

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

CHURCH AND STATE IN SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland is composed of twenty-two cantons, each of which is independent of every other, both as respects political and ecclesiastical matters. Again it may be divided into four districts, according to the language which is chiefly spoken. In Western Switzerland, or Suisse Romande—Geneva, Vaud, and Neuchâtel—French is the prevalent language; in the central and northern cantons, German is spoken; in the canton of Tessin, which runs south like a wedge between the Italian lakes, they speak Italian; while the language of the Engadine, in the Grisons, or extreme eastern part of Switzerland, is the Romansch. Any account of the religious condition of the country as a whole can only, therefore, be of a general character, though the ecclesiastical history of the French-speaking cantons specially is exceedingly interesting, and in some aspects instructive.

In glancing at the ecclesiastical history of Switzerland generally, the first thing, perhaps, that arrests attention is the reciprocal and persistent antipathy to each other that has always prevailed between the Protestant and Catholic cantons. At the death of Zwingli, in 1531, the Reformation had accomplished its chief conquests here. The more important cantons, such as Zurich, Berne, Basle, etc., had cordially adopted the new ideas, while the small mountain cantons, with an uneducated population, and therefore completely in the power of the priests, obstinately resisted all change. This divergence was accentuated by the leagues which were formed, and became permanent after the shedding of blood at Kappel. Add to this the arrival of Jesuits, in accordance with the decision of the Council of Trent, to found schools at Lucerne, Fribourg, etc., and the formation by the Catholic cantons of the "Alliance d'Or," when in 1586 they swore fidelity to the Papacy, and in the following year to Philip II. of Spain. The many local conflicts which arose out of these proceedings could not but lead to a more general war, which broke out in 1656 on the occasion of the expulsion of some Protestants, and in which the Protestant party was defeated at Villmergen, in Aargau. After a temporary peace, the struggle recommenced in 1712, the Protestants gaining a complete victory in the so-called Toggenburg war, at the same place at which they had been previously defeated. When the French Revolution took place, Napoleon formed all the cantons into a "Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible," imposing in 1803 a Federal organization, which for a time put an end to all distinctions. After the restoration, religious feuds once more occurred, and in 1847, in consequence of the changes introduced by the revolution of 1830, and the installation of the Jesuits at Lucerne in 1844, the civil war of the Sonderbund, or separate league, took place. In 1848, however, a new Federal constitution was voted by the democracy, by which Swiss unity was effected and a termination put to intestine quarrels of a serious character.

A second thing is worthy of remark in taking a general view of the religious history of Switzerland—namely, the agreement of the Protestant cantons amongst themselves, and their sympathy with the interests of reform abroad. The Protestant cantons accepted the Reformation with great unanimity, and showed their agreement by signing, in 1534, a common formula of their faith, though they did not publish it. Calvin would have liked them to state even more precisely their belief, but, notwithstanding his great influence, he did not succeed in getting the Reformers to adopt all his views. It was Bullinger who drew up the Confession of Faith, which was signed by all the cantons in 1566. This Confession, in the preparation of which Beza had a hand, recognised the Word of God as sole judge in matters of faith, described the Holy Supper as a commemorative ceremony, and taught the doctrine of Absolute Predestination. Calvin's influence, however, reappeared in the formula of a "Consensus," which was generally adopted in 1675, with the view of arresting the progress of the advanced views which were coming from Saumur, one of the educational institutions of France. This formula condemned alike pietists, mystics, and rationalists, and promoted measures of "dismissal and exile." These measures having been abused, the cantons gradually limited their application, and in 1725 the "Company of Pastors" of Geneva, at the instigation of Prof. Alph. Sur-

retin, decided on asking of candidates for the ministry only an engagement to conform their teaching to the Bible and not to the "Consensus." After this the agreement of the cantons was almost always complete, whether they advanced or receded.

The Protestants of Switzerland manifested their sympathy with the interests of reform abroad by enrolling themselves in the armies of Henry of Navarre (Henry IV.) and William of Orange, and by offering, with generous hospitality, an asylum and a home to French refugees, notwithstanding the menaces of the king. In this case, certainly, virtue had its reward; for these refugees, bringing with them their habits of industry and their commercial talents, laid foundations and left legacies which were the means of ultimate prosperity both in Church and State.

In studying the ecclesiastical history of this country, the almost absolute power of the clergy in most of the Protestant cantons is apparent. The civil rulers did not interfere with the organization and government of the Church, so that for centuries the administration of Church affairs was left in the hands of the "Company of Pastors," or "Venerable Class," who governed it on principles preserved by tradition, applying them in each case according to circumstances, there being no constitution nor organic law, and in many instances not even internal regulations. The laity had little, if anything, to say in the government of the Church. Indeed, the quality of citizen was confounded in some of the cantons with that of member of the Church, so that those who did not wish to form part of the national Church were in an inferior position to that of other citizens, and were in some cases subjected to pains and penalties for refusing to conform to the established order of things. This was ended by the law of 1848, which declared in effect that no civil or political right attaches to the quality of member of the Church.

Having made these general statements with regard to Switzerland, let me add a few additional notes respecting one of the chief centres of Protestantism and its great Reformer,

NEUCHÂTEL AND WILLIAM FAREL.

