, against the prevailing errors, without however having concerted together; and by their constancy and their firmness, accompanied by the blessing from on high, they happily succeeded in different places in rescuing the torch of the Gospel from under the bushel that had hidden its light, and by means of it effected the reformation of the Church; and as God gave, at least in part, this

grace to different nations, such as the French, English, and Germans, he granted the same to the Swiss nation: happy if they had all profited by it.”¹

The country on the threshold of which we now stand, and the eventful story of whose reformation we are to trace, is in many respects a remarkable one. Nature has selected it as the chosen field for the display of her wonders. Here beauty and terror, softness and ruggedness, the most exquisite loveliness and stern, savage, appalling sublimity lie folded up together, and blend into one panorama of stupendous and dazzling magnificence. Here is the little flower gemming the meadow, and yonder on the mountain’s side is the tall, dark, silent fir-tree. Here is the crystal rivulet, gladdening the vale through which it flows, and yonder is the majestic lake, spread out amid the hushed mountains, reflecting from its mirror-like bosom the rock that nods over its strand, and the white peak which from afar looks down upon it out of mid-heaven. Here is the rifted gorge across which savage rocks fling their black shadows, making it almost night at noon-day ; here, too, the glacier, like a great white ocean, hangs its billows on the mountain’s brow; and high above all, the crowning glory in this scene of physical splendours, is some giant of the Alps, bearing on his head the snows of a thousand winters, and waiting for the morning sun to enkindle them with his light, and fill the firmament with their splendour.

The politics of Switzerland are nearly as romantic as its landscape. They exhibit the same blending of the homely and the heroic. Its people, simple, frugal, temperate, and hardy, have yet the faculty of kindling into enthusiasm, and some of the most chivalric feats that illustrate the annals of modern war have been enacted on the soil of this land. Their mountains, which expose them to the fury of the tempest, to the violence of the torrent, and the dangers of the avalanche, have taught them self-denial, and schooled them into daring. Nor have their souls remained untempered by the grandeurs amid which they daily move, as witness, on proper occasions, their devotion at the altar, and their heroism on the battle-field. Passionately fond of their country, they have ever shown themselves ready, at the call of patriotism, to rush to the battlefield, and contend against the most tremendous odds. From tending their herds and flocks on those breezy pasture-lands that skirt the eternal snows, the first summons has brought them down into the plain to do battle for the freedom handed down to them from their fathers. Peaceful shepherds have been suddenly transformed into dauntless warriors, and the mail-clad phalanxes of the invader have gone down before the impetuosity of their onset, his spearmen have reeled beneath the battle axes and arrows of the mountaineers, and both Austria and France have often had cause to repent having incautiously roused the Swiss lion from his slumbers.

But now a new age had come, in which deeper feelings were to stir the souls of the Swiss, and kindle them into a holier enthusiasm. A higher liberty than that for which their fathers had shed their blood on the battle-fields of the past was approaching their land. What reception will they give it? Will the men who never declined the summons to arms, sit still when the trumpet calls them to this nobler warfare? Will the yoke on the conscience gall them less than that which they felt to be so grievous though it pressed only on the body? No! the Swiss will nobly respond to the call now to be addressed to them.

¹ *Histoire de la Réformation de la Suisse*. Par Abraham Ruchat, Ministre du Saint Évangile et Professeur en Belles Lettres dans l’Académie du Lausanne. Vol. i., p. 70. Lausanne, 1835.

They were to see by the light of that early dawn that Austria had not been their greatest oppressor: that Rome had succeeded in imposing upon them a yoke more grievous by far than any the House of Hapsburg had put upon their fathers. Had they fought and bled to rend the lighter yoke, and were they meekly to bear the heavier? Its iron was entering the soul. No! they had been the bond-slaves of a foreign priest too long. This hour should be the last of their vassalage. And in no country did Protestantism find warriors more energetic, of combatants more successful, than the champions that Switzerland sent forth.

Not only were the gates of this grand territory to be thrown open to the Reformation, but here in years to come Protestantism was to find its centre and head-quarters. When kings should be pressing it hard with their swords, and chasing it from the more open countries of Europe, it would retreat within this mountain-guarded land, and erecting its seat at the foot of its mighty bulwarks, it would continue from this asylum to speak to Christendom. The day would come when the light would wax dim in Germany, but the Reformation would retrim its lamp in Switzerland, and cause it to burn with a new brightness, and shed all around a purer splendour than ever was that of morning on its Alps. When the mighty voice that was now marshalling the Protestant host in Germany, and leading it on to victory, should cease to be heard; when Luther should descend into his grave, leaving no one behind him able to grasp his sceptre, or wield his sword; when furious tempests should be warring around Protestantism in France, and heavy clouds darkening the morning which had there opened so brightly; when Spain, after a noble effort to break her fetters and escape into the light, should be beaten down by the inquisition and the despot, and compelled to return to her old prison—there would stand up in Switzerland a great chief, who, pitching his pavilion amid its mountains, and surveying from this centre every part of the field, would set in order the battle a second time, and direct its movements till victory should crown the combatants.

Such is the interest of the land we are now approaching. Here mighty champions are to contend, here wise and learned doctors are to teach: but first let us briefly describe the condition in which we find it—the horrible night that has so long covered those lovely valleys and those majestic mountains, on which the first streaks of morning are now beginning to be discernible.

Chapter II.

Condition of Switzerland Prior to the Reformation.

Primitive and Mediaeval Christianity—The Latter Unlike the Former—Change in Church's Discipline—in her Clergy—in her Worship—State of Switzerland—Ignorance of the Bible—The Sacred Languages Unknown—Greek is Heresy—Decay of Schools—Decay of Theology—Distracted State of Society—All Things Conventionally Holy—Sale of Benefices—Swiss Livings held by Foreigners.

So changed was the Christianity of the Middle Ages from the Christianity of the primitive times, that it could not have been known to be the same Gospel. The crystal fountains amid the remote and solitary hills, and the foul and turbid river formed by their waters after stagnating in marshes, or receiving the pollution of the great cities past which they roll, are not more unlike than were the pure and simple Gospel as it issued at the beginning from its Divine source, and the Gospel exhibited to the world after the traditions and corruptions of men had been incorporated with it. The government of the Church, so easy and sweet in the first age, had grown into a veritable tyranny. The faithful pastors who fed the flock with knowledge and truth, watching with care lest harm should come to the fold, had given place to shepherds who slumbered at their post, or awoke up only to eat the fat and clothe them with the wool. The simple and spiritual worship of the first age had, by the fifth, been changed into a ceremonial, which Augustine complained was "less tolerable than the yoke under which the Jews formerly groaned."¹ The Christian churches of that day were but little distinguishable from the pagan temples of a former era; and Jehovah was adored by the same ceremonies and rites by which the heathen had expressed their reverence for their deities. In truth, the throne of the Eternal was obscured by the crowd of divinities placed around it, and the one great object of worship was forgotten in the distraction caused by the many competitors—angels, saints, and images—for the homage due to him alone. It was to no effect, one would think, to pull down the pagan temple and demolish the altar of the heathen god, seeing they were to be replaced with fanes as truly superstitious, and images as grossly idolatrous. So early as the fourth century, St. Bishop of Tours, found in his diocese an altar which one of his predecessors had set up in honour of a brigand, who was worshipped as a martyr.²

The stream of corruption, swollen to such dimensions so early as the fifth century, flowed down with ever-augmenting volume to the fifteenth. Not a country in Christendom which the deluge did not overflow. Switzerland was visited with the fetid stream as well as other lands; and it will help us to estimate the mighty blessing which the Reformation conferred on the world, to take a few examples of the darkness in which this country was plunged before that epoch.

The ignorance of the age extended to all classes and to every department of human knowledge. The sciences and the learned languages were alike unknown; political and theological knowledge were equally neglected. "To be able to read a little Greek," says the celebrated Claude d'Espenes, speaking of that time, "was to render one's self suspected of

¹ Augustin., *Epist.* cxix., *Ad Januarium.*

² Sulp. Severus, *Vit. Martini*, cap. 11; *apud* Ruchat, i. 17.

heresy; to possess a knowledge of Hebrew, was almost to be a heretic outright.”³ The schools destined for the instruction of youth contained nothing that was fitted to humanise, and sent forth barbarians rather than scholars. It was a common saying in those days, “The more skilful a grammarian, the worse a theologian.” To be a sound divine it was necessary to eschew letters; and verily the clerks of those days ran little risk of spoiling their theology and lowering their reputation by the contamination of learning. For more than four hundred years the theologians knew the Bible only through the Latin version, commonly styled the *Vulgate*, being absolutely ignorant of the original tongues.⁴ Zwingle, the Reformer of Zurich, drew upon himself the suspicions of certain priests as a heretic, because he diligently compared the original Hebrew of the Old Testament with this version. And Rodolf Am-Ruhel, otherwise Colinus, Professor of Greek at Zurich, tells us that he was on one occasion in great danger from having in his possession certain Greek books, a thing that was accounted an indubitable mark of heresy. He was Canon of Munster, in Aargau, in the year 1523, when the magistrates of Lucerne sent certain priests to visit his house. Discovering the obnoxious volumes, and judging them to be Greek—from the character, we presume, for no respectable, curé would in those days have any nearer acquaintance with the tongue of Demosthenes—“This,” they exclaimed, “is Lutheranism! this is heresy! Greek and heresy—it is the same thing!”⁵

A priest of the Grisons, at a public disputation on religion, held at Ilanz about the year 1526, loudly bewailed that ever the learned languages had entered Helvetia. “If,” said he, “Hebrew and Greek had never been heard of in Switzerland, what a happy country! what a peaceful state! but now, alas! here they are, and see what a torrent of errors and heresies have rushed in after them.”⁶ At that time there was only one academy in all Switzerland, namely, at Basle; nor had it existed longer than fifty years, having been founded by Pope Pius II. (Aeneas Sylvius) in the middle of the fifteenth century. There were numerous colleges of canons, it is true, and convents of men, richly endowed, and meant in part to be nurseries of scholars and theologians, but these establishments had now become nothing better than retreats of epicurism, and nests of ignorance. In particular the Abbey of St. Gall, formerly a renowned school of learning, to which the sons of princes and great lords were sent to be taught, and which in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, had sent forth many learned men, had by this time fallen into inefficiency, and indeed into barbarism. John Schmidt, or Faber, vicar of the Bishop of Constance, and a noted polemic of the day, as well as a great enemy of the Reformation and the Reformers, publicly avowed, in a dispute he had with Zwingle, that he knew just a little Greek, but knew nothing whatever of Hebrew.⁷ It need not surprise us that the common priests were so illiterate, when even the Popes themselves, the princes of the Church, were hardly more learned. A Roman Catholic author has candidly confessed that “there have been many Popes so ignorant that they knew nothing at all of grammar.”⁸

³ *Commentar.*, in 1 *Epist. Timot.*, cap. 3.

⁴ Melchior Canus, *Loc. Com.*, p. 59.

⁵ Hottinger, tom. iii., p. 125; *apud* Ruchat.

⁶ *Ibid.*, tom. iii., pp. 285, 286.

⁷ Zwingle, *Oper.*, tom. ii., p. 613.

⁸ Alphons. de Castro *adv. Haeres*, lib. i., cap. 4; *apud* Ruchat, tom. i., p. 21.

As regards theology, the divines of those days aimed only at becoming adepts in the scholastic philosophy. They knew but one book in the world, to them the sum of all knowledge, the fountainhead of all truth, the “Sentences” of Peter Lombard. While the Bible lay beside them unopened, the pages of Peter Lombard were diligently studied. If they wished to alternate their reading they turned, not to Scripture, but to the writings of Scotus or Thomas Aquinas. These authors were their lifelong study; to sit at the feet of Isaiah, or David, or John, to seek the knowledge of salvation at the pure sources of truth, was never thought of by them. Their great authority was Aristotle, not St. Paul. In Switzerland there were doctors of divinity who had never read the Holy Scriptures; there were priests and curés who had never seen a Bible all their days.⁹ In the year 1527 the magistrates of Bern wrote to Sebastien de Mont-Faulcon, the last Bishop of Lausanne, saying that a conference was to be held in their city, on religion, at which all points were to be decided by an appeal to Sacred Scripture, and requesting him to come himself, or at least send some of his theologians, to maintain their side of the question. Alas! the perplexity of the good bishop. “I have no person,” wrote he to the lords of Bern, “sufficiently versed in Holy Scripture to assist at such a dispute.” This recalls a yet more ancient fact of a similar kind. In A.D. 680 the Emperor Constantine Pogonatus summoned a General Council (the sixth) to be held in his capital in Barbary. The Pope of the day, Agatho, wrote to Constantine, excusing the non-attendance of the Italian bishops, on the score “that he could not find in all Italy a single ecclesiastic sufficiently acquainted with the inspired Oracles to send to the Council.”¹⁰ But if this century had few copies of the Word of Life, it had armies of monks; it had an astoundingly long list of saints, to whose honour every day new shrines were erected; and it had churches, to which the splendour of their architecture and the pomp of their ceremonies gave an imposing magnificence, while the bull of Boniface V. took care that they should not want frequenters, for in this century was passed the infamous law which made the churches places of refuge for malefactors of every description.

The few who studied the Scriptures were contemned as ignoble souls who were content to plod along on the humblest road, and who lacked the ambition to climb to the sublimer heights of knowledge. “Bachelor” was the highest distinction to which they could attain, whereas the study of the “Sentences” opened to others the path to the coveted honour of “Doctor of Divinity.” The priests had succeeded in making it be believed that the study of the Bible was necessary neither for the defence of the Church, nor for the salvation of her individual members, and that for both ends Tradition sufficed. “In what peace and concord would men have lived,” said the Vicar of Constance, “if the Gospel had never been heard of in the world!”¹¹ The great Teacher has said that God must be worshipped “in spirit and in truth:” not in “spirit” only, but in “truth,” even that which God has revealed. Consequently when that “truth” was hidden, worship became impossible. Worship after this was simply masquerade. The priest stood up before the people to make certain magical signs with his fingers, or to mutter unintelligible words between his teeth, or to vociferate at the utmost pitch of his voice. Of a like character

⁹ Hottinger; *apud* Ruchat, tom. i., p. 22.

¹⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 22. Mosheim, cent. 7, pt. ii., chap. 5.

¹¹ Zwing., *Oper.*, tom. ii., p. 622.

were the religious acts enjoined on the people. Justice, mercy, humility, and the other virtues of early times were of no value. All holiness lay in prostrating one's self before an image, adoring a relic, purchasing an indulgence, performing a pilgrimage, or paying one's tithes. This was the devotion, these were the graces that lent their glory to the ages in which the Roman faith was in the ascendant. The baron could not ride out till he had donned his coat of mail, lest he should be assailed by his neighbour baron: the peasant tilled the earth, or herded his oxen, with the collar of his master round his neck: the merchant could not pass from fair to fair, but at the risk of being plundered: the robber and the murderer waylaid the passenger who travelled without an escort, and the blood of man was continually flowing in private quarrels, and on the battle-field; but the times, doubtless, were eminently holy, for all around wherever one looked one beheld the symbols of devotion—crosses, pardons, privileged shrines, images, relics, aves, cows, girdles, and palmer-staffs, and all the machinery which the “religion” of the times had invented to make all things holy—earth, air, and water—everything, in short, save the soul of man. Polydore Virgil, an Italian, and a good Catholic, wishing to pay a compliment to the piety of those of whom he was speaking, said, “they had more confidence in their images than in Jesus Christ himself, whom the image represents.”¹²

Within the “Church” there was seen only a scramble for temporalities; such as might be seen in a city abandoned to pillage, where each strives to appropriate the largest share of the spoil. The ecclesiastical benefices were put up to auction, in effect, and knocked down to the highest bidder. This was found to be the easiest way of gathering the gold of Christendom, and pouring it into the great treasury at Rome—that treasury into which, like another sea, flowed all the rivers of the earth, and yet like the sea it never was full. Some of the Popes tried to reduce the scandal, but the custom was too deeply rooted to yield to even their authority. Martin V., in concert with the Council of Constance, enacted a perpetual constitution, which declared all simoniacs, whether open or secret, excommunicated. His successor Eugenius and the Council of Basle ratified this constitution. It is a fact, nevertheless, that during the Pontificate of Pope Martin the sale of benefices continued to flourish.¹³ Finding they could not suppress the practice, the Popes evidently thought that their next best course was to profit by it. The rights of the chapters and patrons were abolished, and bands of needy priests were seen crossing the Alps, with Papal briefs in their hands, demanding admission into vacant benefices. From all parts of Switzerland came loud complaints that the churches had been invaded by strangers. Of the numerous body of canons attached to the cathedral church of Geneva, in 1527, one only was a native, all the rest were foreigners.¹⁴

¹² *De Invent. Rer.*, lib. vi. 13: “Imaginibus magis fidunt, quam Christo ipsi;” *apud* Ruchat, tom. i., p. 24.

¹³ The sale of benefices was as ordinary an affair, says Ruchat (tom. i., p. 26), “que celle des cochons au marché”—as that of swine in a market.

¹⁴ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 26.

Chapter III.

Corruption of the Swiss Church.

The Government of the Pope—How the Shepherd Fed his Sheep—Texts from Aquinas and Aristotle—Preachers and their Sermons—Council of Moudon and the Vicar—Canons of Neufchatel—Passion-plays—Excommunication employed against Debtors—Invasion of the Magistrates' Jurisdiction—Lausanne—Beauty of its Site—Frightful Disorders of its Clergy—Geneva and other Swiss Towns—A Corrupt Church the greatest Scourge of the World—Cry for Reform—The Age turns away from the True Reform—A Cry that waxes Louder, and a Corruption that waxes Stronger.

Over the Churches of Switzerland, as over those of the rest of Europe, the Pope had established a tyranny. He built this usurpation on such make-believes as the “holy chair,” the “Vicar of Jesus Christ,” and the “infallibility” thence deduced. He regulated all things according to his pleasure. He forbade the people to read the Scriptures. He every day made new ordinances, to the destruction of the laws of God; and all priests, bishops not excepted, he bound to obey him by an oath of peculiar stringency. The devices were infinite—annats, reservations, tithes (double and treble), amulets, dispensations, pardons, rosaries, relics—by which provision was made whereby the humblest sheep, in the remotest corner of the vast fold of the Pope, might send yearly to Rome a money acknowledgment of the allegiance he owed to that great shepherd, whose seat was on the banks of the Tiber, but whose iron crook reached to the extremities of Christendom.

But was that shepherd equally alive to what he owed the flock? Was the instruction which he took care to provide them with wholesome and abundant? Is it to the pastures of the Word that he conducted them? The priests of those days had no Bible; how then could they communicate to others what they had not learned themselves? If they entered a pulpit, it was to rehearse a fable, to narrate a legend, or to repeat a stale jest; and they deemed their oratory amply repaid, if their audience gaped at the one and laughed at the other. If a text was announced, it was selected, not from Scripture, but from Scotus, or Thomas Aquinas, or the Moral Philosophy of Aristotle.¹ Could grapes grow on such a tree, or sweet waters issue from such a fountain?

But, in truth, few priests were so adventurous as to mount a pulpit, or attempt addressing a congregation. The most part were dumb. They left the duty of story-telling, or preaching, to the monks, and in particular to the Mendicants. “I must record,” says the historian Ruchat, “a fact to the honour of the Council of Moudon. Not a little displeased at seeing that the curé of the town was a dumb pastor, who left his parishioners without instruction, the Council, in November, 1535, ordered him to explain, at least to the common people, the Ten Commandments of the Law of God, every Sabbath, after the celebration of the office of the mass.”² Whether the curé’s theological acquirements enabled him to fulfil the Council’s injunction we do not know. He might have pleaded, as a set-off to his own indolence, a yet more scandalous neglect of duty to be witnessed not far off. At Neufchatel, so pleasantly situated at the foot of the Jura Alps, with its lake

¹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 27.

² *Arch. de Moud. Registr.*, apud Ruchat, tom. i., p. 27.

reflecting on its tranquil bosom the image of the vine-clad heights that environ it, was a college of canons. These ecclesiastics lived in grand style, for the foundation was rich, the air pleasant, and the wine good. But, says Ruchat, “it looked as if they were paid to keep silence, for, though they were many, there was not one of them all that could preach.”³

In those enlightened days, the ballad-singers and playwrights supplemented the deficiencies of the preachers. The Church held it dangerous to put into the hands of the people the vernacular Gospel, lest they should read in their own tongue of the wondrous birth at Bethlehem, and the not less wondrous death on Calvary, with all that lay between. But the Passion, and other Biblical events, were turned into comedies and dramas, and acted in public—with how much edification to the spectators, one may guess! In the year 1531, the Council of Moudon gave ten florins of Savoy to a company of tragedians, who played the “Passion” on Palm Sunday, and the “Resurrection” on Easter Monday.⁴ “If Luther had not come,” said a German abbé, calling to mind this and similar occurrences—“If Luther had not come, the Pope by this time would have persuaded men to feed themselves on dust.”

A raging greed, like a burning thirst, tormented the clergy, from their head downwards. Each several order became the scourge of the one beneath it. The inferior clergy, pillaged by the superior, as the superior by their Sovereign Priest at Rome, fleeced in their turn those under them. “Having bought,” says the historian of the Swiss Reformation, “the Church in gross, they sold it in detail.”⁵ Money, money was the mystic potency that set agoing and kept working the machine of Romanism. There were churches to be dedicated, cemeteries to be consecrated, bells to be baptised: all this must be paid for. There were infants to be christened, marriages to be blessed, and the dead to be buried: nothing of all this could be done without money. There were masses to be said for the repose of the soul; there were victims to be rescued from the raging flames of purgatory: it was vain to think of doing this without money. There was, moreover, the privilege of sepulture in the floor of the church—above all, near the altar where the dead man mouldered in ground pre-eminently holy, and the prayers offered for him were specially efficacious: that was worth a great sum, and a heavy price was charged for it. There were those who wished to eat flesh in Lent, or in forbidden times, and there were those who felt it burdensome to fast at any season: well, the Church had arranged to meet the wishes of both, only, as was reasonable, such accommodation must be paid for. All needed pardon: well, here it is—a plenary pardon; the pardon of all one’s sins up to the hour of one’s death—but first the price has to be paid down. Well, the price has been paid; the soul has taken its departure, fortified with a plenary absolution; but this has to be rendered yet more plenary by the payment of a supplemental sum—though why, we cannot well say, for now we touch the borders of a subject which is shrouded in mystery, and which no Romish theologian has attempted to make plain. In short, as said the poet Mantuan,⁶ the Church of Rome is an

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 29.

⁶ “Venilia Romae

Templa, Sacerdotes, Altaria, Sacra, Coronae,
Ignis, Thura, Preces, Coelum est venale, Deusque.”

“enormous market, stocked with all sorts of wares, and regulated by the same laws which govern all the other markets of the world. The man who comes to it with money may have everything; but, alas! for him who comes without money, he can have nothing.”

Every one knows how simple was the discipline of the early Church, and how spiritual the ends to which it was directed. The pastors of those days wielded it only to guard the doctrine of the Church from the corruption of error, and her communion from the contamination of scandalous persons. For far different ends was the Church's discipline employed in the fifteenth century in Switzerland, and other countries of Europe. One abuse of it, very common, was to employ it for compelling payment of debts. The creditor went to the bishop and took out an excommunication against his debtor. To the poor debtor this was a much more formidable affair than any civil process. The penalties reached the soul as well as the body, and extended beyond the grave. The magistrate had often to interfere, and forbid a practice which was not more an oppression of the citizen, than a manifest invasion of his own jurisdiction. We find the Council of Moudon, 7th July, 1532, forbidding a certain Antoine Jayet, chaplain and vicar of the church, to execute any such interdiction against any layman of the town and parish of Moudon, and promising to guarantee him against all consequences before his superiors. Nor was it long till the Council had to make good their guarantee; for the same month, the vicar having failed to execute one of these interdictions against a burgess of Moudon, the Council deputed two of their number to defend him before the chapter at Lausanne, which had summoned him before it to answer for his disobedience.⁷ A frequent consequence was that corpses remained unburied. If the husband died under excommunication for debt, the wife could not consign his body to the grave, nor the son that of the father. The excommunication must first be revoked.⁸

This prostitution of ecclesiastical discipline was of very common occurrence, and inflicted a grievance that was widely felt, not only at the epoch of the Reformation, but all through the fifteenth century. It was one of the many devices by which the Roman Church worked her way underneath the temporal power, and filched from it its rightful jurisdiction. Thrones, judgment-seats, in short, the whole machinery of civil government that Church left standing, but she contrived to place her own functionaries in these chairs of rule. She talked loftily of the kingly dignity, she styled princes the “anointed of heaven;” but she deprived their sceptres of all real power by the crosiers of her bishops. In the year 1480 we find the inhabitants of the Pays-de-Vaud complaining to Philibert, Duke of Savoy, their liege lord, that his subjects who had the misfortune to be in debt were made answerable, not in his courts, but to the officer of the Bishop of Lausanne, by whom they were visited with the penalty of excommunication. The duke did not take the matter so quietly as many others. He fulminated a decree, dated “Chambery, August 31st,” against this usurpation of his jurisdiction on the part of the bishop.⁹

(At Rome are on sale, temples, priests, altars, mitres, crowns, fire [or, excommunications], incense, prayers, heaven, and God himself.)

⁷ *Arch. de Moud. Registr.; apud Ruchat, i. 30.*

⁸ *Arch. de Moud. Registr.; apud Ruchat, i. 30.*

⁹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 31.

It remains only that we touch on what was the saddest part of the corruption of those melancholy days, the libertinism of the clergy. Its frightful excess makes the full and open exposure of the scandal impossible. Oftener than once did the Swiss cantons complain that their spiritual guides led worse lives than the laymen, and that, while they went about their church performances with an indevotion and coldness that shocked the pious, they gave themselves up to profanity, drunkenness, gluttony, and uncleanness.¹⁰

We shall let the men who then lived, and who witnessed this corruption, and suffered from it, describe it. In the year 1477, some time after the election of Benedict of Montferrand to the Bishopric of Lausanne, the Bernese came to him on the 2nd of August, to complain of their clergy, whose irregularities they were no longer able to bear. "We see clearly," said they, "that the clergy of our land are extremely debauched, and given up to impurity, and that they practise their wickedness openly, without any feeling of shame. They keep their concubines, they resort at night to houses of debauchery; and they do all this with so much boldness, that it is plain they have neither honour nor conscience, and are not restrained by the fear either of God or man. This afflicts us extremely. Our ancestors have often made police regulations to arrest these disorders, particularly when they saw that the ecclesiastical tribunals gave themselves no care about the matter." A similar complaint was lodged, in the year 1500, against the monks of the Priory of Grandson, by the lords of Bern and Friburg.¹¹ But to what avail? Despite these complaints and police regulations, the manners of the clergy remained unreformed: the salt had lost its savour, and wherewith could it be salted? The law of corruption is to become yet more corrupt. So would it assuredly have been in Switzerland—from its corruption, corruption only would have come in endless and ever grosser developments—had not Protestantism come to sow with beneficent hand, and quicken with heavenly breath, in the bosom of society, the seeds from which was to spring a new life. Men needed not laws to amend the old, but a power to create the new.

The examples we have given—and it is the violence of the malady that illustrates the power of the physician—are sufficiently deplorable; but sad as they are, they fade from view and pass from memory in presence of this one enormity, which an ancient document has handed down to us, and which we must glance at; for we shall only glance, not dwell, on the revolting spectacle. It will give us some idea of the frightful moral gulf in which Switzerland was sunk, and how inevitable would have been its ruin had not the arm of the Reformation plucked it from the abyss.

On the northern shore of Lake Lemman stands the city of Lausanne. Its site is one of the grandest in Switzerland. Crowned with its cathedral towers, the city looks down on the noble lake, which sweeps along in a mighty crescent of blue, from where Geneva on its mount of rock is dimly descried in the west, till it bathes the feet of the two mighty Alps, the Dent du Midi and the Dent de Morcele, which like twin pillars guard the entrance to the Rhone valley. Near it, on this side, the country is one continuous vineyard, from amid which hamlets and towns sweetly look out. Yonder, just dipping into the lake, is the donjon of Chillon, recalling the story of Bonnévard, to whose captivity within its walls the

¹⁰ "L'impïété, l'ivrognerie, la gourmandise et l'impureté, étaient parmi eux à leur comble; ils le portaient plus loin que les laïques." (Ruchat, tom. i., p. 32.)

¹¹ *Arch. de Bern. et MS. amp.*, p. 18; *apud* Ruchat, i. 33.

genius of Byron has given a wider than a merely Swiss fame. And beyond, on the other side of the lake, is Savoy, a rolling country, clothed with noble forests and rich pastures, and walled in on the far distance, on the southern horizon, by the white peaks of the Alps. But what a blot in this fair scene was Lausanne! We speak of the Lausanne of the sixteenth century. In the year 1533 the Lausanne preferred a list of twenty-three charges against their canons and priests, and another of seven articles against their bishop, Sebastien de Mont-Faulcon. Ruchat has given the document in full, article by article, but parts of it will not bear translation in these pages, so, giving those it concerns the benefit of this difficulty, we take the liberty of presenting it in an abridged form.¹²

The canons and priests, according to the statement of their parishioners, sometimes quarrelled when saying their offices, and fought in the church. The citizens who came to join in the cathedral service were, on occasion, treated by the canons to a fight, and stabbed with poignards. Certain ecclesiastics had slain two of the citizens in one day, but no reckoning had been held with them for the deed. The canons, especially, were notorious for their profligacy. Masked and disguised as soldiers, they sallied out into the streets at night, brandishing naked swords, to the terror, and at times the effusion of the blood, of those they encountered. They sometimes attacked the citizens in their own houses, and when threatened with ecclesiastical inflictions, denied the bishop's power and his right to pronounce excommunication upon them. Certain of them had been visited with excommunication, but they went on saying mass as before. In short, the clergy were just as bad as they could possibly be, and there was no crime of which many of them had not at one time or another been guilty.

The citizens further complained that, when the plague visited Lausanne,¹³ many had been suffered to die without confession and the Sacrament. The priests could hardly plead in excuse an excess of work, seeing they found time to gamble in the taverns, where they seasoned their talk with oaths, or cursed some unlucky throw of the dice. They revealed confessions, were adroit at the framing of testaments, and made false entries in their own favour. They were the governors of the hospital, and their management had resulted in a great impoverishment of its revenues.

Unhappily, Lausanne was not an exceptional case. It exhibits the picture of what Geneva and Neuchâtel and other towns of the Swiss Confederacy in those days were, although, we are glad to be able to say, not in so aggravated a degree. Geneva, to which, when touched by the Reformed light, there was to open a future so different, lay plunged at this moment in disorders, under its bishop, Pierre de la Baume, and stood next to Lausanne in the notoriety it had achieved by the degeneracy of its manners. But it is needless to particularise. All round that noble lake which, with its smiling banks and its magnificent mountain boundaries—here the Jura, there the White Alps—forms so grand a feature of Switzerland, were villages and towns, from which went up a cry not unlike that which ascended from the Cities of the Plain in early days.

¹² "Taken," says Ruchat, "from an original paper, which has been communicated to me by M. Olivier, châtelain of La Sarraz."

¹³ Two or three years before the occurrence of this plague, a pestilence had raged in Lausanne and its environs. (Ruchat.)

This is but a partial lifting of the veil. Even conceding that these are extreme cases, still, what a terrible conclusion do they force upon us as regards the moral state of Christendom! And when we think that these polluting streams flowed from the sanctuary, and the instrumentality ordained by God for the purification of society had become the main means of corrupting it, we are taught that, in some respects, the world has more to fear from the admixture of Christianity with error than the Church has. It was the world that first brought this corruption into the Church; but see what a terrible retaliation the Church now takes upon the world!

One does not wonder that there is heard on every side, at this era, an infinite number of voices, lay and cleric, calling for the Reformation of the Church. Yet the majority of those from whom these demands came were but groping in the dark. But God never leaves himself without a witness. A century before this, he had put before the world, in the ministry of Wicliffe, plain, clear, and demonstrated, the one only plan of a true Reformation. Putting his finger upon the page of the New Testament, Wicliffe said: Here it is; here is what you seek. You must forget the past thousand years; you must look at what is written on this page; you will find in this Book the Pattern of the Reformation of the Church; and not the Pattern only, but the Power by which that Reformation can alone be realised.

But the age would not look at it. Men said, Can any good thing come out of this Book? The Bible did well enough as the teacher of the Christians of the first century; but its maxims are no longer applicable, its models are antiquated. We of the fifteenth century require something more profound, and more suited to the times. They turned their eyes to Popes, to emperors, to councils. These, alas! were hills from which no help could come. And so for another century the cry for Reformation went on, gathering strength with every passing year, as did also the corruption. The two went on by equal stages, the cry waxing ever the louder and the corruption growing ever the stronger, till at length it was seen that there was no help in man. Then He who is mighty came down to deliver.

Chapter IV.

Zwingle's Birth and School-days.

One Leader in Germany—Many in Switzerland—Valley of Tockenburg—Village of Wildhaus—Zwingle's Birth—His Parentage—Swiss Shepherds—Winter Evenings—Traditions of Swiss Valour—Zwingle Listens—Sacred Traditions—Effect of Scenery in moulding Zwingle's Character—Sent to School at Wesen—Outstrips his Teacher—Removed to Basle—Binzli—Zwingle goes to Bern—Lupullus—The Dominicans—Zwingle narrowly escapes being a Monk.

There is an apt resemblance between the physical attributes of the land in which we are now arrived, and the eventful story of its religious awakening. Its great snow-clad hills are the first to catch the light of morning, and to announce the rising of the sun. They are seen burning like torches, while the mists and shadows still cover the plains and valleys at their feet. So of the moral dawn of the Swiss. Three hundred years ago, the cities of this land were among the first in Europe to kindle in the radiance of the Reformed faith, and to announce the new morning which was returning to the world. There suddenly burst upon the darkness a multitude of lights. In Germany there was but one pre-eminent centre, and one pre-eminently great leader. Luther towered up like some majestic Alp. Alone over all that land was seen his colossal figure. But in Switzerland one, and another, and a third stood up, and like Alpine peaks, catching the first rays, they shed a bright and pure effulgence not only upon their own cities and cantons, but over all Christendom.

In the south-east of Switzerland is the long and narrow valley of the Tockenburg. It is bounded by lofty mountains, which divide it on the north from the canton of Appenzell, and on the south from the Grisons. On the east it opens toward the Tyrolese Alps. Its high level does not permit the grain to ripen or the vine to be cultivated in it, but its rich pastures were the attraction of shepherds, and in process of time the village of Wildhaus grew up around its ancient church. In this valley, in a cottage which is still to be seen¹ standing about a mile from the church, on a green meadow, its walls formed of the stems of trees, its roof weighed down with stones to protect it from the mountain gusts, with a limpid stream flowing before it, there lived three hundred years ago a man named Huldric Zwingle, bailiff of the parish. He had eight sons, the third of whom was born on New Year's day, 1584, seven weeks after the birth of Luther, and was named Ulric.²

The man was greatly respected by his neighbours for his upright character as well as for his office. He was a shepherd, and his summers were passed on the mountains, in company with his sons, who aided him in tending his flocks. When the green of spring brightened the vales, the herds were brought forth and driven to pasture. Day by day, as the verdure mounted higher on the mountain's side, the shepherds with their flocks continued to ascend. Midsummer found them at their highest elevation, their herds browsing on the skirts of the eternal snows, where the melting ice and the vigorous sun of July nourished a

¹ Christoffel, *Zwingle, or Rise of the Reformation in Switzerland*, p. 1; Clark's ed., Edin., 1858. D'Aubigné, bk. viii., chap. 1.

² Pallavicino asserts that he was obscurely born—"nato bassamente" (tom. i., lib. i., cap. 19). His family was ancient and highly respected (Gerdesius, p. 101)—"Issu d'une honnête et ancienne famille" says Ruchat (tom i., p. 71).

luxuriant herbage. When the lengthening nights and the fading pasturage told them that summer had begun to decline, they descended by the same stages as they had mounted, arriving at their dwellings in the valley about the time of the autumnal equinox. In Switzerland so long as winter holds its reign on the mountaintops, and darkens the valleys with mists and tempests, no labour can be done out of doors, especially in high-lying localities like the Tockenburg. Then the peasants assemble by turns in each other's houses, lit at night by a blazing fire of firwood or the gleam of candle. Gathering round the hearth, they beguile the long evenings with songs and musical instruments, or stories of olden days. They will tell of some adventurous exploit, when the shepherd climbed the precipice, or braved the tempest, to rescue some member of the fold which had strayed from its companions. Or they will narrate some yet braver deed done on the battlefield where their fathers were wont to meet the spearmen of Austria, or the steel-clad warriors of Gaul. Thus would they make the hours pass swiftly by.

The house of the Amman of Wildhaus, Huldric Zwingle, was a frequent resort of his neighbours in the winter evenings. Round his hearth would assemble the elders of the village, and each brought his tale of chivalry borrowed from ancient Swiss ballad or story, or mayhap handed down by tradition. While the elders spoke, the young listened with coursing pulse and flashing eyes. They told of the brave men their mountains had produced of old; of the feats of valour which had been done upon their soil; and how their own valley of the Tockenburg had sent forth heroes who had helped to roll back from their hills the hosts of Charles the Bold. The battles of their fathers were fought over again in the simple yet graphic narratives of the sons. The listeners saw these deeds enacted before them. They beheld the fierce foreign phalanxes gathering round their mountains. They saw their sires mustering in city and on mountain, they saw them hurrying through narrow gorge, and shady pine-forest, and across their lakes, to repel the invader; they heard the shock of the encounter, the clash of battle, the shout of victory, and saw the confusion and terrors of the rout. Thus the spirit of Swiss valour was kept alive; bold sire was succeeded by son as bold; and the Alps, as they kindled their fires morning by morning, beheld one generation of patriots and warriors rise up after another at their feet.

In the circle of listeners round his father's hearth in the winter evenings was the young Ulric Zwingle. He was thrilled by these tales of the deeds of ancient valour, some of them done in the very valley where he heard them rehearsed. His country's history, not in printed page, but in tragic action, passed before him. He could see the forms of its heroes moving grandly along. They had fought, and bled, centuries ago; their ashes had long since mingled with the dust of the vale, or been borne away by the mountain torrent; but to him they were still living. They never could die. If that soil which spring brightened with its flowers, and autumn so richly covered with its fruits, was free—if yonder snows, which kindled so grandly on the mountain's brow, owned no foreign lord, it was to these men that this was owing. This glorious land inhabited by freemen was their eternal monument. Every object in it was to him associated with their names, and recalled them to his memory. To be worthy of his great ancestors, to write his name alongside theirs, and have his exploits similarly handed down from father to son, became henceforward his highest ambition. This brave, lofty, liberty-loving nature, which strengthened from year to year, was a fit stock on which to graft the love of a yet higher liberty, and the detestation of a

yet baser tyranny than any which their fathers had repelled with the scorn of freemen when they routed the phalanxes of the Hapsburg, or the legionaries of France.

And betimes this liberty began to be disclosed to him. His grandmother was a pious woman. She would call the young Ulric to her, and making him sit beside her, would introduce him to heroes of a yet loftier type, by reciting to him such portions of sacred history as she herself had learned from the legends of the Church, and the lessons of the Breviary. She would tell him, doubtless, of those grand patriarchal shepherds who fed their flocks on the hills of Palestine of old, and how at times an August Being came down and talked with them. She would tell him of those mighty men of valour from the plough, the sheepfold, or the vineyard, who, when the warriors of Midian, crossing the Jordan, darkened with their swarms the broad Esdraelon, or the hordes of Philistia, from the plain by the sea-shore, climbed the hills of Judah, drove back the invading hosts, and sent them with slaughter and terror to their homes. She would take him to the cradle at Bethlehem, to the cross on Calvary, to the garden on the morning of the third day, when the doors of the sepulchre were seen to open, and a glorious form walked forth from the darkness of the tomb. She would show him the first missionaries hurrying away with the great news to the Gentile world, and would tell him how the idols of the nations fell at the preaching of the Gospel. Thus day by day was the young Zwingli trained for his great future task. Deep in his heart was laid the love of his country, and next were implanted the rudiments of that faith which alone could be the shield of his country's stable and lasting independence.

The grand aspects of nature around him—the tempest's roar, the cataract's dash, the mountain peaks—doubtless contributed their share to the forming of the future Reformer. They helped to nurse that elevation of soul, that sublime awe of Him who had “set fast the mountains,” and that intrepidity of mind which distinguished Zwingli in after-years. So thinks his biographer. “I have often thought in my simplicity,” says Oswald Myconius,³ “that from these sublime heights, which stretch up towards heaven, he has taken something heavenly and sublime.” “When the thunder rolls through the gorges of the mountains, and leaps from crag to crag with crashing roar, then it is as if we heard anew the voice of the Lord God proclaiming, ‘I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.’ When in the dawn of morning the icy mountains glow in light divine, so that a sea of fire seems to surround all their tops, it is as if ‘the Lord God of hosts treadeth upon the high places of the earth,’ and as if the border of his garment of light had transfigured the hills. It is then that with reverential awe we feel as if the cry came to us also, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ Here under the magnificent impressions of a mountain world and its wonders, there awoke in the breast of the young Zwingli the first awful sense of the grandeur and majesty of God, which afterwards filled his whole soul, and armed him with intrepidity in the great conflict with the powers of darkness. In the solitude of the mountains, broken only by the bells of his pasturing flocks, the reflective boy mused on the wisdom of God which reveals itself in all creatures. An echo of this deep contemplation of nature, which occupied his harmless youth, we find in a work which, in the ripeness of manhood, he composed on ‘The Providence of God.’⁴ ‘The earth,’ says he, ‘the mother of all, shuts never ruthlessly her rich

³ Oswald Myconius, *Vit. Zwingli*. Not to be confounded with Myconius the friend and biographer of Luther.

⁴ *De Providentiâ Dei*.

treasures within herself ; she heeds not the wounds made on her by spade and share. The dew, the rain, the rivers moisten, restore, quicken within her that which had been brought to a stand-still in growth by drought, and its after-thriving testifies wondrously of the Divine power. The mountains, too, these awkward, rude, inert masses, that give to the earth, as the bones to the flesh, solidity, form, and consistency, that render impossible, or at least difficult, the passage from one place to another, which, although heavier than the earth itself, are yet so far above it, and never sink, do they not proclaim the imperishable might of Jehovah, and speak forth the whole volume of his majesty?"⁵

His father marked with delight the amiable disposition, the truthful character, and the lively genius of his son, and began to think that higher occupations awaited him than tending flocks on his native mountains. The new day of letters was breaking over Europe. Some solitary rays had penetrated into the secluded valley of the Tockenbourg, and awakened aspirations in the bosom of its shepherds. The Bailiff of Wildhaus, we may be sure, shared in the general impulse which was moving men towards the new dawn.

His son Ulric was now in his eighth or ninth year. It was necessary to provide him with better instruction than the valley of the Tockenbourg could supply. His uncle was Dean of Wesen, and his father resolved to place him under his superintendence. Setting out one day on their way to Wesen, the father and son climbed the green summits of the Ammon, and now from these heights the young Ulric had his first view of the world lying around his native valley of the Tockenbourg. On the north rose the snowy crests of the Oberland. He could almost look down into the valley of Glarus, which was to be his first charge; more to the north were the wooded heights of Einsiedeln, and beyond them the mountains which enclose the lovely waters of Zurich.

The Dean of Wesen loved his brother's child as his own son. He sent him to the public school of the place. The genius of the boy was quick, his capacity large, but the stores of the teacher were slender. Soon he had communicated to his pupil all he knew himself, and it became necessary to send Zwingle to another school. His father and his uncle took counsel together, and selected that of Basle.

Ulric now exchanged his grand mountains, with their white peaks, for the carpet-like meadows, watered by the Rhine, and the gentle hills, with their sprinkling of fir-trees, which encompass Basle. Basle was one of those points on which the rising day was concentrating its rays, and whence they were radiated over the countries around. It was the seat of a University. It had numerous printing-presses, which were reproducing the master-pieces of the classic age. It was beginning to be the resort of scholars; and when the young student from the Tockenbourg entered its gates and took up his residence within it, he felt doubtless that he was breathing a new atmosphere.

The young Zwingle was fortunate as regarded the master under whose care he was placed at Basle. Gregory Binzli, the teacher in St. Theodore's School, was a man of mild temper and warm heart, and in this respects very unlike the ordinary pedagogues of the sixteenth century, who studied by a stiff demeanour, a severe countenance, and the terrors of discipline to compel the obedience of their pupils, and inspire them with the love of

⁵ Christoffel, p. 3.

learning. In this case no spur was needed. The pupil from the Tockenburg made rapid progress here as at Wesel. He shone especially in the mimic debates which the youth of that day, in imitation of the wordy tournaments of their elders, often engaged in, and laid the foundation of that power in disputation which he afterwards wielded on a wider arena.⁶ Again the young Zwingle, distancing his schoolmates, stood abreast of his teacher. It was clear that another school must be found for the pupil of whom the question was not, What is he able to learn? but, Where shall we find one qualified to teach him?⁷ The Bailiff of Wildhaus and the Dean of Wesen once more took counsel touching the young scholar, the precocity of whose genius had created for them this embarrassment. The most distinguished school at that time in all Switzerland was that of Bern, where Henry Woelflin, or Lupullus, taught, with great applause, the dead languages. Thither it was resolved to send the boy. Bidding adieu for a time to the banks of the Rhine, Zwingle recrossed the Jura, and stood once more in sight of those majestic snowy piles, which had been in a sort his companions from his infancy. Morning and night he could gaze upon the pyramidal forms of the Shrekhorn and the Eiger, on the tall peak of the Finster Aarhorn, on the mighty Blumlis Alp, and overtopping them all, the Jungfrau, kindling into glory at the sun's departure, and burning in light long after the rest had vanished in darkness.

But it was the lessons of the school that engrossed him. His teacher was accomplished beyond the measure of his day. He had travelled over Italy and Greece, and had extended his tour as far as Syria and the Holy Sepulchre. He had not merely feasted his eyes upon their scenery, he had mastered the long-forgotten tongues of these celebrated countries. He had drunk in the spirit of the Roman and Greek orators and poets, and the fervour of ancient liberty and philosophy he communicated to his pupils along with the literature in which they were contained. The genius of Zwingle expanded under so sympathetic a master. Lupullus initiated him into the art of verse-making after the ancient models. His poetic vein was developed, and his style now began to assume that classic terseness and chastened glow which marked it in after-years. Nor was his talent for music neglected.

But the very success of the young scholar was like to have cut short his career, or fatally changed its direction. With his faculties just opening into blossom, he was in danger of disappearing in a convent. Luther at a not unsimilar stage of his career had buried himself in the cell, and would never have been heard of more, had not a great storm arisen in his soul and compelled him to leave it. If Zwingle shall bury himself as Luther did, will he be rescued as Luther was? But how came he into this danger?

In Bern, as everywhere else, the Dominicans and the Franciscans were keen competitors, the one against the other, for public favour. Their claims to patronage were mainly such as these—a showy church, a gaudy dress, an attractive ceremonial; and if they could add to these a wonder-working image, their triumph was almost secured. The Dominicans now thought that they saw a way by which they would mortify their rivals the Franciscans. They had heard of the scholar of Lupullus. He had a fine voice, he was quick-witted, and altogether such a youth as would be a vast acquisition to their order. Could they only enrol him in their ranks, it would do more than a fine altarpiece, or a new

⁶ Osw. Mycon., *Vit. Zwing.*

⁷ Christoffel, p. 5.

ceremonial, to draw crowds to their chapel, and gifts to their treasury. They invited him to take up his abode in their convent as a novice.⁸

Intelligence reached the Amman of Wildhaus of the snares which the Dominicans of Bern were laying for his son. He had imagined a future for him in which, like his uncle the dean, he would be seen discharging with dignity the offices of his Church; but to wear a cowl, to become the mere decoy-duck of monks, to sink into a pantomimic performer, was an idea that found no favour in the eyes of the bailiff. He spoilt the scheme of the Dominicans, by sending his commands to his son to return forthwith to his home in the Tockenburg. The Hand that led Luther into the convent guided Zwingle past it.