This canton, largely peopled by French refugees, is chiefly Protestant, the relative numbers, according to the census of 1880, being 91,076 Protestants and 11,651 Catholics. Schools, primary and secondary, abound in the canton, instruction being not only gratuitous, but obligatory until the age of sixteen. The capital of the same name is prettily situated on the shore of Lake Neuchâtel, having as a background Mont Chaumont, one of the finest heights of the Jura range of mountains. There is a classical academy and two theological faculties, at the head of one of which is Professor Godet, so well known on both sides of the Atlantic as an able biblical expositor, and one whose lectures attract students from many foreign countries. I have met in his class-room, besides Swiss, German, Dutch, French, and Scotch students, several of whom had finished their courses in other universities and were here merely to hear Dr. Godet. The doctrines of the Reformation were first introduced into this canton by the intrepid Farel, a statue of whom stands in front of the collegiate church, high above the town, holding aloft an open Bible, with the words of Hebrews iv. 12 forming an appropriate inscription on one side of the pedestal.

Farel was born at Gap, in Dauphiny, in 1489, and was first attracted by the teaching of the pious Lefevre at Paris, who, five years before Luther, and nearly twenty years before Calvin, publicly taught the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ alone—the doctrine that was the means of overturning all the scaffolding erected by the Romish Church. Luther's teaching confirmed Farel's decision, and he immediately joined the mild Ecolampadius and the vacillating Erasmus at Basle, where, like Luther at Wittenberg, he published certain theses, the conclusion of the whole being that "Jesus Christ is our polar star, the only star which ought to guide us." The impetuous reformer, on being set apart to the work of the ministry, was addressed by the gentle Ecolampadius, who was pained at the want of moderation and patience displayed by the new preacher, in these words: "I admire thy zeal, but I would like to see more mildness. Be an evangelist, not a judge and a tyrant. Let the ardour of the lion be tempered by the meekness of the dove." Farel himself felt the need of such virtues, but could not restrain his natural temperament, which, after all, was better fitted for the age he

lived in and the work he had to do. Montbelliard and Strasbourg in France; Basle, Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, and Neuchâtel in Switzerland, were some of the scenes of his reforming work, and blows, blood, and threats of death his rewards, each attack doing more for the work he had at heart than "twenty sermons," according to an old biographer. At Neuchâtel he died in 1565, after having founded a college and a *catechumenal* for the instruction of youth prior to their first communion—an institution still faithfully preserved in the reformed churches of the continent.

In this canton the Protestant Churches, originally one, are now divided into three—the "National Church," the "Evangelical Church independent of the State," and the "Evangelical Free Church." The divisions occurred in the following manner: In the first place, the

EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

owes its origin to a struggle which began as early as 1823. The Church here, as elsewhere, had fallen into a cold and lifeless state about the beginning of the century. A religious revival, which had visited the cantons of Vaud and Geneva, crossed the lake and kindled "the sacred fire of faith" in the hearts of some of the Neuchâtelois. Two young ministers followed and encouraged the good work by preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, which the parish clergy designated "new doctrines." These preachers of the "new doctrines" were not only opposed as being "Sectaries" and "Methodists," but for holding "conventicles" in private houses for the purpose of propagating their "new doctrines." This irregular work continuing, the clergy at last handed over the transgressors to the civil authorities, who sentenced one of them for his "criminal procedure" to ten years of banishment, causing him, as the custom then was, to receive his sentence "on his knees, with his hands tied." This sentence naturally created great excitement, not only in Neuchâtel but in the adjoining cantons. The revival continued to assume still larger dimensions, notwithstanding the anathemas of the "Venerable Class," and the decisions of the "Four Ministries," as the civil authorities of the canton were called. Many refused to partake of the communion in the National Church, and some even refused to have their children baptized in them—a step which led to their banishment from the canton. And as the contest continued, until at last, the public conscience being thoroughly aroused to a sense of the enormity of the wrong which was being done, liberty of worship was proclaimed, and civil rights were made independent of all ecclesiastical ceremonies. Religious liberty was definitely settled, at least in the laws of the canton, in 1848, but this was effected, as one of the veterans who had taken part in the contest told me, "not as the product of philosophy, nor of popular favour, nor of the goodwill of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, who continued to oppose it; it was essentially the fruit of a religious struggle of some independent Christians, who persevered, without fanaticism, to testify to the principle imperatively proclaimed by the Saviour Himself when He said, 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;' and thus evangelical action," continued my informant, "will continue to make itself recognised more and more in the intelligence, conscience, and heart of humanity." The Free Church is not a numerous body in the canton, but it continues a separate existence, refusing to accept either organization or salary from the State, holding the doctrines of the apostles and confessors as its creed, and admitting as its members only those who profess to be born again, and therefore to be participants in the life of Christ. It does not conform to the ordinary practice of a collective and periodic reception of catechumens, and leaves to the conviction and judgment of individuals the question of the baptism of infants or believing adults, while every Sabbath day the members "Break bread," after the example of the disciples. It is in these practical matters that this branch differs from the

EVANGELICAL CHURCH, INDEPENDENT OF THE STATE,

which dates only from 1873. When the new constitution was formed in 1848, the administration of Church affairs was placed exclusively in the power of a synod composed of thirty-two members—two elected by the Council of State, two chosen by the *Colloque* (equivalent to presbytery) of each district, and three out of each of the districts, selected by the