⁸ Bullinger, *Chron.*

Chapter V.

Zwingle's Progress Towards Emancipation.

Zwingle returns Home—Goes to Vienna—His Studies and Associates—Returns to Wildhaus—Makes a Second Visit to Basle—His Love of Music—The Scholastic Philosophy—Leo Juda—Wolfgang Capito—Oecolampadius—Erasmus—Thomas Wittenbach—Stars of the Dawn—Zwingle becomes Pastor of Glarus—Studies and Labours among his Parishioners—Swiss drawn to Fight in Italy—Zwingle's Visit to Italy—Its Lessons.

The young Zwingle gave instant obedience to the injunction that summoned him home; but he was no longer the same as when he first left his father's house. He had not yet become a disciple of the Gospel, but he had become a scholar. The solitudes of the Tockenburg had lost their charm for him; neither could the society of its shepherds any longer content him. He longed for more congenial fellowship.

Zwingle, by the advice of his uncle, was next sent to Vienna, in Austria. He entered the high school of that city, which had attained great celebrity under the Emperor Maximilian I. Here he resumed those studies in the Roman classics which had been so suddenly broken off in Bern, adding thereto a beginning in philosophy. He was not the only Swiss youth now living in the capital and studying in the schools of the ancient enemy of his country's independence. Joachim Vadian, the son of a rich merchant of St. Gall; Henry Loreti, commonly known as Glarean, a peasant's son, from Mollis; and a Suabian youth, John Heigerlin, the son of a blacksmith, and hence called Faber, were at this time in Vienna, and were Zwingle's companions in his studies and in his amusements. All three gave promise of future eminence, and all three attained it; but no one of the three rendered anything like the same service to the world, or achieved the same lasting fame, as the fourth, the shepherd's son from the Tockenburg. After a sojourn of two years at Vienna, Zwingle returned once more (1502) to his home at Wildhaus.

But his native valley could not long retain him. The oftener he quaffed the cup of learning, the more he thirsted to drink thereof. Being now in his eighteenth year, he repaired a second time to Basle, in the hope of turning to use, in that city of scholars, the knowledge he had acquired. He taught in the School of St. Martin's, and studied at the University. Here he received the degree of Master of Arts. This title he accepted more from deference to others than from any value which he himself put upon it. At no period did he make use of it, being wont to say, "One is our Master, even Christ."¹

Frank and open and joyous, he drew around him a large circle of friends, among whom was Capito, and Leo Juda, who afterwards became his colleague. His intellectual powers were daily expanding. But all was not toil with him; taking his lute or his horn, he would regale himself and his companions with the airs of his native mountains; or he would sally out along the banks of the Rhine, or climb the hills of the Black Forest on the other side of that stream.

¹ Christoffel, p. 8.

To diversify his labours, Zwingle turned to the scholastic philosophy. Writing of him at this period, Myconius says: "He studied philosophy here with more exactness than ever, and pursued into all their refinements the idle, hair-splitting sophistries of the schoolman, with no other intention than that, if ever he should come to close quarters with him, he might know his enemy, and beat him with his own weapons."² As one who quits a smiling and fertile field, and crosses the boundary of a gloomy wilderness, where nothing grows that is good for food or pleasant to the eye, so did Zwingle feel when he entered this domain. The scholastic philosophy had received the reverence of ages; the great intellects of the preceding centuries had extolled it as the sum of all wisdom. Zwingle found in it only barrenness and confusion; the further he penetrated into it the more waste it became. He turned away, and came back with a keener relish to the study of the classics. There he breathed a freer air, and there he found a wider horizon around him.

Between the years 1512 and 1516 there chanced to settle in Switzerland a number of men of great and varied gifts, all of whom became afterwards distinguished in the great movement of Reform. Let us rapidly recount their names. It was not of chance surely that so many lights shone out all at once in the sky of the Swiss. Leo Juda comes first: he was the son of a priest of Alsace. His diminutive stature and sickly face hid a richly replenished intellect, and a bold and intrepid spirit. The most loved of all the friends of Zwingle, he shared his two master-passions, the love of truth and the love of music. When the hours of labour were fulfilled, the two regaled themselves with song. Leo had a treble voice, and struck the tymbal; to the trained skill and powerful voice of Ulric all instruments and all parts came alike. Between them there was formed a covenant of friendship that lasted till death. The hour soon came that parted them, for Leo Juda was the senior of Zwingle, and quitted Basle to become priest at St. Pilt in Alsace. But we shall see them re-united ere long, and fighting side by side, with ripened powers, and weapons taken from the armoury of the Divine Word, in the great battle of the Reformation.

Another of those remarkable men who, from various countries, were now directing their steps to Switzerland, was Wolfgang Capito. He was born at Hagenau in Germany in 1478, and had taken his degree in the three faculties of theology, medicine, and law. In 1512 he was invited to become curé of the cathedral church of Basle. Accepting this charge he set to studying the Epistle to the Romans, in order to expound it to his hearers, and while so engaged his own eyes opened to the errors of the Roman Church. By the end of 1517 so matured had his views become that he found he no longer could say mass, and forbore the practice.³

John Hausschein, or, in its Greek form, Oecolampadius—both of which signify "light of the house,"—was born in 1482, at Weinsberg, in Franconia. His family, originally from Basle, was wealthy. So rapid was his progress in the *belles lettres*, that at the age of twelve he composed verses which were admired for their elegance and fire. He went abroad to study jurisprudence at the Universities of Bologna and Heidelberg. At the latter place he so recommended himself by his exemplary conduct and his proficiency in study, that he was appointed preceptor to the son of the Elector Palatine Philip. In 1514 he

² Osw. Mycon., *Vit. Zwing.*

³ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 67.

preached in his own country. His performance elicited an applause from the learned, which he thought it little merited, for he says of it that it was nothing else than a medley of superstition. Feeling that his doctrine was not true, he resolved to study the Greek and Hebrew languages, that he might be able to read the Scriptures in the original. With this view he repaired to Stuttgart, to profit by the instructions of the celebrated scholar Reuchlin, or Capnion. In the year following (1515) Capito, who was bound to Oecolampadius in the ties of an intimate friendship, had made Christopher of Uttenheim, Bishop of Basle, acquainted with his merits, and that prelate addressed to him an invitation to become preacher in that city,⁴ where we shall afterwards meet him.

About the same time the celebrated Erasmus came to Basle, drawn thither by the fame of its printing-presses. He had translated, with simplicity and elegance, the New Testament into Latin from the original Greek, and he issued it from this city, accompanied with clear and judicious notes, and a dedication to Pope Leo X. To Leo the dedication was appropriate as a member of a house which had given many munificent patrons to letters, and no less appropriate ought it to have been to him as head of the Church. The epistle dedicatory is dated Basle, February 1st, 1516. Erasmus enjoyed the aid of Oecolampadius in this labour, and the great scholar acknowledges, in his preface to the paraphrase, with much laudation, his obligations to the theologian.⁵

We name yet another in this galaxy of lights which was rising over the darkness of this land, and of Christendom as well. Though we mention him last, he was the first to arrive. Thomas Wittenbach was a native of Bienne, in Switzerland. He studied at Tubingen, and had delivered lectures in its high school. In 1505 he came to that city on the banks of the Rhine, around which its scholars, and its printers scarcely less, were shedding such a halo. It was at the feet of Wittenbach that Ulric Zwingle, on his second visit to Basle, found Leo Juda. The student from the Tockenbourg sat him down at the feet of the same teacher, and no small influence was Wittenbach destined to exert over him. Wittenbach was a disciple of Reuchlin, the famous Hebraist. Basle had already opened its gates to the learning of Greece and Rome, but Wittenbach brought thither a yet higher wisdom. Skilled in the sacred tongues, he had drunk at the fountains of Divine knowledge to which these tongues admitted him. There was an older doctrine, he affirmed, than that which Thomas Aquinas had propounded to the men of the Middle Ages—an older doctrine even than that which Aristotle had taught to the men of Greece. The Church had wandered from that old doctrine, but the time was near when men would come back to it. That doctrine in a single sentence was that “the death of Christ is the only ransom for our souls.”⁶ When these words were uttered, the first seed of a new life had been cast into the heart of Zwingle.

To pause a moment: the names we have recited were the stars of morning. Verily, to the eyes of men that for a thousand years had dwelt in darkness, it was a pleasant thing to behold their light. With literal truth may we apply the words of the great poet to them, and

⁴ Hottinger, 16. Ruchat, tom. i., pp. 76, 77.

⁵ Hottinger, 16, 17. Ruchat, tom. i., p. 77.

⁶ “Jesum Christum nobis a Patre justitiam et satisfactionem pro peccatis mundi factum est” (Jesus Christ is made by the Father our righteousness and the satisfaction for the sins of the world).—Gerdesius, tom. i., pp. 100-102.

call their effulgence “holy: the offspring of heaven first-born.” Greater luminaries were about to come forth, and fill with their splendour that firmament where these early harbingers of day were shedding their lovely and welcome rays. But never shall these first pure lights be forgotten or blotted out. Many names, which war has invested with a terrible splendour, and which now attract the universal gaze, grow gradually dim, and at last will vanish altogether. But history will trim these “holy lights” from century to century, and keep them burning throughout the ages; and be the world’s day ever so long and ever so bright, the stars that ushered in its dawn will never cease to shine.

We have seen the seed dropped into the heart of Zwingle; the door now opened by which he was ushered into the field in which his great labours were to be performed. At this juncture the pastor of Glarus died. The Pope appointed his equerry, Henri Goldi, to the vacant office;⁷ for the paltry post on the other side of the Alps must be utilised. Had it been a groom for their horses, the shepherds of Glarus would most thankfully have accepted the Pope’s nominee; but what they wanted was a teacher for themselves and their children, and having heard of the repute of the son of the Bailiff of Wildhaus, their neighbour, they sent back the equerry to his duties in the Pontifical stables, and invited Ulric Zwingle to become their pastor. He accepted the invitation, was ordained at Constance, and in 1506, being then in his twenty-second year, he arrived at Glarus to begin his work. His parish embraced nearly a third of the canton.

“He became a priest,” says Myconius, “and devoted himself with his whole soul to the search after Divine truth, for he was well aware how much he must know to whom the flock of Christ is entrusted.” As yet, however, he was a more ardent student of the ancient classics than of the Holy Scriptures. He read Demosthenes and Cicero, that he might acquire the art of oratory. He was especially ambitious of wielding the mighty power of eloquence. He knew what it had accomplished in the cities of Greece, that it had roused them to resist the tyrant, and assert their liberties: might it not achieve effects as great, and not less needed, in the valleys of Switzerland? Caesar, Livy, Tacitus, and the other great writers of Rome, he was perfectly familiar with. Seneca he called a “holy man.” The beautiful genius, the elevation of soul, and the love of country which distinguished some of the great men of heathendom, he attributed to the influence of the Holy Ghost. God, he affirmed, did not confine his influence within the limits of Palestine, he covered therewith the world. “If the two Catos,” said he, “Scipio and Camillus, had not been truly religious, could they have been so high-minded?”⁸

He founded a Latin school in Glarus, and took the conduct of it into his own hands. He gathered into it the youth of all the best families in his extensive parish, and so gained them to the cause of letters and of noble aims. As soon as his pupils were ripe, he sent them either to Vienna, in the University of which Vadian, the friend of his youth, had risen to the rank of rector, or to Basle, where Glarean, another of his friends, had opened a seminary for young men. A gross licentiousness of manners, united with a fiery martial spirit, acquired in the Burgundian and Suabian wars, had distinguished the inhabitants of Glarus before his arrival amongst them. An unwonted refinement of manners now began

⁷ Christoffel, p. 9.

⁸ *Zwing. Epp.*, p. 9.

to characterise them, and many eyes were turned to that new light which had so suddenly broken forth in this obscure valley amid the Alps.

There came a pause in his classical studies and his pastoral work. The Pope of the day, Julius II., was warring with the King of France, Louis XII., and the Swiss were crossing the Alps to fight for "the Church." The men of Glarus, with their cardinal-bishop, in casque and coat of mail, at their head, obeying a new summons from the war-like Pontiff, marched in mass to encounter the French on the plains of Italy. Their young priest, Ulric Zwingle, was compelled to accompany them. Few of these men ever returned: those who did, brought back with them the vices they had learned in Italy, to spread idleness, profligacy, and beggary over their native land. Switzerland was descending into an abyss. Ulric's eyes began to be opened to the cause which was entailing such manifold miseries upon his country. He began to look more closely at the Papal system, and to think how he could avert the ruin which, mainly through the intrigues of Rome, appeared to impend over Swiss independence and Swiss morals. He resumed his studies. A solitary ray of light had found its way in the manner we have already shown into his mind. It had appeared sweeter than all the wisdom which he had acquired by the laborious study of the ancients, whether the classic writers, whom he enthusiastically admired, or the scholastic divines, whom he held but in small esteem. On his return from the scenes of dissipation and carnage which had met his gaze on the south of the Alps, he resumed the study of Greek, that he might have free access to the Divine source whence he knew that solitary ray had come.

This was a moment big with the fate of Zwingle, of his native Switzerland, and in no inconsiderable degree of the Church of God. The young priest of Glarus now placed himself in presence of the Word of God. If he shall submit his understanding and open his heart to its influence, all will be well; but if, offended by its doctrines, so humbling to the pride of the intellect, and so distasteful to the unrenewed heart, he shall turn away, his condition will be hopeless indeed. He has bowed before Aristotle: will he bow before a Greater speaking in this Word?

Chapter VI.

Zwingle in the Presence of the Bible.

Zwingle's profound Submission to Scripture—The Bible his First Authority—This a Wider Principle than Luther's—His Second Canon—The Spirit the Great Interpreter—His use of the Fathers—Light—The Swiss Reform presents a New Type of Protestantism—German Protestantism Dogmatic—Swiss Protestantism Normal—Duality in the False Religion of Christendom—Met by the Duality of Protestantism—Place of Reason and of Scripture.

The point in which Zwingle is greatest, and in which he is second to none among the Reformers, is this, even his profound deference to the Word of God. There had appeared no one since our own Wicliffe who had so profoundly submitted himself to its teaching. When he came to the Bible, he came to it as a *Revelation from God*, in the full consciousness of all that such an admission implies, and prepared to follow it out to all its practical consequences. He accepted the Bible as a first authority, an infallible rule, in contradistinction to the Church or tradition, on the one hand, and to subjectivism or spiritualism on the other. This was the great and distinguishing principle of Zwingle, and of the Reformation which he founded—THE SOLE AND INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. It is a prior and deeper principle than that of Luther. It is *before* it in logical sequence, and it is more comprehensive in its range; for even Luther's article of a standing or a falling Church, "justification by faith alone," must itself be tried by Zwingle's principle, and must stand or fall according as it agrees therewith. Is the *free justification of sinners* part of God's Revelation? That question we must first decide, before admitting the doctrine itself. The sole infallible authority of the Bible is therefore the first of all theological principles, being the basis on which all the others stand.

This was Zwingle's *first* canon: what was his *second*? Having adopted a Divine rule, he adopted also a Divine Interpreter. He felt that it would be of but little use that God should speak if man were authoritatively to interpret. He believed in the Bible's self-evidencing power, that its true meaning was to be known by its own light. He used every help to ascertain its sense fully and correctly: he studied the languages in which it was originally given; he read the commentaries of learned and pious men; but he did not admit that any man, or body of men, had a peculiar and exclusive power of perceiving the sense of Scripture, and of authoritatively declaring it. The Spirit who inspired it would, he asserted, reveal it to every earnest and prayerful reader of it.

This was the starting-point of Ulric Zwingle. "The Scriptures," said he, "come from God, not from man, and even that God who enlightens will give thee to understand that the speech comes from God. The Word of God cannot fail; it is bright, it teaches itself, it discloses itself, it illumines the soul with all salvation and grace, comforts it in God, humbles it, so that it loses and even forfeits itself, and embraces God in itself."¹ These effects of the Bible, Zwingle had himself experienced in his own soul. He had been an enthusiastic student of the wisdom of the ancients: he had pored over the pages of the scholastic divines; but not till he came to the Holy Scriptures, did he find a knowledge that

¹ *Zwingli Opp.*, ed. Schuler et Schulthess, i. 81; *apud* Dorner, *Hist. Prot. Theol.*, vol. i., p. 287.

could solve his doubts and stay his heart. “When seven or eight years ago,” we find him writing in 1522, “I began to give myself wholly up to the Holy Scriptures, philosophy and theology (scholastic) would always keep suggesting quarrels to me. At last I came to this, that I thought, ‘Thou must let all that lie, and learn the meaning of God purely out of his own simple Word.’ Then I began to ask God for his light, and the Scriptures began to be much easier to me, although I am but lazy.”²

Thus was Zwingle taught of the Bible. The ancient doctors and Fathers of the Church he did not despise, although he had not yet begun to study them. Of Luther he had not even heard the name. Calvin was then a boy about to enter school. From neither Wittenberg nor Geneva could it be said that the light shone upon the pastor of Glarus, for these cities themselves were still covered with the night. The day broke upon him direct from heaven. It shone in no sudden burst; it opened in a gradual dawn; it continued from one studious year to another to grow. At last it attained its noon; and then no one of the great minds of the sixteenth century excelled the Reformer of Switzerland in the simplicity, harmony, and clearness of his knowledge.³

In Ulric Zwingle and the Swiss Reformation we are presented with a new type of Protestantism—a type different from that which we have already seen at Wittenberg. The Reformation was one in all the countries to which it extended; it was one in what it accepted, as well as in what it rejected; but it had, as its dominating and moulding principle, one doctrine in Germany, another in Switzerland, and hence it came to pass that its outward type or aspect was two-fold. We may say it was dogmatic in the one country, normal in the other.

This duality was rendered inevitable by the state of the world. In the Christendom of that day there were two great currents of thought—there was the superstitious or self-righteous current, and there was the scholastic or rationalistic current. Thus the error which the Reformation sought to withstand wore a two-fold type, though at bottom one, for the superstitious element is as really *human* as the rationalistic. Both had been elaborated into a scheme by which man might save himself. On the side of self-righteousness man was presented with a system of meritorious services, penances, payments, and indulgences by which he might atone for sin, and earn Paradise. On the scholastic side he was presented with a system of rules and laws, by which he might discover all truth, become spiritually illuminated, and make himself worthy of the Divine favour. These were the two great streams into which the mighty flood of human corruption had parted itself.

² *Ibid.*, i. 79; *apud* Dorner, vol. i., p. 287.

³ Zwingle’s own words, as given in his Works, tom. i., p. 37, are—“Caepi ego evangelium praedicare anno salutis decimo sexto supra millesimum et quingentesimum, eo silicet tempore, cum Lutheri nomen in nostris regionibus ne auditum quidem adhuc erat” (I began to preach the Gospel in the year of grace 1516, at that time namely when even the name of Luther had not been heard in our country). Wolfgang’s words are, as given in Capito’s letter to Bullinger—“Nam antequam Lutherus in lucem emerserat, Zwinglius et ego inter nos communicavimus de Pontifice dejiciendo, etiam dum ille vitam degeret in Eremitorio” (For before Luther had appeared in public, Zwingle and I had conversed together regarding the overthrow of the Pope, even when he lived in the Hermitage).—Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 193.

Luther began his Reformation in the way of declaring war against the self-righteous principle: Zwingle, on the other hand, began his by throwing down the gage of battle to the scholastic divinity.

Luther's *hygemonic* or dominating principle was *justification by faith alone*, by which he overthrew the monkish fabric of human merit. Zwingle's dominating principle was the *sole authority of the Word of God*, by which he dethroned reason from the supremacy which the schoolmen had assigned her, and brought back the understanding and the conscience to Divine revelation. This appears to us the grand distinction between the German and the Swiss Reformation. It is a distinction not in substance or in nature, but in form, and grew out of the state of opinion in Christendom at the time, and the circumstance that the prevailing superstition took the monkish form mainly, though not exclusively, in the one half of Europe, and the scholastic form in the other. The type impressed on each—on the German and on the Swiss Reformation—at this initial stage, each has continued to wear more or less all along.

Nor did Zwingle think that he was dishonouring reason by assigning it its true place and office as respects revelation. If we accept a revelation at all, reason says we must accept it wholly. To say that we shall accept the Bible's help only where we do not need its guidance; that we shall listen to its teachings in those things that we already know, or might have known, had we been at pains to search them out; but that it must be silent on all those mysteries which our reason has not and could not have revealed to us, and which, now that they are revealed, reason cannot fully explain—to act thus is to make reason despicable under pretence of honouring it. For surely it is not reasonable to suppose that God would have made a special communication to us, if he had had nothing to disclose save what we already knew, or might have known by the exercise of the faculties he has given us. Reason bids us expect, in a Divine revelation, announcements not indeed contradictory to reason, but above reason; and if we reject the Bible because it contains such announcements, or reject those portions of it in which these announcements are put forth, we act irrationally. We put dishonour upon our reason. We make that a proof of the Bible's falsehood which is one of the strongest proofs of its truth. The Bible the first authority, was the fundamental principle of Zwingle's Reformation.

Chapter VII.

Einsiedeln and Zurich.

Visit to Erasmus—The Swiss Fight for the Pope—Zwingle Accompanies them—Marignano—Its Lessons—Zwingle invited to Einsiedeln—Its Site—Its Administrator and Abbot—Its Image—Pilgrims—Annual Festival—Zwingle's Sermon—A Stronghold of Darkness converted into a Beacon of Light—Zwingle called to Zurich—The Town and Lake—Zwingle's First Appearance in its Pulpit—His Two Grand Principles—Effects of his Preaching—His Pulpit a Fountain of National Regeneration.

Two journeys which Zwingle made at this time had a marked effect upon him. The one was to Basle, where Erasmus was now living. His visit to the prince of scholars gave him equal pleasure and profit. He returned from Basle, his enthusiasm deepened in the study of the sacred tongues, and his thirst whetted for a yet greater acquaintance with the knowledge which these tongues contained.

The other journey was of another character, as well as in another direction. Louis XII. of France was now dead; Julius II. of Rome had also gone to his account; but the war which these two potentates had waged with each other remained as a legacy to their successors. Francis I. took up the quarrel—rushed into Italy—and the Pope, Leo X., summoned the Swiss to fight for the Church, now threatened by the French. Inflamed by the eloquence of their warlike cardinal, Matthew Schinner, Bishop of Sion, even more than drawn by the gold of Rome, the brave mountaineers hastened across the Alps to defend the "Holy Father." The pastor of Glarus went with them to Italy, where one day he might be seen haranguing the phalanxes of his countrymen, and another day, sword in hand, fighting side by side with them on the battlefield—a blending of spiritual and military functions less repulsive to the ideas of that age than to those of the present. But in vain the Swiss poured out their blood. The great victory which the French achieved at Marignano inspired terror in the Vatican, filled the valleys of the Swiss with widows and orphans, and won for the youthful monarch of France a renown in arms which he was destined to lose, as suddenly as he had gained it, on the fatal field of Pavia.

But if Switzerland had cause long to remember the battle of Marignano, in which so many of her sons had fallen, the calamity was converted at a future day into a blessing to her. Ulric Zwingle had thoughts suggested to him during his visit to Italy which bore fruit on his return. The virtues that flourished at Rome, he perceived, were ambition and avarice, pride and luxury. These were not, he thought, by any means so precious as to need to be nourished by the blood of the Swiss. What a folly! what a crime to drag the flower of the youth of Switzerland across the Alps, and slaughter them in a cause like this! He resolved to do his utmost to stop this effusion of his countrymen's blood. He felt, more than ever, how necessary was a Reformation, and he began more diligently than before to instruct his parishioners in the doctrines of Holy Scripture.

He was thus occupied, searching the Bible, and communicating what, from time to time, he discovered in it to his parishioners, when he was invited (1516) to be preacher in the Convent of Einsiedeln. Theobald, Baron of Gherolds-Eck, was administrator of this abbey, and lord of the place. He was a lover of the sciences and of learned men, and above

all of those who to a knowledge of science joined piety. From him came the call now addressed to the pastor of Glarus, drawn forth by the report which the baron had received of the zeal and ability of Zwingle.¹ Its abbot was Conrad de Rechenberg, a gentleman of rank, who discountenanced the superstitious usages of his Church, and in his heart had no great affection for the mass, and in fact had dropped the celebration of it. One day, as some visitors were urging him to say mass, he replied, "If Jesus Christ is veritably in the Host, I am not worthy to offer him in sacrifice to the Father; and if he be not in the Host, I should be more unhappy still, for I should make the people adore bread in place of God."²

Ought he to leave Glarus, and bury himself on a solitary mountain-top? This was the question Zwingle put to himself. He might, he thought, as well go to his grave at once; and yet, if he accepted the call, it was no tomb in which he would be shutting himself up. It was a famed resort of pilgrims, in which he might hope to prosecute with advantage the great work of enlightening his countrymen. He therefore decided to avail himself of the opportunity thus offered for carrying on his mission in a new and important field.

The Convent of Einsiedeln was situated on a little hill between the Lakes of Zurich and Wallenstadt. Its renown was inferior only to that of the far-famed shrine of Loretto. "It was the most famous," says Gerdesius, "in all Switzerland and Upper Germany."³ An inscription over the portal announced that "Plenary Indulgences" were to be obtained within; and moreover—and this was its chief attraction—it boasted an image of the Virgin which had the alleged power of working miracles. Occasional parties of pilgrims would visit Einsiedeln at all seasons, but when the great annual festival of its "Consecration" came round, thousands would flock from all parts of Switzerland, and from places still more remote, from France and Germany, to this famous shrine. On these occasions the valley at the foot of the mountain became populous as a city; and all day long files of pilgrims might be seen climbing the mountain, carrying in the one hand tapers to burn in honour of "Our Lady of Einsiedeln," and in the other money to buy the pardons which were sold at her shrine. Zwingle was deeply moved by the sight. He stood up before that great multitude—that congregation gathered from so many of the countries of Christendom—and boldly proclaimed that they had come this long journey in vain; that they were no nearer the God who hears prayer on this mountain-top than in the valley; that they were on no holier ground in the precincts of the Chapel of Einsiedeln than in their own closets; that they were spending "their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not," and that it was not a pilgrim's gown but a contrite heart which was pleasing to God. Nor did Zwingle content himself with simply reprovng the grovelling superstition and profitless rites which the multitudes whom this great festival had brought to Einsiedeln substituted for love to God and a holy life. He preached to them the Gospel. He had pity on the many who came really seeking rest to their souls. He spoke to them of Christ and him crucified. He told them that he was the one and only Saviour; that his death had made a complete satisfaction for the sins of men; that the efficacy of his sacrifice lasts through all ages, and is available for all nations; and that there was no need to climb this mountain to obtain forgiveness; that the Gospel offers

¹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 74.

² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 75.

³ *Hist. Ren. Evang.*, i. 104.

to all, through Christ, pardon without money and without price. This “good news” it was worth coming from the ends of the earth to hear.⁴ Yet there were those among this crowd of pilgrims who were not able to receive it as “good news.” They had made a long journey, and it was not pleasant to be told at the end of it that they might have spared their pains and remained at home. It seemed, moreover, too cheap a pardon to be worth having. They would rather travel the old road to Paradise by penances, and fasts, and alms-deeds, and the absolutions of the Church, than trust their salvation to a security so doubtful. To these men Zwingle’s doctrine seemed like a blasphemy of the Virgin in her own chapel.

But there were others to whom the preacher’s words were as “cold water” to one athirst. They had made trial of these self-righteous performances, and found their utter inefficacy. Had they not kept fast and vigil till they were worn to a skeleton? Had they not scourged themselves till the blood flowed? But peace they had not found: the sting of an accusing conscience was not yet plucked out. They were thus prepared to welcome the words of Zwingle. A Divine influence seemed to accompany these words in the case of many. They disclosed, it was felt, the only way by which they could ever hope to obtain eternal life, and returning to their homes they published abroad the strange but welcome tidings they had heard. Thus it came to pass that this, the chief stronghold of darkness in all Switzerland, was suddenly converted into a centre of the Reformed light. “A trumpet had been blown,” and a “standard lifted up” upon the tops of the mountains.⁵

Zwingle continued his course. The well-worn pilgrim-track began to be disused, the shrine to which it led forsaken; and as the devotees diminished, so too did the revenues of the priest of Einsiedeln. But so far from being grieved at the loss of his livelihood, it rejoiced Zwingle to think that his work was prospering. The Papal authorities offered him no obstruction, although they could hardly shut their eyes to what was going on. Rome needed the swords of the cantons. She knew the influence which Zwingle wielded over his countrymen, and she thought by securing him to secure them; but her favours and flatteries, bestowed through the Cardinal-Bishop of Sion, and the Papal legate, were totally unavailing to turn him from his path. He continued to prosecute his ministry, during the three years of his abode at this place, with a marked degree of success.

By this course of discipline Zwingle was being gradually prepared for beginning the Reformation of Switzerland. The post of Preacher in the College of Canons which Charlemagne had established at Zurich became vacant at this time, and on the 11th of December, 1518, Zwingle was elected, by a majority of votes, to the office.

The ‘foundation’ on which Zwingle was now admitted was limited to eighteen members. According to the terms of Charlemagne’s deed they were “to serve God with praise and prayer, to furnish the Christians in hill and valley with the means of public worship, and finally to preside over the Cathedral school,” which, after the name of the founder, was called the Charles’ School. The Great Minster, like most other ecclesiastical institutions, quickly degenerated, and ceased to fulfil the object for which it had been instituted. Its canons, spending their time in idleness and amusement, in falconry and hunting the boar, appointed a leut-priest with a small salary, supplemented by the prospect

⁴ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 94.

⁵ Christoffel, pp. 28, 29.

of ultimate advancement to a canonship, to perform the functions of public worship. This was the post that Zwingli was chosen to fill. At the time of his election the Great Minister had twenty-four canons and thirty-six chaplains. Felix Hammerlin, the precentor of this foundation, had said of it in the first half of the fifteenth century "A blacksmith can, from a number of old horseshoes, pick out one and make it useable; but I know no smith who, out of all these canons, could make one good canon."⁶ We may be sure that there were some of a different spirit among the canons at the time of Zwingli's election, otherwise the chaplain of Einsiedeln would never have been chosen as Preacher in the Cathedral of Zurich.

Zurich is pleasantly situated on the shores of the lake of that name. This is a noble expanse of water, enclosed within banks which swell gently upwards, clothed here with vineyards, there with pine-forests, from amid which hamlets and white villas gleam out and enliven the scene, while in the far-off horizon the glaciers are seen blending with the golden clouds. On the right the region is walled in by the craggy rampart of the Albis Alp, but the mountains stand back from the shore, and by permitting the light to fall freely upon the bosom of the lake, and on the ample sweep of its lovely and fertile banks, give a freshness and airiness to the prospect as seen from the city, which strikingly contrasts with the neighbouring Lake of Zug, where the placid waters and the slumbering shore seem perpetually wrapped in the shadows of the great mountains.

Zurich was at that time the chief town of the Swiss Confederation. Every word spoken here had thus double power. If at Einsiedeln Zwingli had boldly rebuked superstition, and faithfully preached the Gospel, he was not likely to show either less intrepidity or less eloquence now that he stood at the centre of Helvetia, and spoke to all its cantons. He appeared in the pulpit of the Cathedral of Zurich for the first time on the 1st of January, 1519. It was a singular coincidence, too, that this was his thirty-fifth birthday. He was of middle size, with piercing eyes, sharpest features, and clear ringing voice. The crowd was great, for his fame had preceded him. It was not so much his reputed eloquence which drew this multitude around him, including so many who had long ceased to attend service, as the dubious renown, as it was then considered, of preaching a new Gospel. He commenced his ministry by opening the New Testament, and reading the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew,⁷ and he continued his expositions of this Gospel on successive Sabbaths, till he had arrived at the end of the book. The life, miracles, teaching, and passion of Christ were ably and earnestly laid before his hearers.

The two leading principles of his preaching at Zurich, as at Glarus and Einsiedeln, were—the Word of God *the one infallible authority*, and the death of Christ *the one complete satisfaction*. Making these his rallying-points, his address took a wide range, as suited his own genius, or as was demanded by the condition of his hearers, and the perils and duties of his country. Beneath him, crowding every bench, sat all ranks and conditions—statesmen, burgomasters, canons, priests, scholars, merchants, and artisans. As the calm face of ocean reflects the sky which is hung above it, so did the rows of upturned faces respond to the varied emotions which proceeded from the cathedral pulpit

⁶ Christoffel, p. 111.

⁷ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 105.

of Zurich. Did the preacher, as was his delight, enlarge, in simple, clear, yet earnest words—words whose elegance charmed the learned, as they instructed the illiterate⁸—on a “free salvation,” the audience bent forward and drank in every syllable. Not all, however; for there were those among Zwingli’s hearers, and some even who had promoted his election, who saw that if this doctrine were generally received it would turn the world upside down. Popes must doff their tiara, and renowned doctors and monarchs of the schools must lay down their sceptre.

The intrepid preacher would change his theme; and, while the fire of his eye and the sternness of his tones discovered the indignation of his spirit, he would reprove the pride and luxury which were corrupting the simplicity of ancient manners, and impairing the vigour of ancient virtue. When there was more piety at the hearth, there was more valour in the field. On glancing abroad, and pointing to the tyranny that flourished on the south of the Alps, he would denounce in yet more scathing tones that hypocritical ambition which, for its own aggrandisement, was rending their country in pieces, dragging away its sons to water foreign lands with their blood, and digging a grave for its morality and its independence. Their sires had broken the yoke of Austria, it remained for them to break the yet viler yoke of the Popes. Nor were these appeals without effect. Zwingli’s patriotism, kindled at the altar, and burning with holy and vehement flame, set on fire the souls of his countrymen. The knitted brows and flashing eyes of his audience showed that his words were telling, and that he had awakened something of the heroic spirit which the fathers of the men he was addressing had displayed on the memorable fields of Mortgarten and Sempach.

It was seen that a fountain of new life had been opened at the heart of Switzerland. Zwingli had become the regenerator of the nation. Week by week a new and fresh impulse was being propagated from the cathedral, throughout not Zurich only, but all the cantons; and the ancient simplicity and bravery of the Swiss, fast perishing under the wiles of Rome and the corrupting touch of French gold, were beginning again to flourish. “Glory be to God!” men were heard saying to one another, as they retired from the cathedral where they had listened to Zwingli, says Bullinger, in his Chronicle, “this man is a preacher of the truth. He will be our Moses to lead us forth from this Egyptian darkness.”

⁸ Osw. Mycon., *Vit. Zwing.*

Chapter VIII.

The Pardon-monger and the Plague.

The Two Proclamations—Pardon for Money and Pardon of Grace—Contemporaneous—The Cordelier Samson sent to Switzerland—Crosses St. Gothard—Arrives in Uri—Visits Schwitz—Zug—Bern—A General Release from Purgatory—Baden—“Ecce Volant!”—Zurich—Samson Denied Admission—Returns to Rome—The Great Death—Ravages—Zwingle Stricken—At the Point of Death—Hymn—Restored—Design of the Visitation.

It is instructive to mark that at the very moment when Rome was preparing for opening a great market in Christendom for the pardon of sin, so many preachers should be rising up, one in this country and another in that, and, without concert or pre-arrangement, beginning to publish the old Gospel that offers pardon without money. The same year, we may say, 1517, saw the commencement of both movements. In that year Rome gathered together her hawkers, stamped her indulgence tickets, fixed the price of sins, and enlarged her coffers for the streams of gold about to flow into them. Woe to the nations! the great sorceress was preparing new enchantments; and the fetters that bound her victims were about to be made stronger.

But unknown to Rome, at that very hour, numbers of earnest students, dispersed throughout Christendom, were poring over the page of Scripture, and sending up an earnest cry to God for light to enable them to understand its meaning. That prayer was heard. There fell from on high a bright light upon the page over which they bent in study. Their eyes were opened; they saw it all—the cross, the all-perfect and everlasting sacrifice for sin—and in their joy, unable to keep silence, they ran to tell the perishing tribes of the earth that there was “born unto them a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.” “Certain historians have remarked,” says Ruchat,¹ “that this year, 1517, there fell out a prodigy at Rome that seemed to menace the ‘Holy Chair’ with some great disaster. As the Pope was engaged in the election of thirty-one new cardinals, all suddenly there arose a horrible tempest. There came the loud peals of the thunder and the lightning’s terrific flash. One bolt struck the angel on the top of the Castle of St. Angelo, and threw it down; another, entering a church, shivered the statue of the infant Jesus in the arms of his mother; and a third tore the keys from the hands of the statue of St. Peter.” Without, however, laying stress upon this, a surer sign that this chair, before which the nations had so long bowed, was about to be stripped of its influence, and the keys wrested from the hands of its occupant, is seen in the rise of so many evangelists, filled with knowledge and intrepidity, to publish that Gospel of which it had been foretold that, like the lightning, it should shine from the east even unto the west.

We have already seen how contemporaneous in Germany were the two great preachings—forgiveness for money, and forgiveness through grace. They were nearly as contemporaneous in Switzerland.

The sale of indulgences in Germany was given to the Dominicans; in Switzerland this traffic was committed to the Franciscans. The Pope commissioned Cardinal Christopher,

¹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 90.

of Forli, general of the order, as superintendent-in-chief of the distribution in twenty-five provinces; and the cardinal assigned Switzerland to the Cordelier Bernardin Samson, guardian of the convent at Milan.² Samson had already served in the trade under two Popes, and with great advantage to those who had employed him. He had transported across the mountains, it was said, from Germany and Switzerland, chests filled with gold and silver vessels, besides what he had gathered in coin, amounting in eighteen years to no less a sum than eight hundred thousand dollars.³ Such were the antecedents of the man who now crossed the Swiss frontier on the errand of vending the Pope's pardons, and returning with the price to those who had sent him, as he thought, but in reality to kindle a fire amid the Alps, which would extend to Rome, and do greater injury to the "Holy Chair" than the lightning which had grazed it, and passed on to consume the keys in the hands of the statue of St. Peter.

"He discharged his mission in Helvetia with not less impudence," says Gerdesius, "than Tetzl in Germany."⁴ Forcing his way (1518) through the snows of the St. Gothard, and descending along the stream of the Reuss, he and his band arrived in the canton of Uri.⁵ A few days sufficing to fleece these simple mountaineers, the greedy troop passed on to Schwitz, there to open the sale of their merchandise. Zwingle, who was then at Einsiedeln, heard of the monk's arrival and mission, and set out to confront him. The result was that Samson was obliged to decamp, and from Schwitz went on to Zug. On the shores of this lake, over whose still waters the lofty Rossberg and the Righi Kulm hang a continual veil of shadows, and Rome a yet deeper veil of superstition and credulity, Samson set up his stage, and displayed his wares. The little towns on the lake sent forth their population in such crowds as almost to obstruct the sale, and Samson had to entreat that a way might be opened for those who had money, promising to consider afterwards the case of those who had none. Having finished at Zug, he travelled over the Oberland, gathering the hard cash of the peasants and giving them the Pope's pardons in return. The man and his associates got fat on the business; for whereas when they crossed the St. Gothard, lank, haggard, and in rags, they looked like bandits, they were now in flesh, and daintily apparelled. Directing his course to Bern, Samson had some difficulty in finding admission for himself and his wares into that lordly city. A little negotiation with friends inside, however, opened its gates. He proceeded to the cathedral church, which was hung with banners on which the arms of the Pope were blazoned in union with those of the cantons, and there he said mass with great pomp. A crowd of spectators and purchasers filled the cathedral. His bulls of indulgences were in two forms, the one on parchment and the other on paper. The first were meant for the rich, and were charged a dollar. The others were for the poor, and were sold at two batzen a-piece. He had yet a third set, for which he charged a much higher sum. A gentleman of Orbe, named Arnay, gave 500 dollars for one of these.⁶ A

² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 92.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Hist. Ren. Evang.*, tom. i., pp. 106, 122.

⁵ Pallavicino, tom. i., lib. i., cap. 19, p. 80.

⁶ Some of Samson's indulgences were preserved in the archives of the towns, and in the libraries of private families, down to Ruchat's time, the middle of last century. The indulgence bought by Arnay for 500 dollars Ruchat had seen, signed by Samson himself. Two batzen, for which the paper indulgences were sold, are about three-halfpence.

Bernese captain, Jacob von Stein, bartered the dapple-grey mare which he bestrode for one of Samson's indulgences. It was warranted good for himself, his troop of 500 men, and all the vassals on the Seigniorship of Belp,⁷ and may therefore be reckoned cheap, although the animal was a splendid one. We must not pass without notice a very meritorious act of the monk in this neighbourhood. The small town of Aarberg, three leagues from Bern, had, some years before, been much damaged by fire and floods. The good people of the place were taught to believe that these calamities had befallen them for the sin they had committed in insulting a nuncio of the Pope. The nuncio, to punish the affront he had received at their hands, and which reflected on the Church whose servant he was, had excommunicated them, and cursed them, and threatened to bury their village seven fathoms deep in the earth. They had recourse to Samson to lift off a malediction which had already brought so many woes upon them, and the last and most dreadful of which yet awaited them. The lords of Bern used their mediation for the poor people. The good monk was compassionate. He granted, but of course not without a sum of money, a plenary indulgence, which removed the excommunication of the nuncio, and permitted the inhabitants to sleep in peace. Whether it is owing to Samson's indulgence we shall not say, but the fact is undeniable that the little town of Aarberg is above ground to this day.⁸ At Bern, so pleased was the monk with his success, that he signalled his departure with a marvellous feat of generosity. The bells were tolling his leave-taking, when Samson caused it to be proclaimed that he "delivered from the torments of purgatory and of hell all the souls of the Bernese who are dead, whatever may have been the manner or the place of their death."⁹ What sums it would have saved the good people of Bern, had he made that announcement on the first day of his visit! At Bern, Lupullus, formerly the schoolmaster, now canon, and whom we have already met with as one of Zwingle's teachers, was Samson's interpreter. "When the wolf and the fox prowl about together," said one of the canons to De Wattville, the provost, "your safest plan, my gracious lord, is to shut up your sheep and your geese." These remarks, as they broke no bones, and did not spoil his market, Samson bore with exemplary good-nature.

From Bern, Samson went on to Baden. The Bishop of Constance, in whose diocese Baden was situated, had forbidden his clergy to admit the indulgence-monger into their pulpits, not because he disapproved his trade, but because Samson had not asked his permission before entering his diocese, or had his commission countersigned by him. The Curé of Baden, however, had not courage to shut the door of his pulpit in the face of the Pope's commissioner.

After a brisk trade of some days, the monk proposed to signalise his departure by an act of grace, similar to that with which he had closed his performances in Bern. After mass, he formed a procession, and putting himself at its head, he marched round the churchyard, himself and troop chanting the office for the dead. Suddenly he stopped, looked fixedly up into the sky, and after a minute's pause, he shouted out, "Ecce volant!"—"See how they fly!" These were the souls escaping through the open gates of purgatory and winging their way to Paradise. It struck a wag who was present that he

⁷ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 96.

⁸ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 97.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 98. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 124.

would give a practical commentary on the flight of the souls to heaven, He climbed to the top of the steeple, taking with him a bag of feathers, which he proceeded to empty into the air. As the feathers were descending like snow-flakes on Samson and his company, the man exclaimed, “Ecce volant!”—“See how they fly!” The monk burst into a rage. To have the grace of holy Church so impiously travestied was past endurance. Such horrible profanation of the wholesome institution of indulgences, he declared, deserved nothing less than burning. But the citizens pacified him by saying that the man’s wits were at times disordered. Be this as it may, it had turned the laugh against Samson, who departed from Baden somewhat crestfallen.¹⁰

Samson continued his journey, and gradually approached Zurich. At every step he dispensed his pardons, and yet his stock was no nearer being exhausted than when he crossed the Alps. On the way he was told that Zwingle was thundering against him from the pulpit of the cathedral. He went forward, notwithstanding. He would soon put the preacher to silence. As he came nearer, Zwingle waxed the bolder and the plainer. “God only can forgive,” said the preacher, with a solemnity that awed his hearers; “none on earth can pardon sin. You may buy this man’s papers, but be assured you are not absolved. He who sells indulgences is a sorcerer, like Simon Magus; a false prophet, like Balaam; an ambassador of the king of the bottomless pit, for to those dismal portals rather than to the gates of Paradise do indulgences lead.”

Samson reached Zurich to find its gates closed, and the customary cup of wine—a hint that he was not expected to enter—waiting him.¹¹ Feigning to be charged with a special message from the Pope to the Diet, he was admitted into the city. At his audience it was found that he had forgotten his message, for the sufficient reason that he had never received any. He was ignominiously sent away without having sold so much as a single pardon in Zurich. Soon thereafter he re-crossed the Alps, dragging over their steeps a wagon-full of coin, the fruits of his robbery, and returned to his masters in Italy.¹²

He was not long gone when another visitant appeared in Switzerland, sent of God to purify and invigorate the movement—to scatter the good seed on the soil which Zwingle had ploughed and broken up. That visitant was the plague or “Great Death.” It broke out in the August of that same year, 1519. As it spread from valley to valley, inflicting frightful ravages, men felt what a mockery were the pardons which thousands, a few months before, had flocked to purchase. It reached Zurich, and Zwingle, who had gone to the baths of Pfeffers to recruit his health, exhausted by the labours of the summer, hastened back to his flock. He was hourly by the bedsides of the sick or the dying.¹³ On every side of him fell friends, acquaintances, stricken down by the destroyer. He himself had hitherto escaped his shafts, but now he too was attacked. He lay at the point of death. Utterly prostrate, all hope of life was taken away. It was at this moment that he penned his little hymn, so simple, yet not a little dramatic, and breathing a resignation so entire, and a faith so firm—

¹⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 106.

¹¹ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 126.

¹² Pallavicino, tom. i., p. 80.

¹³ Bullinger, p. 87.

“Lo! at the door
I hear Death’s knock!
Shield me, O Lord,
My strength and rock.

“The hand once nailed
Upon the tree,
Jesus, uplift—
And shelter me,

“Willest Thou, then,
Death conquer me
In my noon-day? . . .
So let it be!

“Oh! may I die,
Since I am Thine;
Thy home is made
For faith like mine.”

Thus he examined, at that awful moment, the foundations of his faith; he lifted his eyes to the cross; he knew whom he had believed; and being now more firmly persuaded than ever of the Gospel’s truth, having put it to the last awful test, he returned from the gates of the grave to preach it with even more spirituality and fervour than before. Tidings of his death had been circulated in Basle, in Lucerne—in short, all the cities of the Confederation. Everywhere men heard with dismay that the great preacher of Switzerland had gone to his grave. Their joy was great in proportion when they learned that Zwingli still lived.¹⁴ Both the Reformer and the country had been chastened, purified, and prepared, the one for his mighty task, and the other for the glorious transformation that awaited it.

¹⁴ *Zwing. Epp.*, p. 91.

Chapter IX.

Extension of the Reformation in Bern and other Swiss Towns.

A Solemn Meeting—Zwingle Preaches with greater Life—Human Merit and Gospel Virtue—The Gospel Annihilates the one, Nourishes the other—Power of Love—Zwingle's Hearers Increase—His Labours—Conversions—Extension of the Movement to other Swiss Towns—Basle—Lucerne—Oswald Myconius—Labours in Lucerne—Opposition—Is Thrust out—Bern—Establishment of the Reformation there.

When Zwingle and the citizens of Zurich again assembled in their cathedral, it was a peculiarly solemn moment for both. They were just emerging from the shadow of the "Great Death." The preacher had risen from a sick-bed which had nearly passed into a death-bed, and the audience had come from waiting beside the couches on which they had seen their relations and friends breathe their last. The Reformed doctrine seemed to have acquired a new value. In the awful gloom through which they had just passed, when other lights had gone utterly out, the Gospel had shone only the brighter. Zwingle spoke as he had never spoken before, and his audience listened as they had listened on no former occasion.

Zwingle now opened a deeper vein in his ministry. He touched less frequently upon the evils of foreign service. Not that he was less the patriot, but being now more the pastor, he perceived that a renovated Christianity was not only the most powerful renovator of his country's morals, but the surest palladium of its political interests. The fall and the recovery of man were his chief themes. "In Adam we are all dead," would he say—"sunk in corruption and condemnation." This was a somewhat inauspicious commencement of a Gospel of "good news," for which, after the terrors incident to the scenes which the Zurichers had witnessed, so many of them thirsted. But Zwingle went on to proclaim a release from prison—an opening of the sepulchre. But dead men do not open their own tombs. Christ was their life. He had become so by his passion, which was "an eternal sacrifice, and everlastingly effectual to heal."¹ To him must they come. "His sacrifice satisfies Divine justice for ever in behalf of all who rely upon it with firm and unshaken faith." Are men then to live in sin? Are they to cease to cultivate holiness? No. Zwingle went on to show that, although this doctrine annihilates human merit, it does not annihilate evangelical virtue: that, although no man is saved for his holiness, no man will be saved *without* holiness: that as God bestows his salvation *freely*, so we give our obedience *freely*: on the one side there is life by *grace*, and on the other works by *love*.

And then, going still deeper down, Zwingle would disclose that principle which is at once the strongest and the sweetest in all the Gospel system. What is that principle? Is it law? No. Law comes like a tyrant with a rod to coerce the unwilling, and to smite the guilty. Man is both unwilling and guilty. Law in his case, therefore, can but engender fear: and that fear darkens his mind, enfeebles his will, and produces a cramped, cringing, slavish spirit, which vitiates all he does. It is the Medusa-head that turns him into stone.

What then is the principle? It is love. But how comes love to spring up in the heart of a guilty and condemned man? It comes in this wise. The Gospel turns man's eye upon the

¹ *Zwing. Opp.*, i. 206; *apud* D'Aubigné, ii. 351.

Saviour. He sees Him enduring His passion in his stead, bearing the bitter tree, to bestow upon him a free forgiveness, and life everlasting. That look enkindles love. That love penetrates his whole being, quickening, purifying, and elevating all his powers, filling the understanding with light, the will with obedience, the conscience with peace, the heart with joy, and making the life to abound in holy deeds, fruitful alike to God and man. Such was the Gospel that was now preached in the Cathedral of Zurich.

The Zurichers did not need any argument to convince them that this doctrine was true. They read its truth in its own light. Its glory was not of earth, but of the skies, where was the place of its birth. An unspeakable joy filled their hearts when they saw the black night of monkery departing, with its cowls, its beads, its scourges, its purgatorial fires, which had given much uneasiness to the flesh, but brought no relief to the conscience; and the sweet light of the Gospel opening so full of refreshing to their souls.

The cathedral, although a spacious building, could not contain the crowds that flocked to it. Zwingli laboured with all his might to consolidate the movement. He admirably combined prudence with his zeal. He practised the outward forms of the Church in the pale of which he still remained. He said mass: he abstained from flesh on fast-days: but all the while he laboured indefatigably to diffuse a knowledge of Divine truth, knowing that as the new growth developed, the old, with its rotten timber, and seared and shrivelled leaves, would be cast off. As soon as men should come to see that a free pardon was offered to them in the Bible, they would no longer scourge themselves to merit one, or climb the mountain of Einsiedeln with money in their hand to buy one. In short, Zwingli's first object, which he ever kept clearly in view, was not the overthrow of the PAPACY, but the restoration of CHRISTIANITY.

He commenced a week-day lecture for the peasants who came to market on Friday. Beautifully consecutive and logical was his Sunday course of instruction. Having opened to his flock the Gospel in his expositions of St. Matthew, he passed on to the consideration of the Acts of the Apostles, that he might show them how Christianity was diffused. He next expounded the Epistles, that he might have an opportunity of inculcating the Christian graces, and showing that the Gospel is not only a "doctrine," but also a "life." He then took up the Epistles of St. Peter, that he might reconcile the two apostles, and show the harmony that reigns in the New Testament on the two great subjects of "Faith" and "Works;" and last of all he expounded the Epistle to the Hebrews, showing the harmony that subsists between the two Dispensations, that both have one substance, and that one substance is the Gospel—Salvation of Grace—and that the difference lay only in the mode of revelation, which was by type and symbol in the one case, by plain literal statements in the other. "Here they were to learn," says Zwingli, "that Christ is our alone true High Priest. That was the seed I sowed; Matthew, Luke, Paul, Peter have watered it, but God caused it to thrive." And in a letter to Myconius, of December 31st, 1519,² he reports that "at Zurich upwards of 2,000 souls had already been so strengthened and nourished by the milk of the truth, that they could now bear stronger food, and anxiously longed for it." Thus, step by step, did Zwingli lead his hearers onward from the first principles to the higher mysteries of Divine revelation.

² Cristoffel, pp. 40, 42.

A movement like this could not be confined within the walls of Zurich, any more than day can break and valley and mountaintop not catch the radiance. The seeds of this renovation were being cast by Zwingli into the air; the winds were wafting them all over Switzerland, and at many points labourers were preparing a soil in which they might take root and grow. It was in favour of the movement here that the chief actors were not, as elsewhere, kings, ministers, and princes of the Church, but the people. Let us look around and note the beginnings of this movement, by which so many of the Helvetic cantons were, at no distant day, to be emancipated from the tyranny of the Papal supremacy, and the superstitions of the Papal faith.

We begin on the northern frontier. There was at that time at Basle a brilliant cluster of men. Among the first, and by much the most illustrious of them all, was Erasmus, whose edition of the New Testament (1516) may be said to have opened a way for the Reformation. The labours of the celebrated printer Frobenius were scarcely less powerful. He printed at Basle the writings of Luther, and in a short time spread them in Italy, France, Spain, and England.³ Among the second class, the more distinguished were Capito and Hedio. They were warm friends and admirers of Zwingli, and they adopted in Basle the same measures for the propagation of the Reformed faith which the latter was prosecuting with so much success at Zurich. Capito began to expound daily to the citizens the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and with results thus described in a letter of Hedio's to Zwingli in 1520: "This most efficacious doctrine of Christ penetrates and warms the heart."⁴ The audiences increased. The doctors and monks conspired against the preacher,⁵ and raised tumults. The Cardinal-Archbishop of Mainz, desiring to possess so great a scholar, invited Capito to Mainz.⁶ On his departure, however, the work did not cease. Hedio took it up, and beginning where Capito had stopped, went on to expound the Gospel with a courageous eloquence, to which the citizens listened, although the monks ceased not to warn them against believing those who told them that the sum of all Christian doctrine was to be found in the Gospel. Scotus, said they, was a greater doctor than St. Paul. So broke the dawn of the Reformation in Basle. The number of its disciples in this seat of learning rapidly increased. Still it had a long and sore fight before obtaining the mastery. The aristocracy were powerful: the clergy were not less so: the University threw its weight into the same scale. Here was a triple rampart, which it cost the truth much effort to scale. Hedio, who succeeded Capito, was himself succeeded by Oecolampadius, the greatest of the three. Oecolampadius laboured with zeal and waited in hope for six years. At last, in 1528, Basle, the last of all the Helvetic cantons, decreed its acceptance of the Reformed faith.⁷

At Lucerne, Myconius endeavoured to sow the good seed of the Gospel; but the soil was unkindly, and the seed that sprang up soon withered. It was choked by the love of arms and the power of superstition. Oswald Geishauser—for such was his name till Erasmus *hellenised* it into Myconius—was one of the sweetest spirits and most

³ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 108.

⁴ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 229.

⁵ Scultet, p. 67.

⁶ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 229.

⁷ Gerdesius, tom. ii., sec. 106, 120, 121.

accomplished minds of that age. He was born at Lucerne (1488), and educated at Basle, where he became Rector of St. Peter's School. In 1516 he left Basle, and became Rector of the Cathedral School at Zurich. He was the first of those who sought to dispel the ignorance of his native Switzerland by labouring, in his vocation as schoolmaster, to introduce at once the knowledge of ancient letters and the love of Holy Scripture. He had previously contracted a friendship with Zwingli, and it was mainly through his efforts and counsel that the Preacher of Einsiedeln was elected to fill the vacant office at Zurich. The two friends worked lovingly together, but at length it was resolved that Myconius should carry the light to his native city of Lucerne. The parting was sad, but Myconius obeyed the call of duty and set out.

He hoped that his office as head-master in the collegiate school of this city would afford him opportunities of introducing a higher knowledge than that of Pagan literature among the citizens around the Waldstatter Lake. He began his work very quietly. The writings of Luther had preceded him, but the citizens of Lucerne, the strenuous advocates at once of a foreign service and a foreign faith, abominated these books as if they had proceeded from the pen of a demon. The expositions of Myconius in the school awakend instant suspicion. "We must burn Luther and the schoolmaster,"⁸ said the citizens to one another. Myconius went on, notwithstanding, not once mentioning Luther's name, but quietly conveying to the youth around him a knowledge of the Gospel. The whisperings soon grew into accusations. At last they burst out in fierce threats. "I live among ravenous wolves," we find him writing in December, 1520.⁹ He was summoned before the council. "He is a Lutheran," said one accuser; "he is a seducer of youth," said another. The council enjoined him not to read anything of Luther's to his scholars—not even to mention his name—nay, not even to admit the thought of him into his mind.¹⁰ The lords of Lucerne set no narrow limits to their jurisdiction. The gentle spirit of the schoolmaster was ill-fitted to buffet the tempests that assailed him on every side. He had offered the Gospel to the citizens of Lucerne, and although a few had accepted it, and loved him for its sake, the great majority had thrust it from them. There were other cities and cantons that, he knew, would gladly welcome the truth which Lucerne had rejected. He resolved, therefore, to shake off the dust from his feet as a witness against it, and depart. Before he had carried his resolution into effect, the council furnished him with but too good evidence that the course he had resolved upon was the path of duty. He was suddenly stripped of his office, and banished from the canton. He quitted the ungrateful city, where his cradle had been placed, and in 1522 he returned to Zwingli at Zurich.¹¹ Lucerne failed to verify the augury of its name, and the light that departed with its noblest son has never since returned.

Bern knew to choose the better part which Lucerne had rejected. Its citizens had won renown in arms; their city had never opened its gates to an enemy, but in the morning of the sixteenth century it was conquered by the Gospel, and the victory which truth won at

⁸ Letter to Zwingli, 1520—Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 231.

⁹ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 232.

¹⁰ "Ne Lutherum discipulis legerem; ne nominarem, imo ne in mentem eum admitterem." (Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 232.)

¹¹ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 233. D'Aubigné, vol. ii., p. 400.

Bern was the more important that it opened a door for the diffusion of the Gospel throughout Western Switzerland.

It was the powerful influence that proceeded from Zurich which originated the Reformed movement in the warlike city of Bern. Sebastian Meyer had by little and little opened the gates of the Gospel to the Bernese.¹² But eminently the Reformer of this city was Berthold Haller. He was born in Roteville,¹³ Wurtemberg, and studied at Pforzeim, where he was a fellow-student of Melancthon. In 1520 he came to Bern, and was made Canon and Preacher in the cathedral. He possessed in ample measure all the requisites for influencing public assemblies. He had a noble figure, a graceful manner, a mind richly endowed with the gifts of nature, and yet more richly furnished with the acquisitions of learning. After the example of Zwingle, he expounded from the pulpit the Gospel as contained in the evangelists. But the Bernese partook not a little of the rough and stubborn nature of the animal that figures in their cantonal shield. The clash of halberds and swords had more attraction for their ears than the sound of the Gospel. Haller's heart at times grew faint. He would pour into the bosom of Zwingle all his fears and griefs. He should perish one day by the teeth of these bears: so he wrote. "No," would Zwingle reply, in ringing words that made him ashamed of his timidity, "you must tame these bear-cubs by the Gospel. You must neither be ashamed nor afraid of them. For whosoever is ashamed of Christ before men, of him will Christ be ashamed before his Father." Thus would Zwingle lift up the hands that hung down, and set them working with fresh vigour. The sweetness of the Gospel doctrine was stronger than the sternness of Bernese nature. The bear-cubs were tamed. Reanimated by the letters of Zwingle, and the arrival from Nuremberg of a Carthusian monk named Kolb,¹⁴ with hoary head but a youthful heart, fired with the love of the Gospel, and demanding, as his only stipend, the liberty of preaching it, Haller had his zeal and perseverance rewarded by seeing in 1528 the city and powerful cauton of Bern, the first after Zurich of all the cantons of Helvetia, pass over to the side of Protestantism.¹⁵

The establishment of the Protestant worship at Bern formed an epoch in the Swiss Reformation. That event had been preceded by a conference which was numerously attended, and at which the distinctive doctrines of the two faiths were publicly discussed by the leading men of both sides.¹⁶ The deputies had their views cleared and their zeal stimulated by these discussions, and on their return to their several cantons, they set themselves with fresh vigour to complete, after the example of Bern, the work of reformation. For ten years previously it had been in progress in most of them.

¹² Gergesius, tom. ii., p. 237.

¹³ *Ibid.*, tom. ii., p. 236—Effigies.

¹⁴ Gergesius, tom. ii. p. 322.

¹⁵ Gergesius, tom. ii., p. 328. Christoffel, pp. 186-192. D'Aubigné, vol. ii., p. 359; vol. iii., pp. 259-261.

¹⁶ See summary of Disputation in Gergesius, tom. ii., sec. 118.

Chapter X.

Spread of Protestantism in Eastern Switzerland.

St. Gall—The Burgomaster—Purgation of the Churches—Canton Glarus—Valley of the Tockenburg—Embraces Protestantism—Schwytz about to enter the Movement—Turns back—Appenzell—Six of its Eight Parishes embrace the Gospel—The Grisons—Coire—Becomes Reformed—Constance—Schaffhausen—The German Bible—Its Influence—The Five Forest Cantons—They Crouch down under the Old Yoke.

The light radiating from Zurich is touching the mountain-tops of Eastern Switzerland, and Protestantism is about to make great progress in this part of the land. At this time Joachim Vadian, of a noble family in the canton of St. Gall, returning from his studies in Vienna, put his hand to the plough of the Reformation.¹ Although he filled the office of burgomaster, he did not disdain to lecture to his townsmen on the Acts of the Apostles, that he might exhibit to them the model of the primitive Church—in simplicity and uncorruptedness, how different from the pattern of their own day!² A contemporary remarked, “Here in St. Gall it is not only allowed to hear the Word of God, but the magistrates themselves preach it.”³ Vadian kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with Zwingle, whose eye continually watched the progress of the work in all parts of the field, and whose pen was ever ready to minister encouragement and direction to those engaged in it. A sudden and violent outburst of Anabaptism endangered the cause in St. Gall, but the fanaticism soon spent itself; and the preachers returning from a conference at Baden with fresh courage, the reformation of the canton was completed. The images were removed from the Church of St. Lawrence, and the robes, jewels, and gold chains which adorned them sold to found alms-houses.⁴ In 1528 we find Vadian writing, “Our temples at St. Gall are purged from idols, and the glorious foundations of the building of Christ are being more laid every day.”⁵

In the canton of Glarus the Reformed movement had been begun by Zwingle himself. On his removal to Einsiedeln, three evangelists who had been trained under him came forward to carry on the work. Their names were—Tschudi, who laboured in the town of Glarus; Brunner, in Mollis; and Schindler, in Schwanden. Zwingle had sown the seed: these three gathered in the harvest.⁶

The rays of truth penetrated into Zwingle’s native valley of the Tockenburg. With intense interest did he watch the issue of the struggle between the light and the darkness on a spot to which he was bound by the associations of his youth, and by many ties of blood and friendship. Knowing that the villagers were about to meet to decide whether they should embrace the new doctrine, or continue to worship as their fathers had done, Zwingle addressed a letter to them, in which he said, “I praise and thank God, who has

¹ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 239.

² *Ibid.*, p. 246.

³ Christoffel, p. 180.

⁴ D’Aubigné, vol. iii., p. 320.

⁵ Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 367, foot-note.

⁶ Christoffel, pp. 173, 174.

called me to the preaching of his Gospel, that he has led you, who are so dear to my heart, out of the Egyptian darkness of false human doctrines, to the wondrous light of his Word;" and he goes on earnestly to exhort them to add to their profession of the Gospel doctrine the practice of every Gospel virtue, if they would have profit, and the Gospel praise. This letter decided the victory of Protestantism in the Reformer's native valley. The council and the community in the same summer, 1524, made known their will to the clergy, "that the Word of God be preached with one accord." The Abbot of St. Gall and the Bishop of Coire sought to prevent effect being given to these instructions. They summoned three of the preachers—Melitus, Doering, and Farer—before the chapter, and charged them with disobedience. The accused answered in the spirit of St. Peter and St. John before the council, "Convince us by the Word of God, and we will submit ourselves not only to the chapter, but to the least of our brethren; but contrariwise we will submit to no one—no, not even to the mightiest potentate." The two dignitaries declined to take up the gage which the three pastors had thrown down. They retired, leaving the valley of the Tockenburg in peaceful possession of the Gospel.⁷ In the ancient canton of Schwitz, which lay nearer to Zurich than the places of which we have just spoken, there were eyes that were turned in the direction of the light. Some of its citizens addressed Zwingli by letter, desiring him to send men to them who might teach them the new way. "They had begun to loathe," they said, "the discoloured stream of the Tiber, and to thirst for those waters whereof they who had once tasted wished evermore to drink." Schwitz, however, did not intend to take her stand by the side of her sister Zurich, in the bright array of cantons that had now begun to march under the Reformed banner.

The majority of her citizens, content to drink at the muddy stream from which some had turned away, were not yet prepared to join in the request, "Give us of this water, that we may go no more to Rome to draw." Their opportunity was let slip. They spurned the advice of Zwingli not to sell their blood for gold, by sending their sons to fight for the Pope, as he was now soliciting them to do. Schwitz became one of the most hostile of all the Helvetic cantons to the Reformer and his work.

But though the cloud still continued to rest on Schwitz, the light shone on the cantons around and beyond it.

Appenzell opened its mountain fastnesses for the entrance of the heralds of the Reformed faith. Walter Klaxer, a native of the canton, who had studied at Paris, and been converted by the writings of Luther, began in 1522 to preach here with great zeal. He found an efficient coadjutor in James Schurtanner, minister at Teufen. We find Zwingli writing to the latter in 1524 as follows: "Be manly and firm, dear James, and let not yourself be overcome, that you may be called Israel. We must contend with the foe till the day dawn, and the powers of darkness hide themselves in their own black night. . . . It is to be hoped that, although your canton is the last in the order of the Confederacy,⁸ it will not be the last in the faith. For these people dwell not in the centre of a fertile country, where the dangers of selfishness and pleasure are greatest, but in a mountain district where a pious simplicity can be better preserved, which guileless simplicity, joined to an intelligent

⁷ Gerdesius, tom. ii., pp. 368, 394. Christoffel, pp. 175, 178.

⁸ Appenzell joined the Swiss league in 1513, and was the last in order of the so-called old cantons.

piety, affords the best and surest abiding-place for faith.” The audiences became too large for the churches to contain. The Gospel needs neither pillared aisle nor fretted roof, said they; let us go to the meadow. They assembled in the open fields, and their worship lost nothing of impressiveness, or sublimity, by the change. The echoes of their mountains awoke responsive to the voice of the preacher proclaiming the “good tidings,” and the psalm with which their service was closed blended with the sound of the torrents as they rolled down from the summits.⁹ Out of the eight parishes of the canton, six embraced the Reformation.

Following the course of the Upper Rhine, the Protestant movement penetrated to Coire, which nestles at the foot of the Splügen pass. The soil had been prepared here by the schoolmaster Salandrinus, a friend of Zwingli. In 1523 the Diet met at Coire to take into consideration the abuses in the Church, and to devise means for their removal. Eighteen articles were drawn up and confirmed in the year following, of which we give only the first as being the most important: “Each clergyman shall, for himself, purely and fully preach the Word of God and the doctrine of Christ to his people, and shall not mislead them by the doctrines of human invention. Whoever will not or cannot fulfil this official duty shall be deprived of his living, and draw no part of the same.” In virtue of this decision, the Dean of St. Martin’s, after a humiliating confession of his inability to preach, was obliged to give way to Zwingli’s friend, John Dorfman, or Comander—a man of great courage, and renowned for his scholarship—who now became the chief instrument in the reform of the city and canton. Many of the priests were won to the Gospel: those who remained on the side of Rome, with the bishop at their head, attempted to organise an opposition to the movement. Their violence was so great that the Protestant preacher, Comander, had to be accompanied to the church by an armed guard, and defended, even in the sanctuary, from insult and outrage. In the country districts, where more than forty Protestant evangelists, “like fountains of living water, were refreshing hill and dale,” the same precautions had to be taken. Finding that the work was progressing nevertheless, the bishop complained of the preachers to the Diet, as “heretics, insurrectionists, sacrilegists, abusers of the holy Sacraments, and despisers of the mass-sacrifice,” and besought the aid of the civil power to put them down. When Zwingli heard of the storm that was gathering, he wrote to the magistrates of Coire with apostolic vigour, pointing to the sort of opposition that was being offered to the Gospel and its preachers in their territories, and he charged them, as they valued the light now beginning to illuminate their land, and dreaded being plunged again into the old darkness, in which the Truth had been held captive, and its semblance palmed upon them, to the cozening them of their worldly goods, and, as he feared he had ground to add, of their souls’ salvation, that they should protect the heralds of the Gospel from insult and violence. Zwingli’s earnest appeal produced a powerful effect in all the councils and communities of the Grisons; and when the bishop, through the Abbot of St. Luzi, presented his accusation against the Protestant preachers, in the Diet which met at Coire on Christmas Day, 1525, craving that they should be condemned without a hearing, that assembly answered with dignity, “The law which demands that no one be condemned unheard, shall also be observed in this instance.” There followed a public disputation at Ilanz, and the conversion of seven more

⁹ Christoffel, pp. 179-181.

mass-priests.¹⁰ The issue was that the canton was won. “Christ waxed strong everywhere in these mountains,” writes Salandrinus to Zwingli, “like the tender grass in spring.”¹¹

Nor did the reform find here its limits. Napoleon had not yet cut a path across these glacier-crowned mountains for his cannon to pass into Italy, but the Gospel, without waiting for the picks and blasting agencies of the conqueror to open its path, climbed these mighty steeps and took possession of the Grisons, the ancient Rhoetia. The bishop fled to the Tyrol; religious liberty was proclaimed in the territory; the Protestant faith took root, and here where are placed the sources of those waters which, rushing down the mountains’ sides, form rivers in the valleys below, were opened fountains of living waters. From the crest of the Alps, where it had now seated itself, the Gospel may be said to have looked down upon Italy. Not yet, however, was that land to be given to it.¹²

It is interesting to think that the light spread on the east as far as to Constance and its lake, where a hundred years before John Huss had poured out his blood. After various reverses the movement of reform was at last crowned, in the year 1528, by the removal of the images and altars from the churches, and the abolition of all ceremonies, including that of the mass itself.¹³ All the districts that lie along the banks of the Thur, of the Lake of Constance, and of the Upper Rhine, embraced the Gospel. At Mammern, which adjoins the spot where the Rhine issues from the lake, the inhabitants flung their images into the water. The statue of St. Blaise, on being thrown in, stood upright for a short while, and casting a reproachful look at the ungrateful and impious men who had formerly worshipped and were now attempting to drown it, swam across the lake to Cathorn on the opposite shore. So does a monk named Lang, whom Hettinger quotes, relate.¹⁴ After a protracted struggle, Protestantism gained the victory over the Papacy in Schaffhausen. The chief labourers there were Sebastian Hoffmeister, Sebastian Hoffman, and Erasmus Ritter. On the Reformed worship being set up there, after the model of Zurich in 1529, the inhabitants of Eastern Switzerland generally may be said to have enjoyed the light of Protestant truth. The change that had passed over their land was like that which spring brings with it, when the snows melt, and the torrents gush forth, and the flowers appear, and all is fertility and verdure up to the very margin of the glacier. Yet more welcome was this spiritual spring-time, and a higher joy did it inspire. The winter—the winter of ascetic severities, vain mummeries, profitless services, and burdensome rites—was past, and the sweet light of a returning springtime now shone upon the Swiss. From the husks of superstition they turned to feed on the bread and water of life.

Perhaps the most efficient instrument in this reform remains to be mentioned. In every canton a little band of labourers arose at the moment when they were needed. All of them were men of intrepidity and zeal, and most of them were pre-eminent in piety and scholarship. In this distinguished phalanx, Zwingli was the most distinguished; but in those around him there were worthy companions in arms, well entitled to fight side by side

¹⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., pp. 228-230. Cristoffel, pp. 183, 185.

¹¹ Scultet., *Annal.*, Dec. i., p. 290; *apud* Gerdesius, tom. ii., pp. 292 and 304, 306. Christoffel, pp. 182-185.

¹² Gerdesius, tom. ii., pp. 292, 293.

¹³ Hottinger, *Helv.*, pp. 380-384. Sleidan, lib. vi.; *apud* Gerdesius, tom. ii., p. 363.

¹⁴ D’Aubigné, vol. iv., p. 306.

with him. But the little army was joined by another combatant, and that combatant was one common to all the German-speaking cantons—the Word of God. Luther’s German edition of the New Testament appeared in 1522. Introduced into Switzerland, it became the mightiest instrumentality for the furtherance of the movement. It came close to the conscience and heart of the people. The pastor could not be always by their side, but in the Bible they had an instructor who never left them. By night as well as by day this voice spoke to them, cheering, inspiring, and upholding them. Of the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures in the mother tongue, Zwingle said, “Every peasant’s cottage became a school, in which the highest art of all was practised, the reading of the Old and New Testament; for the right and true Schoolmaster of his people is God, without whom all languages and all arts are but nets of deception and treachery. Every cow and goose herd became thereby better instructed in the knowledge of salvation than the schoolmen.”¹⁵ From the Bible eminently had Zwingle drawn his knowledge of truth. He felt how sweetly it works, yet how powerfully it convinces; and he desired above all things that the people of Switzerland should repair to the same fountains of knowledge. They did so, and hence the solidity, as well as the rapidity, of the movement. There is no more Herculean task than to change the opinions and customs of a nation, and the task is ten times more Herculean when these opinions and customs are stamped with the veneration of ages. It was a work of this magnitude which was accomplished in Switzerland in the short space of ten years. The truth entered, and the heart was cleansed from the pollution of lust, the understanding was liberated from the yoke of tradition and human doctrines, and the conscience was relieved from the burden of monastic observances. The emancipation was complete as well as speedy; the intellect, the heart, the conscience, all were renovated; and a new era of political and industrial life was commenced that same hour in the Reformed cantons.

Unhappily, the five Forest Cantons did not share in this renovation. The territory of these cantons contains, as every traveller knows, the grandest scenery in all Switzerland. It possesses the higher distinction of having been the cradle of Swiss independence. But those who had contended on many a bloody field to break the yoke of Austria, were content, in the sixteenth century, to remain under the yoke of Rome. They even threatened to bring back the Austrian arms, unless the Reformed cantons would promise to retrace their steps, said return to the faith they had cast off. It is not easy to explain why the heroes of the fourteenth century should have been so lacking in courage in the sixteenth. Their physical courage had been nursed in the presence of physical danger. They had to contend with the winter storms, with the avalanches and the mountain torrents; this made them strong in limb and bold in spirit. But the same causes which strengthen physical bravery sometimes weaken moral courage. They were insensible to the yoke that pressed upon the soul. If their personal liberty or their material interests were assailed, they were ready to defend them with their blood; but the higher liberty they were unable to appreciate. Their more secluded position shut them out from the means of information accessible to the other cantons. But the main cause of the difference lay in the foreign service to which these cantons were specially addicted. That service had demoralised them. Husbanding their blood that they might sell it for gold, they were deaf when liberty pleaded. Thus their grand mountains became the asylum of the superstitions in which their

¹⁵ Christoffel, p. 173.

fathers had lived, and the bulwark of that base vassalage which the other cantons had thrown off.

Chapter XI.

The Question of Forbidden Meats.

The Foreign Enlistments—The Worship at Zurich as yet Unchanged—Zwingle makes a Beginning—Fasts and Forbidden Meats—Bishop of Constance Interferes—Zwingle's Defence—The Council of Two Hundred—The Council gives no Decision—Opposition organised against Zwingle—Constance, Lausanne, and the Diet against Zwingle—First Swiss Edict of Persecution—Diet Petitioned to Cancel it—The Reformed Band—Luther Silent—Zwingle Raises his Voice—The Swiss Printing-press.

Our attention must again be directed to the centre of the movement at Zurich. In 1521 we find the work still progressing, although at every step it provokes opposition and awakens conflict. The first trouble grew out of the affair of foreign service. Charles V. and Francis I. were on the point of coming to blows on the plains of Italy. On the outlook for allies, they were making overtures to the Swiss. The men of Zurich promised their swords to the emperor. The other cantons engaged theirs to the French. Zwingle, as a patriot and a Christian minister, denounced a service in which Swiss would meet Swiss, and brother shed the blood of brother in a quarrel which was not theirs. To what purpose should he labour in Switzerland by the preaching of the Gospel to break the yoke of the Pope, while his fellow-citizens were shedding their blood in Italy to maintain it? Nevertheless, the solicitations of the Cardinal-Archbishop of Sion, who had sent an agent into the canton to enlist recruits for the emperor, to whom the Pope had now joined himself in alliance, prevailed, and a body of 2,700 Zurichers marched out at the gates, bound on this enterprise.¹ They won no laurels in the campaign; the usual miseries—wounds and death, widows and orphans, vices and demoralisation—formed its sequel, and many a year passed before another body of Zurichers left their home on a similar errand. Zwingle betook himself more earnestly to the preaching of the Word of God, persuaded that only this could extinguish that love of gold which was entangling his countrymen with foreign princes, and inspire them with a horror of these mercenary and fratricidal wars into which this greed of sordid treasure was plunging them, to the ruin of their country.

The next point to be attacked by the Reformer was the fast-days of the Church. Hitherto no change had been made in the worship at Zurich. The altar with its furniture still stood; mass was still said; the images still occupied their niches; and the festivals were daily honoured as they came round. Zwingle was content, meanwhile, to sow the seed. He precipitated nothing, for he saw that till the understanding was enlightened, and the heart renovated, outward change would nought avail. But now, after four years' inculcation of the truth, he judged that his flock was not unprepared to apply the principles he had taught them. He made a beginning with the smaller matters. In expounding the fourth chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, Zwingle took occasion to maintain that fasts appointed by the Church, in which certain meats were forbidden to be eaten at certain times, had no foundation in the Bible.² Certain citizens of Zurich, sober and worthy men for the most part, resolved to reduce Zwingle's doctrine to practice. They ate flesh on forbidden days. The monks took alarm. They saw that the whole question of ecclesiastical ordinances was

¹ Christoffel, pp. 51, 52.

² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 133.

at stake. If men could eat forbidden meats without purchasing permission from the Church, might not her commands be set at nought on other weightier points? What helped to increase the irritation were the words of Zwingli, in his sermon, which had given special umbrage to the war party:—"Many think that to eat flesh is improper, nay, a sin, although God has nowhere forbidden it; but to sell human flesh for slaughter and carnage, they hold to be no sin at all."³

It began to be clear how Zwingli's doctrine would work; its consequences threatened to be very alarming, indeed. The revenues of the clergy it would diminish, and it would withdraw the halberds of the Swiss from the service of Rome and her allies. The enemies of the Reformation, who up to this time had watched the movement at Zurich in silence, but in no little uneasiness, began now to bestir themselves. The Church's authority and their own pockets were invaded. Numerous foes arose to oppose Zwingli.

The tumult on this weighty affair of "forbidden meats" increased, and the Bishop of Constance, in whose diocese Zurich was situated, sent his suffragan, Melchior Bottli, and two others, to arrange matters. The suffragan-bishop appeared (April 9th, 1522) before the Great Council of Zurich. He accused Zwingli, without mentioning him by name, of preaching novelties subversive of the public peace; and said if he were allowed to teach men to transgress the ordinances of the Church, a time would soon come when no law would be obeyed, and a universal anarchy would overwhelm all things.⁴ Zwingli met the charge of sedition and disorder by pointing to Zurich, "in which he had now been four years, preaching the Gospel of Jesus, and the doctrine of the apostles, with the sweat of his brow, and which was more quiet and peaceful than any other town in the Confederacy." "Is not then," he asked, "Christianity the best safeguard of the general security? Although all ceremonies were abolished, would Christianity therefore cease to exist? May not the people be led by another path than ceremonies to the knowledge of the truth, even by the path which Christ and his apostles pursued?" He concluded by asking that people should be at liberty to fast all the days of the year, if so it pleased them, but that no one should be compelled to fast by the threat of excommunication.⁵ The suffragan had no other reply than to warn the councillors not to separate themselves from a Church out of which there was no salvation. To this the quick retort of Zwingli was, "that this need not alarm them, seeing the Church consists of all those in every place who believe upon the Lord Jesus—the Rock which St. Peter confessed;—"it is out of this Church," said he, "that there is no salvation." The immediate result of this discussion—an augury of greater things to come—was the conversion of one of the deputies of the bishop to the Reformed faith—John Vanner.⁶

The Council of Two Hundred broke up without pronouncing any award as between the two parties. It contented itself with craving the Pope, through the Bishop of Constance, to give some solution of the controverted point, and with enjoining the faithful meanwhile to abstain from eating flesh in Lent. In this conciliatory course, Zwingli went thoroughly with the council. This was the first open combat between the champions of the two faiths;

³ Christoffel, p. 58.

⁴ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 134.

⁵ Ruchat, tom. i., pp. 134, 135.

⁶ Christoffel, pp. 58-62.

it had been fought in presence of the supreme council of the canton; the prestige of victory, all men felt, remained with the Reformers, and the ground won was not only secured, but extended by a treatise which Zwingli issued a few days thereafter on *the free use of meats*.⁷

Rome resolved to return to the charge. She saw in Zurich a second Wittenberg, and she thought to crush the revolt that was springing up there before it had gathered strength. When Zwingli was told that a new assault was preparing against him, he replied, "Let them come on; I fear them as the beetling cliff fears the waves that thunder at its feet." It was arranged that Zwingli should be attacked from four different quarters at once. The end of the Zurich movement, it was believed, was near.

The first attacking galley was fitted out in the port of Zurich; the other three sailed out of the episcopal harbour of Constance. One day, the aged Canon Hoffman tabled in the chapter of Zurich a long accusatory writing against the Reformer. This, which was the opening move of the projected campaign, was easily met. A few words of defence from Zwingli, and the aged canon was fain to flee before the storm which, at the instigation of others, he had drawn upon himself. "I gave him," writes Zwingli to Myconius, "a shaking such as an ox does, when with its horns it tosses a heap of straw up in the air."

The second attack came from the Bishop of Constance. In a pastoral letter which he issued to his clergy, he drew a frightful picture of the state of Christendom. On the frontier stood the Turk; and in the heart of the land were men, more dangerous than Turks, sowing "damnable heresies." The two, the Turk and the heresies, were so mixed up in the bishop's address, that the people, whose minds the pastoral was intended to influence, could hardly avoid concluding that the one was the cause of the other, and that if they should imbibe the heresy, their certain doom was to fall by the scimitar of the Turk.

The third attack was meant to support the second. It came from the Bishop of Lausanne, and also took the shape of a pastoral letter to the clergy of his diocese. It forbade all men, under pain of being denied the Sacrament in their last hours, or refused Christian burial, to read the writings of Zwingli or of Luther, or to speak a word in private or public, to the disparagement of the "holy rites and customs of the Church." By these means, the Roman ecclesiastics hoped utterly to discredit Zwingli with the people. They only extended the reputation they meant to ruin. The pastoral was taken to pieces by Zwingli in a tractate, entitled *Archeteles* (the beginning, and the end), which overflowed with hard argument and trenchant humour.⁸ The stereotyped and vapid phrases in which the bishops indulged, fell pointless compared with the convincing reasonings of the Reformer, backed as these were by facts drawn from the flagrant abuses of the Church, and the oppressions under which Switzerland groaned, and which were too patent to be denied by any save those who had a hand in their infliction, or were interested in their support.⁹

The first three attacks having failed to destroy Zwingli, or arrest his work, the fourth was now launched against him. It was the most formidable of the four. The Diet, the

⁷ Gerdesius, tom i., p. 270. Ruchat, tom. i., p. 135.

⁸ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 138. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 273.

⁹ Christoffel, pp. 66, 67.

supreme temporal power in the Swiss Confederacy, was then sitting at Baden. To it the Bishop of Constance carried his complaint, importuning the court to suppress by the secular arm the propagation of the new doctrines by Zwingle and his fellow-labourers. The Diet was not likely to turn a deaf ear to the bishop's solicitations. The majority of its members were pensioners of France and Italy, the friends of the "foreign service" of which Zwingle was the declared and uncompromising foe. They regarded the preacher of Zurich with no favourable eye. Only the summer before (1522), the Diet, at its meeting in Lucerne, had put upon its records an order "that priests whose sermons produced dissension and disorder among the people should desist from such preaching." This was the first persecuting edict which disgraced the statute-book of Helvetia.¹⁰

It had remained a dead letter hitherto, but now the Diet resolved to put it in force, and made a beginning by apprehending and imprisoning Urban Weiss, a Protestant pastor in the neighbourhood of Baden. The monks, who saw that the Diet had taken its side in the quarrel between Rome and the Gospel, laid aside their timidity, and assuming the aggressive, strove by clamour and threats to excite the authorities to persecution.

The Reformer of Zurich did not suffer himself to be intimidated by the storm that was evidently brewing. He saw in it an intimation of the Divine will that he should not only display the banner of truth more openly than ever in the pulpit of Zurich, but that he should wave it in the sight of the whole Confederacy. In the June following, he summoned a meeting of the friends of the Gospel at Einsiedeln. This summons was numerously responded to. Zwingle submitted two petitions to the assembly, to be signed by its members, one addressed to the Diet, and the other to the Bishop of the diocese. The petitions, which were in substance identical, prayed "that the preaching of the Gospel might not be forbidden, and that it might be permitted to the priests to marry." A summary of the Reformed faith accompanied these petitions, that the members of the Diet might know what it was they were asked to protect,¹¹ and an appeal was made to their patriotism, whether the diffusion of doctrines so wholesome, drawn from their original fountains in the Sacred Scriptures, would not tend to abolish the many evils under which their country confessedly groaned, and at once purify its private morals, and reinvigorate and restore its public virtue.

These petitions were received and no further cared for by those to whom they were presented. Nevertheless, their influence was great with the lower orders of the clergy, and the common people. The manifesto that accompanied them laid bare the corruption which had taken place in the national religion, and the causes at work in the deterioration of the national spirit, and became a banner round which the friends of Gospel truth, and the champions of the rights of conscience, leagued themselves. Thus banded together, they were abler to withstand their enemies. The cause grew and waxed strong by the efforts it made to overcome the obstacles it encountered. Its enemies became its friends. The storms that warred around the tree Zwingle had planted, instead of overturning it, cleared away the mephitic vapours with which the air around it was laden, and lent a greater luxuriance

¹⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 140.

¹¹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 141. Gerdesius, tom. i., pp. 270-277.

to its boughs. Its branches spread wider and yet wider around, and its fibres going still deeper into the soil, it firmly rooted itself in the land of the Swiss.

The friends of the Reformation in Germany were greatly encouraged and emboldened by what was now taking place in Switzerland. If Luther had suddenly and mysteriously vanished, Zwingle's voice had broken the silence which had followed the disappearance of the former. If the movement stood still for the time on the German plains, it was progressing on the mountains of Switzerland. The hopes of the Protestants lived anew. The friends of truth everywhere could not but mark the hand of God in raising up Zwingle when Luther had been withdrawn, and saw in it an indication of the Divine purpose, to advance the cause of Protestantism, although emperors and Diets were "taking counsel together" against it. The persecuted in the surrounding countries, turning their eyes to Switzerland, sought under the freer forms and more tolerant spirit of its government that protection which they were denied under their own. Thus from one day to another the friends of the movement multiplied in Helvetia.

The printing-press was a powerful auxiliary to the living agency at work in Switzerland. Zurich and Basle were the first of the Swiss towns to possess this instrumentality. There had been, it is true, a printing-press in Basle ever since the establishment of its University, in 1460, by Pope Pius II.; but Zurich had no printing-press till 1519, when Christopher Froschauer, from Bavaria, established one. Arriving in Zurich, Froschauer purchased the right of citizenship, and made the city of his adoption famous by the books he issued from his press. He became in this regard the right hand of Zwingle, to whom he afforded all the facilities in his power for printing and publishing his works. Froschauer thus did great service to the movement. The third city of Switzerland to possess a printing-press was Geneva. A German named Koln, in 1523, printed there, in the Gothic character, the *Constitutions of the Synod of the Diocese of Lausanne*, by order of the bishop, Sebastien de Mont-Faulcon. The fourth city of the Swiss which could boast a printing establishment was Neufchâtel. There lived Pierre de Wingle, commonly called Pirot Picard, who printed in 1535 the Bible in French, translated by Robert Olivetan, the cousin of Calvin. This Bible formed a large folio, and was in the Gothic character.¹²

¹² Ruchat, tom. i., pp. 150, 151.

Chapter XII.

Public Disputation at Zurich.

Leo Juda and the Monk—Zwingle Demands a Public Disputation—Great Council Grants it—Six Hundred Members Assemble—Zwingle's Theses—President Roist—Deputies of the Bishop of Constance—Attempt to Stifle Discussion—Zwingle's Challenge—Silence—Faber Rises—Antiquity—Zwingle's Reply—Hoffman's Appeal—Leo Juda—Doctor of Tübingen—Decree of Lords of Zurich—Altercation between Faber and Zwingle—End of Conference,

Early in the following year (1523) the movement at Zurich advanced a step. An incident, in itself of small moment, furnished the occasion. Leo Juda, the school-companion of Zwingle at Basle, had just come to Zurich to assume the Curacy of St. Peter's. One day the new pastor entered a chapel where an Augustine monk was maintaining with emphasis, in his sermon, "that man could satisfy Divine justice himself." "Most worthy father," cried Leo Juda, but in calm and friendly tones, "hear me a moment; and ye, good people, give ear, while I speak as becomes a Christian." In a brief address he showed them, out of the Scriptures, how far beyond man's power it was to save himself. A disturbance broke out in the church, some taking the side of the monk, and others that of the Curate of St. Peter's. The Little Council summoned both parties before them. This led to fresh disturbances. Zwingle, who had been desirous for some time to have the grounds of the Reformed faith publicly discussed, hoping thereby to bear the banner of truth onwards, demanded of the Great Council a public disputation. Not otherwise, he said, could the public peace be maintained, or a wise rule laid down by which the preachers might guide themselves. He offered, if it was proved that he was in error, not only to keep silence for the future, but submit to punishment; and if, on the other hand, it should be shown that his doctrine was in accordance with the Word of God, he claimed for the public preaching of it protection from the public authority.

Leave was given to hold a disputation, summonses were issued by the council to the clergy far and near; and the 29th day of January, 1523, was fixed on for the conference.¹

It is necessary to look a little closely at what Zwingle now did, and the grounds and reasons of his procedure. The Reformer of Zurich held that the determination of religious questions appertains to the Church, and that the Church is made up of all those who profess Christianity according to the Scriptures. Why then did he submit this matter—the question as to which is the true Gospel—to the Great Council of Zurich, the supreme civil authority in the State?

Zwingle in doing so did not renounce his theory, but in reconciling his practice with his theory, in the present instance, it is necessary to take into account the following considerations. It was not possible for the Reformer of Zurich in the circumstances to realise his *ideal*; there was yet no Church Organisation; and to submit such a question at large to the general body of the professors of the Reformed faith would have been, in their immature state of knowledge, to risk—nay, to invite—divisions and strifes. Zwingle, therefore, chose in preference the Council of Two Hundred as part of the Reformed

¹ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 279. Christoffel, pp. 95, 96.

body—as, in fact, the ecclesiastical and political representative of the Church. The case obviously was abnormal. Besides, in submitting this question to the council, Zwingle expressly stipulated that all arguments should be drawn from the Scriptures; that the council should decide according to the Word of God; and that the Church, or ecclesiastical community, should be free to accept or reject their decision, according as they might deem it to be founded on the Bible.²

Practically, and in point of fact, this affair was a conference or disputation between the two great religious parties in presence of the council—not that the council could add to the truth of that which drew its authority from the Bible exclusively. It judged of the truth or falsehood of the matter submitted to it, in order that it might determine the course it became the council to pursue in the exercise of its own functions as the rulers of the canton. It must hear and judge not for *spiritual* but for *legal* effects. If the Gospel which Zwingle and his fellow-labourers are publishing be true, the council will give the protection of law to the preaching of it.

That this was the light in which Zwingle understood the matter is plain, we think, from his own words. “The matter,” says he, “stands thus. We, the preachers of the Word of God in Zurich, on the one hand, give the Council of Two Hundred plainly to understand, that we commit to them that which properly it belongs to the whole Church to decide, only on the condition that in their consultations and conclusion they hold themselves to the Word of God alone; and, on the other hand, that they only act so far in the name of the Church, as the Church tacitly and voluntarily adopts their conclusions and ordinances.”³ Zwingle discovers, in the very dawn of the Reformation, wonderfully clear views on this subject; although it is true that not till a subsequent period in the history of Protestantism was the distinction between things spiritual and things secular, and, correspondingly, between the authorities competent to decide upon the one and upon the other, clearly and sharply drawn; and, especially, not till a subsequent period were the principles that ought to regulate the exercise of the civil power about religious matters—in other words, the principles of toleration—discovered and proclaimed. It is in Switzerland, and at Zurich, that we find the first enunciation of the liberal ideas of modern times.

The lords of Zurich granted the conference craved by Zwingle, and published a formal decree to that effect. They invited all the curés or pastors, and all ecclesiastics of whatever degree, in all the towns of the canton. The Bishop of Constance, in whose diocese Zurich was situated, was also respectfully asked to be present, either in person or by deputy. The day fixed upon was the 29th of January. The disputation was to be conducted in the German language, all questions were to be determined by the Word of God, and it was added that after the conference had pronounced on all the questions discussed in it, only what was agreeable to Scripture was to be brought into the pulpit.⁴

That an ecclesiastical Diet should convene in Zurich, and that Rome should be summoned before it to show cause why she should longer retain the supremacy she had wielded for a thousand years, appeared to the men of those times a most extraordinary

² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 160.

³ Christoffel, p. 96.

⁴ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 160.

and, indeed, portentous event. It made a great stir all over Switzerland. “There was much wondering,” says Bullinger in his Chronicle, “what would come out of it.” The city in which it was to be held prepared fittingly to receive the many venerable and dignified visitors who had been invited. Warned by the examples of Constance and Basle, Zurich made arrangements for maintaining public decorum during the session of the conference. The public-houses were ordered to be shut at an early hour; the students were warned that noise and riot on the street would be punished; all persons of ill-fame were sent out of the town, and two councillors, whose immoralities had subjected them to public criticism, were forbidden, meanwhile, attendance in the council chamber. These things betokened that already the purifying breath of the Gospel, more refreshing than the cool breeze from the white Alps on lake and city in the heat of summer, had begun to be felt in Zurich. Zwingle’s enemies called it “a Diet of vagabonds,” and loudly prophesied that all the beggars in Switzerland would infallibly grace it with their presence. Had the magistrates of Zurich expected guests of this sort, they would have prepared for their coming after a different fashion.

Zwingle prepared for the conference which he had been the main instrument of convoking, by composing an abridgment of doctrine, consisting of sixty-seven articles, which he got printed, and offered to defend from the Word of God. The first article struck at that dogma of Romanism which declares that “Holy Scripture has no authority unless it be sanctioned by the Church.” The others were not less important, namely, that Jesus Christ is our only Teacher and Mediator; that he alone is the Head of believers; that all who are united to him are members of his body, children of God, and members of the Church; that it is by power from their Head alone that Christians can do any good act; that from him, not from the Church or the clergy, comes the efficacy that sanctifies; that Jesus Christ is the one sovereign and eternal Priest; that the mass is not a sacrifice; that every kind of food may be made use of on all days; that monkery, with all that appertains to it—frocks, tonsures, and badges—is to be rejected; that Holy Scripture permits all men, without exception, to marry; that ecclesiastics, as well as others, are bound to obey the magistrate; that magistrates have received power from God to put malefactors⁵ to death; that God alone can pardon sin; that he gives pardon solely for the love of Christ; that the pardon of sins for money is simony; and, in fine, that there is no purgatory after death.⁶

By the publication of these theses, Zwingle struck the first blow in the coming campaign, and opened the discussions in the canton before the conference had opened them in the Council Hall of Zurich.⁷

When the day (29th January, 1523) arrived, 600 persons assembled in the Town Hall. They met at the early hour of six. The conference included persons of rank, canons, priests, scholars, strangers, and many citizens of Zurich. The Bishop of Constance, the diocesan, was invited,⁸ but appeared only by his deputies, John Faber, Vicar-General, and James von Anwyl, knight, and Grand Master of the Episcopal Court at Constance.

⁵ This article would appear to be directed against the teaching of the Anabaptists, who began to appear about the year 1522.

⁶ Ruchat, tom i., p. 161.

⁷ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 279. Christoffel, p. 99.

⁸ Hotting., 106, 107. Puchat, tom. i., p. 160.

Deputies of the Reformation appeared only from Bern and Schaffhausen; so weak as yet was the cause in the Swiss cantons.

The burgomaster, Marx Roist, presided. He was, says Christoffel, “a hoary-headed warrior, who had fought with Zwingle at Marignano.” He had a son named Gaspar, a captain in the Pope’s bodyguard, nevertheless he himself was a staunch Reformer, and adhered faithfully to Zwingle, although Pope Adrian had tried to gain him by letters full of praise.⁹ In a vacant space in the middle of the assembly sat Zwingle alone at a table. Bibles in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages lay open before him. All eyes were turned upon him. He was there to defend the Gospel he had preached, which so many, now face to face with him, had loudly denounced as heresy and sedition, and the cause of the strifes that were beginning to rend the cantons. His position was not unlike that of Luther at Worms. The cause was the same, only the tribunal was less august, the assemblage less brilliant, and the immediate risks less formidable. But the faith that upheld the champion of Worms also animated the hero of Zurich.

The venerable president rose. He stated briefly why the conference had been convoked, adding, “If any one has anything to say against the doctrine of Zwingle, now is the time to speak.”¹⁰ All eyes were turned on the bishop’s representative, John Faber. Faber had formerly been a friend of Zwingle, but having visited Rome and been flattered by the Pope, he was now thoroughly devoted to the Papal interests, and had become one of Zwingle’s bitterest opponents.

Faber sat still, but James von Anwyl rose. He tried to throw oil upon the waters, and to allay the storm raging, not indeed in the council chamber—for there all was calm—but in Zurich. The deputies, he said, were present not to engage in controversy, but to learn the unhappy divisions that were rending the canton, and to employ their power in healing them. He concluded by dropping a hint of a General Council, that was soon to meet, and which would amicably arrange this whole matter.

Zwingle saw through a device which threatened to rob him of all the advantage that he hoped to gain from the conference. “This was now,” he said, “his fifth year in Zurich. He had preached God’s message to men as contained in his own Word;” and, submitting his theses, he offered to make good before the assembly their agreement with the Scriptures; and looking round upon all, said, “Go on then, in God’s name. Here I am to answer you.”¹¹ Thus again challenged, Faber, who wore a red hat, rose, but only to attempt to stifle discussion, by holding out the near prospect of a General Council. “It would meet at Nuremberg within a year’s time.”¹²

“And why not,” instantly retorted the Reformer, “at Erfurt or Wittemberg?” Zwingle entered fully into the grounds of his doctrine, and closed by expressing his convictions that a General Council they would not soon see, and that the one now convened was as good as any the Pope was likely to give them. Had they not in this conference, doctors, theologians, jurisconsults, and wise men, just as able to read the Word of God in the

⁹ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 161.

¹⁰ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 279.

¹¹ Christoffel, p. 102.

¹² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 162.

original Hebrew and Greek, and as well qualified to determine all questions by this, the alone infallible rule, as any Council they were ever likely to see in Christendom?¹³

A long pause followed Zwingle's address. He stood unaccused in the midst of those who had so loudly blamed and condemned him out of doors. Again he challenged his opponents: he challenged them a second time, he challenged them a third time. No one spoke. At length Faber rose—not to take up the gauntlet which Zwingle had thrown down, but to tell how he had discomfited in argument the pastor of Fislisbach, whom, as we have already said, the Diet at Baden had imprisoned—and to express his amazement at the pass to which things had come, when the ancient usages which had lasted for twelve centuries were forsaken, and it was calmly concluded “that Christendom had been in error fourteen hundred years!”

The Reformer quickly replied that error was not less error because the belief of it had lasted fourteen hundred years, and that in the worship of God antiquity of usage was nothing, unless ground or warrant for it could be found in the Sacred Scriptures.¹⁴

He denied that the false dogmas and the idolatrous practices which he was combating came from the first ages, or were known to the early Christians. They were the growth of times less enlightened and men less holy. Successive Councils and doctors, in comparatively modern times, had rooted up the good and planted the evil in its room. The prohibition of marriage to priests he instanced as a case in point.¹⁵

Master Hoffman, of Schaffhausen, then rose. He had been branded, he said, as a heretic at Lausanne, and chased from that city for no other offence than having preached, agreeably to the Word of God, against the invocation of the saints. Therefore he must adjure the Vicar-General, Faber, in the name of God, to show him those passages in the Bible in which such invocation is permitted and enjoined. To this solemn appeal Faber remained silent.

Leo Juda next came forward. He had but recently come to Zurich, he said, as a labourer with Zwingle in the work of the Gospel. He was not able to see that the worship of the Church of Rome had any foundation in Scripture. He could not recommend to his people any other intercessor than the one Mediator, even Christ Jesus, nor could he bid them repose on any other expiation of their sins than his death and passion on the cross. If this belief of his was false, he implored Faber to show him from the Word of God a better way.

This second appeal brought Faber to his feet. But, so far as proof or authority from the Bible was concerned, he might as well have remained silent. Not deigning even a glance at the Canon of Inspiration, he went straight to the armoury of the Roman Church. He pleaded first of all the unanimous consent of the Fathers, and secondly the Litany and canon of the mass, which assures us that we ought to invoke the mother of God and all the saints. Coming at last to the Bible, but only to misinterpret it, he said that the Virgin herself had authorised this worship, inasmuch as she had foretold that it would be rendered

¹³ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 163.

¹⁴ Christoffel, pp. 105, 106.

¹⁵ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 164.

to her in all coming time: “From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.”¹⁶ And not less had her cousin Elizabeth sanctioned it when she gave expression to her surprise and humility in these words: “Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?”¹⁷ These proofs he thought ought to suffice, and if they were not to be held as establishing his point, nothing remained for him but to hold his peace.¹⁸

The Vicar-General found a supporter in Martin Blantsch, Doctor of Tubingen. He was one of those allies who are more formidable to the cause they espouse than to that which they combat. “It was a prodigious, rashness,” said Dr. Blantsch, “to censure or condemn usages established by Councils which had assembled by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The decisions of the first four General Councils ought to receive the same reverence as the Gospel itself: so did the canon law enjoin (Distinction XV.); for the Church, met in Council by the Holy Spirit, cannot err. To oppose its decrees was to oppose God. ‘He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.’”¹⁹

It was not difficult for Zwingli to reply to arguments like these. They presented a pompous array of Councils, canons, and ages; but this procession of authorities, so grandly marshalled, lacked one thing—an apostle or evangelist to head it. Lacking this, what was it? Not a chain of living witnesses, but a procession of lay figures. Seeing this discomfiture of the Papal party, Sebastien Hoffman, the pastor of Schaffhausen, and Sebastien Meyer, of Bern, rose and exhorted the Zurichers to go bravely forward in the path on which they had entered, and to permit neither the bulls of the Popes nor the edicts of the Emperor to turn them from it. This closed the morning’s proceedings.

After dinner the conference re-assembled to hear the decree of the lords of Zurich. The edict was read. It enjoined, in brief, that all preachers both in the city and throughout the canton, laying aside the traditions of men, should teach from the pulpit only what they were able to prove from the Word of God.²⁰ “But,” interposed a country curé, “what is to be done in the case of those priests who are not able to buy those books called the New Testament?” So much for his fitness to instruct his hearers in the doctrines of a book which he had never seen. No priest, replied Zwingli, is so poor as to be unable to buy a New Testament, if he seriously wishes to possess one; or, if he be really unable, he will find some pious citizen willing to lend him the money.²¹

The business was at an end, and the assembly was about to separate. Zwingli could not refrain giving thanks to God that now his native land was about to enjoy the free preaching of the pure Gospel. But the Vicar-General, as much terrified as Zwingli was gladdened by the prospect, was heard to mutter that had he seen the theses of the pastor of Zurich a little sooner, he would have dealt them a complete refutation, and shown from Scripture the authority of oral traditions, and the necessity of a living judge on earth to

¹⁶ Luke i. 48.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, i. 43.

¹⁸ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 105.

¹⁹ Luke x. 16.

²⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 167. Sleidan, bk. iii., p. 57. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 279: “Ut traditionibus hominum omissis, Evangelium pure doceatur e Veteris et Novi Testamenti libris” (That, laying aside the traditions of man, the pure Gospel may be taught from the books of the Old and New Testament).

²¹ *Zwing. Op.*, 621, 622; *apud* Ruchat, tom. i., p. 167.

decide controversies. Zwingle begged him to do so even yet. “No, not here,” said Faber; “come to Constance.” “With all my heart,” replied Zwingle; but he added in a quiet tone, and the Vicar-General could hardly be insensible to the reproach his words implied, “You must give me a safe-conduct, and show me the same good faith at Constance which you have experienced at Zurich; and further, I give you warning that I will accept no other judge than Holy Scripture.” “Holy Scripture!” retorted Faber, somewhat angrily; “there are many things against Christ which Scripture does not forbid: for example, where in Scripture do we read that a man may not take his own or his sister’s daughter to wife? “Nor,” replied Zwingle, “does it stand in Scripture that a cardinal should have thirty livings. Degrees of relationship further removed than the one you have just specified are forbidden, therefore we conclude that nearer degrees are so.” He ended by expressing his surprise that the Vicar-General should have come so long a way to deliver such sterile speeches.

Faber, on his part, taunted the Reformer with always harping upon the same string, even Scripture, adding, “Men might live in peace and concord and holiness, even if there were no Gospel.” The Vicar-General, by this last remark, had crowned his own discomfiture. The audience could no longer restrain their indignation. They started to their feet and left the assembly-hall. So ended the conference.²²

²² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 168. Christoffel, pp. 107, 108. D’Aubigné, vol. iii. pp. 226, 227.

Chapter XIII.

Dissolution of Conventual and Monastic Establishments.

Zwingle's Treatise—An After-fight—Zwingle's Pulpit Lectures—Superstitious Usages and Payments Abolished—Gymnasium Founded—Convents Opened—Zwingle on Monastic Establishments—Dissolution of Monasteries—Public Begging Forbidden—Provision for the Poor.

A victory had been gained, but Zwingle was of opinion that he had won it somewhat too easily. He would have preferred the assertion of the truth by a sharp debate to the dumb opposition of the priests. He set to work, however, and in a few months produced a treatise on the established ordinances and ceremonies, in which he showed how utterly foundation was lacking for them in the Word of God. The luminous argument and the "sharp wit" of the volume procured for it an instant and wide circulation. Men read it, and asked why these usages should be longer continued. The public mind was now ripe for the changes in the worship which Zwingle had hitherto abstained from making. This is a dangerous point in all such movements. Not a few Reformations have been wrecked on this rock. The Reformer of Zurich was able, partly by aid of the council, partly by the knowledge he had sown among the people, to steer his vessel safely past it. He managed to restrain the popular enthusiasm within its legitimate channel, and he made that a cleansing stream which otherwise would have become a devastating torrent.

Faber took care that the indication his extraordinary arguments had awakened in the Zurichers should not cool down. Like the Parthian, he shot his arrows in his flight. No sooner was the Vicar-General back in Constance, than he published a report of the conference, in which he avenged his defeat by the most odious and calumnious attacks on Zwingle and the men of Zurich. This libel was answered by certain of the youth of Zurich, in a book entitled the *Hawk-pluckings*. It was "a sharp polemic, full of biting wit." It had an immense sale, and Faber gained as little in this after-fight as he had done in the main battle.¹

The Reformer did not for a moment pause or lose sight of his grand object, which was to restore the Gospel to its rightful place in the sanctuary, and in the hearts of the people. He had ended his exposition of the Gospel of St. Matthew. He proceeded next to the consideration of the Acts of the Apostles, that he might be able to show his hearers the primitive model of the Church, and how the Gospel was spread in the first ages. Then he went on to the 1st Epistle to Timothy, that he might unfold the rules by which all Christians ought to frame their lives. He turned next to the Epistle to the Galatians, that he might reach those who, like some in St. Paul's days, had still a weakness for the old leaven; then to the two Epistles of St. Peter, that he might show his audience that St. Peter's authority did not rise above that of St. Paul, who, on St. Peter's confession, had fed the flock equally with himself. Last of all he expounded the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he might fix the eyes of his congregation on a more glorious priesthood than that of the Jews of old, or that of Rome in modern times, even the great Monarch and Priest of his Church, who by his one sole sacrifice had sanctified for ever them that believe.

¹ Christoffel, pp. 109.

Thus did he place the building which he was labouring to rear on the foundations of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone. And now it seemed to him that the time for practical reformation had arrived.²

This work began at the cathedral, the institution with which he himself was connected. The original letter of grant from Charlemagne limited the number of canons upon this foundation to thirteen. There were now more than fifty canons and chaplains upon it. These had forgotten their vow, at entry, framed in accordance with the founder's wish, "to serve God with praise and prayer," and "to supply public worship to the inhabitants of hill and valley." Zwingle was the only worker on this numerous staff; almost all the rest lived in downright idleness, which was apt on occasion to degenerate into something worse. The citizens grumbled at the heavy rents and numerous dues which they paid to men whose services were so inappreciable. Feeling the justice of these complaints, Zwingle devised a plan of reform, which the council passed into a law, the canons themselves concurring. The more irritating of the taxes for the ecclesiastical estate were abolished. No one was any longer to be compelled to pay for baptism, for extreme unction, for burial, for burial-candles, for grave-stones, or for the tolling of the great bell of the minster.³ The canons and chaplains who died off were not to be replaced; only a competent number were to be retained, and these were to serve as ministers of parishes. The amount of benefices set free by the decease of canons was to be devoted to the better payment of the teachers in the Gymnasium of Zurich, and the founding of an institution of a higher order for the training of pastors, and the instruction of youth generally in classical learning.

In place of the choir-service, mumbled drowsily over by the canons, came the "prophesying" or exposition of Scripture (1525), which began at eight every morning, and was attended by all the city clergy, the canons, the chaplains, and scholars.⁴ Of the new school mentioned above, Oswald Myconius remarks that "had Zwingle survived, it would not have found its equal anywhere." As it was, this school was a plant that bore rich fruit after Zwingle was in his grave. Of this the best proof is the glory that was shed on Zurich by the numbers of her sons who became illustrious in Church and State, in literature and science.

Reform was next applied to the conventual and monastic establishments. They fell almost without a blow. As melts the ice on the summit of the Alps when spring sets in, so did the monastic asceticism of Zurich give way before the warm breath of evangelism. Zwingle had shown from the pulpit that these institutions were at war alike with the laws of nature, the affections of the heart, and the precepts of Scripture. From the interior of some of these places, cries were heard for deliverance from the conventual vow. The council of Zurich, 17th June, 1523, granted their wish, by giving permission to the nuns to return to society. There was no compulsion; the convent door was open; the inmates might go or they might remain. Many quitted the cloister, but others preferred to end their days where they had spent their lives.⁵

² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 169.

³ *Ibid.*, tom. i., p. 181.

⁴ Christoffel, pp. 101-113.

⁵ Christoffel, p. 115.

Zwingle next set about preparing for the dissolution of the monastic houses. He began by diffusing rational ideas on the subject in the public mind. It has been argued, said he, that a priest must in some way distinguish himself from other men. He must have a bald pate, or a cowl, or a frock, or wooden shoes, or go bare-foot. No, said Zwingle, "he who distinguishes himself from others by such badges but raises against himself the charge of hypocrisy. I will tell you Christ's way: it is to excel in humility and a useful life. With that ornament we shall need no outward badge; the very children will know us, nay, the devil himself will know us to be none of his. When we lose our true worth and dignity, then we garnish ourselves with shorn crowns, frocks, and knotted cords; and men admire our clothes, as the children stare at the gold-bespangled mule of the Pope. I will tell you a labour more fruitful both to one's self and to others than singing matins, aves, and vespers: even to study the Word of God, and not to cease till its light shine into the hearts of men."

"To snore behind the walls of a cloister," he continued, "is not to worship God. But to visit widows and orphans, that is to say, the destitute in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world, that is to worship God. The world in this place (James i. 27) does not mean hill and valley, field and forest, water, lakes, towns and villages, but *the lusts of the world*, as avarice, pride, uncleanness, intemperance. These vices are more commonly to be met with within the walls of a convent than in the world abroad. I speak not of envy and hatred which have their habitation among this crew, and yet these are all greater sins than those they would escape by fleeing to a cloister. . . . Therefore let the monks lay aside all their badges, their cowls, and their regulations, and let them put themselves on a level with the rest of Christendom, and unite themselves to it, if they would truly obey the Word of God."⁶

In accordance with these rational and Gospel principles, came a resolution passed by the council in December, 1524, to reform the monasteries.

It was feared that the monks would offer resistance to the dissolution of their orders, but the council laid their plans so wisely, that before the fathers knew that their establishments were in danger the blow had been struck. On a Saturday afternoon the members of council, accompanied by delegates from the various guilds, the three city ministers, and followed by the town militia, presented themselves in the Augustine monastery. They summoned the inmates into their presence, and announced to them the resolution of the council dissolving their order. Taken unawares, and awed by the armed men who accompanied the council, the monks at once yielded. So quietly fell the death-blow on the monkish establishments of Zurich.⁷

"The younger friars who showed talent and inclination," says Christoffel, "were made to study: the others had to learn a trade. The strangers were furnished with the necessary travelling money to go to their homes, or to re-enter a cloister in their own country; the frail and aged had a competent settlement made upon them, with the condition attached that they were regularly to attend the Reformed service, and give offence to none either by their doctrines or lives. The wealth of the monasteries was for the most part applied to the

⁶ Christoffel, pp. 118, 119.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

relief of the poor or the sick, since forsooth the cloisters called themselves the asylums of the poor; and only a small part was reserved for the churches and the schools.”

“Every kind of door and street beggary was forbidden,” adds Christoffel, “by an order issued in 1525, while at the same time a competent support was given to the home and stranger poor. Thus, for example, the poor scholars were not allowed any longer to beg their living by singing beneath the windows, as was customary before the Reformation. Instead of this a certain number of them (sixteen from the canton Zurich, four strangers) received daily soup and bread, and two shillings weekly. Stranger beggars and pilgrims were allowed only to pass through the town, and nowhere to beg.”⁸ In short, the entire amount realised by the dissolution of the monastic orders was devoted to the relief of the poor, the ministry of the sick, and the advancement of education. The council did not feel at liberty to devote these funds to any merely secular object. “We shall so act with cloister property,” said they, “that we can neither be reproached before God nor the world. We might not have the sin upon our consciences of applying the wealth of one single cloister to fill the coffers of the State.”⁹

The abrogation of the law of celibacy fittingly followed the abolition of the monastic vow. This was essential to the restoration of the ministerial office to its apostolic dignity and purity. Many of the Reformed pastors took advantage of the change in the law, among others Leo Juda, Zwingli’s friend. Zwingli himself had contracted in 1522 a private marriage, according to the custom of the times, with Anna Reinhard, widow of John Meyer von Knonau, a lady of great beauty and of noble character. On the 2nd of April, 1524, he publicly celebrated his marriage in the minster church. Zwingli had made no secret whatever of his private espousals, which were well known to both friend and foe, but the public acknowledgment of them was hailed by the former as marking the completion of another stage in the Swiss Reformation.¹⁰

Thus step by step the movement advanced. Its path was a peaceful one. That changes so great in a country where the government was so liberal, and the expression of public opinion so unrestrained, should have been accomplished without popular tumults, is truly marvellous. This must be ascribed mainly to the enlightened maxims that guided the procedure of the Reformer. When Zwingli wished to do away with any oppressive or superstitious observance, he sifted and exposed the false dogma on which it was founded, knowing that when he had overthrown it in the popular belief, it would soon fall in the popular practice. When public sentiment was ripe, the people would go to the legislative chamber, and would there find the magistrates prepared to put into the form of law what was already the judgment and wish of the community; and thus the law, never outrunning public opinion, would be willingly obeyed. In this way Zwingli had already accomplished a host of reforms. He had opened the door of the convents; he had suppressed the monastic orders; he had restored hundreds of idle men to useful industry; he had set free thousands of pounds for the erection of hospitals and the education of youth; and he had closed a fountain of pollution, only the more defiling because it issued from the sanctuary,

⁸ Christoffel, pp. 119, 120.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 120, foot-note.

¹⁰ See D’Aubigné, viii. 13, foot-note, and Christoffel, pp. 122, 123, on the time and manner of Zwingli’s marriage.

and restored purity to the altar, in the repeal of the law of clerical celibacy. But the Reformation did not stop here. More arduous achievements awaited it.

Chapter XIV.

Discussion on Images and the Mass.

Christ's Death—Zwingle's Fundamental Position—Iconoclasts—Hottinger—Zwingle on Image-worship—Conference of all Switzerland summoned—900 Members Assemble—Preliminary Question—The Church—Discussion on Images—Books that Teach Nothing—The Mass Discussed—It is Overthrown—Joy of Zwingle—Relics Interred.

The images were still retained in the churches, and mass still formed part of the public worship. Zwingle now began to prepare the public mind for a reform in both particulars—to lead men from the idol to the one true God; from the mass which the Church had invented to the Supper which Christ had instituted. The Reformer began by laying down this doctrine in his teaching, and afterwards more formally in eighteen propositions or conclusions which he published—“that Christ, who offered himself once for all upon the cross, is a sufficient and everlasting Sacrifice for the sins of all who believe upon him; and that, therefore, the mass is not a sacrifice, but the memorial of Christ's once offering upon the cross, and the visible seal of our redemption through him.”¹ This great truth received in the public mind, he knew that the mass must fall.

But all men had not the patience of Zwingle. A young priest, Louis Hetzer, of fiery zeal and impetuous temper, published a small treatise on images, which led to an ebullition of popular feeling. Outside the city gates, at Stadelhofen, stood a crucifix, richly ornamented, and with a frequent crowd of devotees before it. It gave annoyance to not a few of the citizens, and among others to a shoemaker, named Nicholas Hottinger, “a worthy man,” says Bullinger, “and well versed in his Bible.” One day as Hottinger stood surveying the image, its owner happened to come up, and Hottinger demanded of him “when he meant to take that thing away?” “Nobody bids you worship it, Nicholas,” was the reply. “But don't you know,” said Hottinger, “that the Word of God forbids images?” “If,” replied the owner, “you feel yourself empowered to remove it, do so.” Hottinger took this for consent, and one morning afterwards, the shoemaker, coming to the spot with a party of his fellow-citizens, dug a trench round the crucifix, when it fell with a crash.² A violent outcry was raised by the adherents of the old faith against these iconoclasts. “Down with these men!” they shouted; “they are church-robbers, and deserving of death.”

The commotion was increased by an occurrence that soon thereafter happened. Lawrence Meyer, Vicar of St. Peter's, remarked one day to a fellow vicar, that when he thought of the people at the church-door, pale with hunger, and shivering from want of clothes, he had a great mind to knock down the idols on the altars, and take their silken robes and costly jewels, and therewith buy food and raiment for the poor. On Lady-day, before three o'clock in the morning, the plates, rolls, images, and other symbols had all

¹ *Zwing. Op.*, tom. i., fol. 35. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 280.

² Christoffel, p. 126. Hottinger was afterwards martyred at Lucerne. But this, and other events outside the canton of Zurich, will come more fully under our notice when we advance to the second stage of the Swiss Reformation—that, namely, from the establishment of the Protestant faith at Zurich, 1525, to the battle of Kappel, 1531.

disappeared from St. Peter's Church. Suspicion, of course, fell upon the vicar. The very thing which he had confessed having a strong desire to do, had been done; and yet it may have been another and not the vicar who did it, and as the deed could not be traced to him, nothing more came of it so far as Meyer was concerned.³

Still the incident was followed by important consequences. Zwingli had shrunk from the discussion of the question of worshipping by images, but now he felt the necessity of declaring his sentiments. He displayed in this, as in every reform which he instituted, great breadth of view, and singular moderation in action. As regarded images in churches, he jocularly remarked that they did not hurt himself, for his short-sightedness prevented him seeing them. He was no enemy to pictures and statues, if used for purposes purely aesthetic. The power of bodying forth beautiful forms, or lofty ideas, in marble or on canvas, was one of the good gifts of God. He did not, therefore condemn the glass paintings in the church windows, and similar ornaments in sacred buildings, which were as little likely to mislead the people as the cock on the church steeple, or the statue of Charles the Great at the minster. And even with regard to images which were superstitiously used, he did not approve their unauthorised and irregular destruction. Let the abuse be exposed and sifted, and it would fall of itself. "The child is not let down from the cradle," said he, "till a rest has been presented to it to aid it in walking." When the knowledge of the one true God has entered the heart, the man will no longer be able to worship by an image.

"On the other hand," said he, "all images must be removed which serve the purposes of a superstitious veneration, because such veneration is idolatry. First of all, where are the images placed? Why, on the altar, before the eyes of the worshippers. Will the Romanists permit a man to stand on the altar when mass is being celebrated? Not they. Images, then, are higher than men, and yet they have been cut out of a willow-tree by the hands of men. But further, the worshippers bow to them, and bare the head before them. Is not that the very act which God has forbidden? 'That thou shalt not bow down unto them.' Consider if this be not open idolatry."

"Further," argued Zwingli, "we burn costly incense before them, as did the heathen to their idols. Here we commit a two-fold sin. If we say that thus we honour the saints, it was thus that the heathen honoured their idols. If we say that it is God we honour, it is a form of worship which no apostle or evangelist ever offered to him."

"Like the heathen, do we not call those images by the names of those they represent? We name one piece of carved wood the Mother of God, another St. Nicholas, a third Holy Hildegarde, and so on. Have we not heard of men breaking into prisons and slaying those who had taken away their images, and when asked why they did so, they replied, 'Oh, they have burned or stolen our blessed Lord God and the saints'? Whom do they call our Lord God? The idol."

"Do we not give to these idols what we ought to give to the poor? We form them of massive gold or silver, or even overlay them with some precious metal. We hang rich

³ Christoffel, p. 126.

clothing upon them, we adorn them with chains and precious jewels. We give to the bedizened image what we ought to give to the poor, who are the living images of God.”

“But, say the Papists,” continued Zwingle, “images are the books of the simple. Tell me, where has God commanded us to learn out of such a book? How comes it that we have all had the cross so many years before us, and yet have not learned salvation in Christ, or true faith in God? Place a child before an image of the saviour and give it no instruction. Will it learn from the image that Christ suffered for us? It is said, Nay, but it must be taught also by the Word. Then the admission is made that it must be instructed not by the image, but by the Word.”

“It is next insisted the images incite to devotion. But where has God taught us that we should do him such honour through idols, and by the performance of certain gestures before them? God everywhere rejects such worship. . . . Therefore, while the Gospel is preached, and men are instructed in the pure doctrine, the idols ought to be removed that men may not fall back into the same errors, for as storks return to their old nests, so do men to their old errors, if the way to them be not barred.”⁴

To calm the public excitement, which was daily growing stronger, the magistrates of Zurich resolved to institute another disputation in October of that same year, 1523.⁵

The two points which were to be discussed were *Images* and the *Mass*. It was meant that this convocation should be even more numerous than the former. The Bishops of Constance, Coire, and Basle were invited. The governments of the twelve cantons were asked to send each a deputy.⁶ When the day arrived, the 26th of October, not fewer than 900 persons met in the Council Hall. None of the bishops were present. Of the cantons only two, Schaffhausen and St. Gall, sent deputies. Nevertheless, this assembly of 900 included 350 priests.⁷ At a table in the middle sat Zwingle and Leo Juda, with the Bible in the original tongues open before them. They were appointed to defend the theses, which all were at liberty to impugn.

There was a preliminary question, Zwingle felt, which met them on the threshold: namely, what authority or right had a conference like this to determine points of faith and worship? This had been the exclusive prerogative of Popes and Councils for ages. If the Popes and Councils were right, then the assembly now met was an anarchical one: if the assembly was right, then Popes and Councils had been guilty of usurpation by monopolising a power which belonged to more than themselves. This led Zwingle to develop his theory of the Church; whence came she? what were her powers, and of whom was she composed?

The doctrine now propounded for the first time by Zwingle, and which has come since to be the doctrine held on this head by a great part of Reformed Christendom, was,

⁴ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 183. Christoffel, pp. 126-130. So did Zwingle, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, reason on the question of the worshipping of God by images. He was followed in the same line of argument by the French and English divines who rose later in the same century. And at this day the Protestant controversialist can make use of but the same weapons that Zwingle employed.

⁵ Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 66.

⁶ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 290.

⁷ Ruchat, tom. i., pp. 182, 183.

in brief, that the Church is created by the Word of God; that her one and only Head is Christ; that the fountain of her laws, and the charter of her rights, is the Bible; and that she is composed of all those throughout the world who profess the Gospel.

This theory carried in it a great ecclesiastical revolution. It struck a blow at the root of the Papal supremacy. It laid in the dust the towering fabric of the Roman hierarchy. The community at Zurich, professing their faith in the Lord Jesus and their obedience to his Word, Zwingle held to be the Church—the Church of Zurich—and he maintained that it had a right to order all things conformable to the Bible. Thus did he withdraw the flock over which he presided from the jurisdiction of Rome, and recover for them the rights and liberties in which the Scriptures had vested the primitive believers, but of which the Papal See had despoiled them.⁸

The discussion on images was now opened. The thesis which the Reformer undertook to maintain, and for which he had prepared the public mind of Zurich by the teachings stated above, was “that the use of images in worship is forbidden in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore ought to be done away with.” This battle was an easy one, and Zwingle left it almost entirely in the hands of Leo Juda. The latter established the proposition in a clear and succinct manner by proofs from the Bible. At this stage the combat was like to have come to an end for want of combatants. The opposite party were most unwilling to descend into the arena. One and then another was called on by name, but all hung back. The images were in an evil case; they could not speak for themselves, and their advocates seemed as dumb as they.⁹ At length one ventured to hint that “one should not take the staff out of the hand of the weak Christian, on which he leans, or one should give him another, else he falls to the ground.” “Had useless parsons and bishops,” replied Zwingle, “zealously preached the Word of God, as has been inculcated upon them, it were not come to this, that the poor ignorant people, unacquainted with the Word, must learn Christ only through paintings on the wall or wooden figures.” The debate, if such it could be called, and the daylight were ending together. The president, Hoffmeister of Schaffhausen, rose. “The Almighty and Everlasting God be praised,” said he, “that he hath vouchsafed us the victory.” Then turning to the councillors of Zurich, he exhorted them to remove the images from the churches, and declared the sitting at an end. “Child’s play,” said Zwingle, “this has been; now comes a weightier and more important matter.”¹⁰

That matter was the mass. Truly was it styled “weightier.” For more than three centuries it had held its place in the veneration of the people, and had been the very soul of their worship. Like a skilful and wary general, Zwingle had advanced his attacking lines nearer and nearer that gigantic fortress against which he was waging successful battle. He had assailed first the outworks; now he was to strike a blow at the inner citadel. Should it fall, he would regard the conquest as complete, and the whole of the contested territory as virtually in his hands.

On the 27th of October, the discussion on the mass was opened. We have previously given Zwingle’s fundamental proposition, which was to this effect, that Christ’s

⁸ Christoffel, p. 132.

⁹ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 291. Christoffel, p. 133.

¹⁰ Christoffel, pp. 132-135.

death on the cross is an all-sufficient and everlasting sacrifice, and that therefore the Eucharist is not a sacrifice, but a memorial. "He considered the Supper to be a remembrance instituted by Christ, at which he will be present, and whereby he, by means of his word of promise and outward signs, will make the blessing of his death, whose inward power is eternal, to be actually effective in the Christian for the strengthening and assurance of faith."¹¹ This cut the ground from beneath "transubstantiation" and the "adoration of the Host." Zwingli led the debate. He expressed his joy at the decision of the conference the day before on the subject of images, and went on to expound and defend his views on the yet graver matter which it was now called to consider. "If the mass is no sacrifice," said Stienli of Schaffhausen, "then have all our fathers walked in error and been damned!" "If our fathers have erred," replied Zwingli, "what then? Is not their salvation in the hands of God, like that of all men who have erred and sinned? Who authorises us to anticipate the judgment of God? The authors of these abuses will, without doubt, be punished by God; but who is damned, and who is not, is the prerogative of God alone to decide. Let us not interfere with the judgments of God. It is sufficiently clear to us that they have erred."¹² When he had finished, Dr. Vadian, who was president for the day, demanded if there was any one present prepared to impugn from Scripture the doctrine which had been maintained in their hearing. He was answered only with silence. He put the question a second time. The greater number expressed their agreement with Zwingli. The Abbots of Kappel and Stein "replied nothing." The Provost of the Chapter of Zurich quoted in defence of the mass a passage from the apocryphal Epistle of St. Clement and St. James. Brennwald, Provost of Embrach, avowed himself of Zwingli's sentiments. The Canons of Zurich were divided in opinion. The chaplains of the city, on being asked whether they could prove from Scripture that the mass was a sacrifice, replied that they could not. The heads of the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustines of Zurich said that they had nothing to oppose to the theses of Zwingli.¹³ A few of the country priests offered objections, but of so frivolous a kind that it was felt they did not merit the brief refutation they received. Thus was the mass overthrown.

This unanimity deeply touched the hearts of all. Zwingli attempted to express his joy, but sobs choked his utterance. Many in that assembly wept with him. The grey-headed warrior Hoffmeister, turning to the council, said, "Ye, my lords of Zurich, ought to take up the Word of God boldly; God the Almighty will prosper you therein." These simple words of the veteran soldier, whose voice had so often been heard rising high above the storm of battle, made a deep impression upon the assembly.¹⁴

No sooner had Zwingli won this victory than he found that he must defend it from the violence of those who would have thrown it away. He might have obtained from the council an order for the instant removal of the images, and the instant suppression of the mass, but with his characteristic caution he feared precipitation. He suggested that both should be suffered to continue a short while longer, that time might be given him more fully to prepare the public mind for the change. Meanwhile, the council ordered that the

¹¹ Dorner, *Hist. Prot. Theol.*, vol. i., p. 309.

¹² Christoffel, p. 137.

¹³ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 184.

¹⁴ Gerdesius, tom. i., pp. 291, 292. Christoffel, pp. 137-139.

images should be “covered and veiled,” and that the Supper should be dispensed in bread and wine to those who wished it in that form. It was also enacted that public processions of religious bodies should be discontinued, that the Host should not be carried through the streets and highways, and that the relics and bones of saints should be decently buried.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, tom. i., pp. 292, 293. Christoffel, pp. 142, 143. They boasted having in the cathedral the bodies of St. Felix and St. Regulus, martyrs of the Theban legion. When their coffins were opened they were found to contain some bones mixed with pieces of charcoal and brick. The bones were committed to the earth. “Nevertheless,” says Ruchat, “the Papists in latter times have given out that the bodies of the martyrs were carried to Ursern, in the canton of Uri, since the Reformation, and they were exhibited there on the 11th April, 1688.” (Ruchat, tom. i., p. 193.)

Chapter XV.

Establishment of Protestantism in Zurich.

The Greater Reforms—Purification of the Churches—Threatening Message of the Forest Cantons—Zurich's Reply—Abduction of the Pastor of Burg—The Wirths—Their Condemnation and Execution—Zwingle Demands the Non-celebration of the Mass—Am-Gruet Opposes—Zwingle's Argument—Council's Edict—A Dream—The Passover—First Celebration of the Supper in Zurich—It's Happy Influence—Social and Moral Regulations—Two Annual Synods—Prosperity of Zurich.

At last the hour arrived to carry out the greater reforms. On the 20th of June, 1524, a procession composed of twelve councillors, the three city pastors, the city architect, smiths, locksmiths, joiners, and masons, might have been seen traversing the streets of Zurich, and visiting its several churches. On entering, they locked the door from the inside, took down the crosses, removed the images, defaced the frescoes, and re-stained the walls. "The reformed," says Bullinger, "were glad, accounting this proceeding an act of worship done to the true God." But the superstitious, the same chronicler tells us, witnessed the act with tears, deeming it a fearful impiety. "Some of these people," says Christoffel, "hoped that the images would of their own accord return to their vacant places, and astound the iconoclasts by this proof of their miraculous power."¹ As the images, instead of remounting to their niches, lay broken and shivered, they lost credit with their votaries, and so many were cured of their superstition. The affair passed off without the least disturbance. In all the country churches under the jurisdiction of Zurich, the images were removed with the same order and quiet as in the capital. The wood was burned, and the costly ornaments and rich robes that adorned the idols were sold, and the proceeds devoted to the support of the poor, "those images of Christ."²

The act was not without significance; nay, rather, rightly considered, it was among the more important reformations that had been hitherto brought to pass in the canton. It denoted the emancipation of the people from the bonds of a degrading superstition. Men and women breathed the "ampler ether and the diviner air" of the Reformed doctrine, which condemned, in unmistakable language, the use of graven images for any purpose whatever. The voice of Scripture was plain on the subject, and the Protestants of Zurich—now that the scales had fallen from their eyes—saw that they were to worship God, and him only, in spirit and in truth, in obedience to the commandments of the Almighty, and in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Again there came a pause. The movement rested a little while at the point it had reached. The interval was filled up with portentous events. The Diet of the Swiss Confederation, which met that year at Zug, sent a deputation to Zurich to say that they were resolved to crush the new doctrine by force of arms, and that they would hold all who should persist in these innovations answerable with their goods, their liberties, and their lives. Zurich bravely replied that in the matter of religion they must follow the Word

¹ Christoffel, p. 143. See also foot-note.

² Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 73. *Zwing. Op.*, tom. i., fol. 261. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 294, also p. 305. Christoffel, pp. 143, 144.

of God alone.³ When this answer was carried back to the Diet the members trembled with rage. The fanaticism of the cantons of Lucerne, Schwitz, Uri, Unterwalden, Friburg, and Zug was rising from one day to another, and soon blood would be spilt.

One night Jean Oexlin, the pastor of Burg, near Stein on the Rhine, was dragged from his bed and carried away to prison. The signal-gun was fired, the alarm-bells were rung in the valley, and the parishioners rose in mass to rescue their beloved pastor.⁴ Some miscreants mixed in the crowd, rioting ensued, and the Carthusian convent of Ittingen was burned to the ground. Among those who had been attracted by the noise of the tumult, and who had followed the crowd which sought to rescue the pastor of Burg, carried away by the officers of a bailiff whose jurisdiction did not extend to the village in which he lived, were an old man named Wirth, Deputy-Bailiff of Stammheim, and his two sons, Adrian and John, preachers of the Gospel, and distinguished by the zeal and courage with which they had prosecuted that good work. They had for some time been objects of dislike for their Reformed sentiments. Apprehended by the orders of the Diet, they were charged with the outrage which they had striven to the utmost of their power to prevent. Their real offence was adherence to the Reformed faith. They were taken to Baden, put to the torture, and condemned to death by the Diet. The younger son was spared, but the father and the elder son, along with Burkhard Ruetimann, Deputy-Bailiff of Nussbaumen, were ordered for execution.

While on their way to the place where they were to die, the Curé of Baden addressed them, bidding them fall on their knees before the image in front of a chapel they were at the moment passing. "Why should I pray to wood and stone?" said the younger Wirth; "my God is the living God, to him only will I pray. Be you yourself converted to him, for you have not worn the grey frock longer than I did; and you too must die." It so happened that the priest died within the year.⁵ Turning to his father, the younger Wirth said, "My dear father, from this moment you shall no longer be my father, and I shall no longer be your son; but we shall be brothers in Jesus Christ, for the love of whom we are now to lay down our lives. We shall to-day go to him who is our Father, and the Father of all believers, and with him we shall enjoy an everlasting life." Being come to the place of execution, they mounted the scaffold with firm step, and bidding each other farewell till they should again meet in the eternal mansions, they bared their necks, and the executioner struck. The spectators could not refrain from shedding floods of tears when they saw their heads rolling on the scaffold.⁶

Zwingle was saddened but not intimidated by these events. He saw in them no reason why he should stop, but on the contrary a strong reason why he should advance in the movement of Reformation. Rome shall pay dear for the blood she has spilt; so Zwingle resolves; he will abolish the mass, and complete the Reformation of Zurich.

On the 11th of April, 1525, the three pastors of Zurich appeared before the Council of Two Hundred, and demanded that the Senate should enact that at the approaching Easter

³ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 217.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁶ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 221. Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 77. Christoffel, pp. 214-221.

festival the celebration of the Lord's Supper should take place according to its original institution.⁷ The Under-Secretary of State, Am-Gruet, started up to do battle in behalf of the threatened Sacrament. "This *is* my body," said he, quoting the words of Christ, which he insisted were a plain and manifest assertion that the bread was the real body of Christ. Zwingle replied that Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture, and reminded him of numerous passages where it has the force of *signifies*, and among others he quoted the following:—"The seed *is* the Word," "The field *is* the world," "I *am* the Vine," "The Rock *was* Christ."⁸ The secretary objected that these passages were taken from parables and proved nothing. No, it was replied, the phrases occur after the parable has ended, and the figurative language been put aside. Am-Gruet stood alone. The council were already convinced: they ordered that the mass should cease, and that on the following day, Maunday Thursday, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated after the apostolic institution.⁹

The scene in which Zwingle had been so intently occupied during the day, presented itself to him when asleep. He thought that he was again in the Council Chamber disputing with Am-Gruet. The secretary was urging his objection, and Zwingle was unable to repel it. Suddenly, a figure stood before him and said, "O, slow of heart to understand, why don't you reply to him by quoting Exodus, chap. xii., verse 11—'Ye shall eat it [the lamb] in haste, it *is* the Lord's Passover?'"¹⁰ Roused from sleep by the appearance of the figure, he leaped out of bed, turned up the passage in the Septuagint, and found there the same word ἴσθι... (*is*) used with regard to the institution of the Passover which is employed in reference to the institution of the Supper. All are agreed that the lamb was simply the symbol and memorial of the Passover: why should the bread be more in the Supper? The two are but one and the same ordinance under different forms. The following day Zwingle preached from the passage in Exodus, arguing that that *exegesis* must be at fault which finds two opposite meanings in the same word, used, as it here is, in the same form of expression, and recording the institution of the same ordinance. If the lamb was simply a symbol in the Passover, the bread can be nothing more in the Supper; but if the bread in the Supper was Christ, the lamb in the Passover was Jehovah. So did Zwingle argue in his sermon, to the conviction of many of his hearers.

In giving an account of the occurrence afterwards, Zwingle playfully remarked that he could not tell whether the figure was white or black.¹¹ His opponents, however, had no difficulty in determining that the figure was black, and that Zwingle received his doctrine from the devil.

On the Thursday of Easter-week the Sacrament of the Supper was for the first time dispensed in Zurich according to the Protestant form. The altar was replaced by a table covered with a white cloth, on which were set wooden plates with unleavened bread, and wooden goblets filled with wine. The pyxes were disused, for, said they, Christ commanded "the elements" not to be enclosed but distributed. The altars, mostly of marble, were converted into pulpits, from which the Gospel was preached. The service

⁷ Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 318.

⁸ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 245.

⁹ Sleidan, bk. iv., p. 82. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 321, Christoffel, p. 146.

¹⁰ Ruchat, tom. i., p. 246. Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 322.

¹¹ "Ater an albus, nihil memini, somnium enim narro." (Gerdesius, tom. i., p. 322.)

began with a sermon; after sermon, the pastor and deacons took their place behind the table; the words of institution (I Cor. xi. 20-29) were read; prayers were offered, a hymn was sung in responses, a short address was delivered; the bread and wine were then carried round, and the communicants partook of them kneeling on their footstools.¹²

“This celebration of the Lord’s Supper,” says Christoffel, “was accompanied with blessed results. An altogether new love to God and the brethren sprang up, and the words of Christ received spirit and life. The different orders of the Roman Church unceasingly quarrelled with each other; the brotherly love of the first centuries of Christianity returned to the Church with the Gospel. Enemies renounced old deep-rooted hatred, and embraced in an ecstasy of love and a sense of common brotherhood, by the partaking in common of the hallowed bread. ‘Peace has her habitation in our town,’ wrote Zwingle to Oecolampadius; ‘no quarrel, no hypocrisy, no envy, no strife. Whence can such union come but from the Lord, and our doctrine, which fills us with the fruits of peace and piety?’”¹³ This ecclesiastical Reformation brought a social one in its wake. Protestantism was a breath of healing—a stream of cleansing in all countries to which it came. By planting a renovating principle in the individual heart, Zwingle had planted a principle of renovation at the heart of the community; but he took care to nourish and conserve that principle by outward arrangements. Mainly through his influence with the Great Council, aided by the moral influence the Gospel exercised over its members, a set of regulations and laws was framed, calculated to repress immorality and promote virtue in the canton. The Sunday and marriage, those twin pillars of Christian morality, Zwingle restored to their original dignity. Rome had made the Sunday simply a Church festival: Zwingle replaced it on its first basis—the Divine enactment; work was forbidden upon it, although allowed, specially in harvest-time, in certain great exigencies of which the whole Christian community were to judge. Marriage, which Rome had desecrated by her doctrine of “holy celibacy,” and by making it a Sacrament, in order, it was pretended, to cleanse it, Zwingle re-vindicated by placing it upon its original institution as an ordinance of God, and in itself holy and good. All questions touching marriage he made subject to a small special tribunal. The confessional was abolished. “Disclose your malady,” said the Reformer, “to the Physician who alone can heal it.” Most of the holy-days were abrogated. All, of whatever rank, were to attend church, at least once, on Sunday. Gambling, profane swearing, and all excess in eating and drinking were prohibited under penalties. To support this arrangement the small inns were suppressed, and drink was not allowed to be sold after nine o’clock in the evening. Grosser immoralities and sins were visited with excommunication, which was pronounced by a board of moral control, composed of the marriage-judges, the magistrates of the district, and the pastors—a commingling of civil and ecclesiastical authority not wholly in harmony with the theoretic views of the Reformer, but he deemed that the peculiar relations of the Church to the State made this arrangement necessary and justifiable for the time.

Above all he was anxious to guard the morals of the pastors, as a means of preserving untarnished the grandeur and unimpaired the power of the Word preached, knowing that it is in the Church usually that the leprosy of national declension first breaks out. An act of

¹² Ruchat, tom. i., p. 247. Christoffel, p. 149.

¹³ Christoffel, pp. 147, 148.

council, passed in 1528, appointed two synodal assemblies to be held each year—one in spring, the other in autumn. All the pastors were to convene, each with one or two members of his congregation. On the part of the council the synod was attended by the burgomaster, six councillors, and the town-clerk. The court mainly occupied itself with inquiries into the lives, the doctrine, and the occupations of the individual pastors, with the state of morals in their several parishes.¹⁴

Thus a vigorous discipline was exercised over all classes, lay and cleric. This régime would never have been submitted to, had not the Gospel as a great spiritual pioneer gone before. Its beneficent results were speedily apparent. “Under its protecting and sheltering influence,” says Christoffel, there grew up and flourished those manly and hardy virtues which so richly adorned the Church of the Reformation at its commencement.” An era of prosperity and renown now opened on Zurich. Order and quiet were established, the youth were instructed, letters were cultivated, arts and industry flourished, and the population, knit together in the bonds of a holy faith, dwelt in peace and love. They were exempt from the terrible scourge which so frequently desolated the Popish cantons around them. Zwingle had withdrawn them from the “foreign service,” so demoralising to their patriotism and their morality, and while the other cantons were shedding their blood on foreign fields, the inhabitants of the canton of Zurich were prosecuting the labours of peace, enriching their territory with their activity and skill, and making its capital, Zurich, one of the lights of Christendom.

¹⁴ Christoffel, pp. 151-165.