

From the Catholic Advocate.

HISTORY

Of the life, works and doctrine of Calvin, by Mr. Audin, Knight of the order of St. Gregory the Great, member of the Academy and literary circle of Lyons, of the Tiberine Academy of Rome, of the Academy of the Catholic Religion of the same city, &c. New edition, revised and corrected. Paris. 1843.

THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTIONS.

CONTINUED.

'Has not Luther just torn out the page, where Calvin, as one inspired by the evil spirit, speaks of the Eucharistic species as mere Emblems?'

'Let Professor Sarmathanus then envy Bale this christian treasure which France will never be able to rival.'

'Has not this Christianity been convicted of novelty and folly by Melancthon, Luther, and Osiander?'

'If Francis the First embraces the symbol of Calvin, Luther threatens him with reprobation.'

'If he listens to Luther, Calvin damns him irremediably, for allowing himself to be seduced by the detestable error of the "Real Presence." Apostles of the Lord agree then among yourselves! You both tell me, take and read, here is the book of life, the bread of truth, the manna of the desert. I listen to you, and your word throws my soul into an abyss of doubts—Who then will cause to shine 'that first star of the day,' as Calvin calls his gospel.'

'I will, says Osiander, but accept my essential justice.'

'I will, says Calvin, but reject the justice of the heretic Osiander, and accept my gratuitous justice.'

'I will, says Melancthon, but remain in the papacy, for the church must have a visible head.'

'I will, says Calvin, but reject the pope, the prince of darkness, the antichrist of flesh and bone.'

'I will, says Luther, but believe that with your lips you receive the body and blood of Christ.'

'I will, says Calvin, but believe that your mouth only touches the symbols of flesh and blood, and that faith alone has the power to transform them into reality.'

'Where then did the first star of day, announced by John of Noyon, stop in its course?'

'At Zurich, says Zuinglius.'

'At Bale, says Ecolampadius.'

'At Strasburg, says Bucer.'

'At Wittenberg, says Luther.'

'At Nouchatel, says Farel.'

'But in what bible shall I read the word of God?'

'In Luther's bible, says Hans Lufft, his printer.'

'In the Geneva bible, says Calvin and Theodore Beza.'

'In the Bible of Bale, answers Ecolampadius.'

* Manuscripts de Gotha.

† Aux fideles de Geneva durant la dissipation de l'eglise.

'In truth, says Beza, the translation of Bale is pitiful, and in many passages often offensive to the Holy Spirit.'

'Cursed be the Geneva translation, says the Colloquist of Hamptoncourt, it is the worst that exists.'

'Be on your guard, says Calvin, against the bible of Zuinglius, it is poison; for Zuinglius has written "that St. Paul did not recognize his epistles as holy, infallible scripture, and that immediately after they had been written, they had no authority among the Apostles."'

'What will Francis the First do? If he accept the Christian Institutions as a book of truth, behold what he must henceforward believe, and with him his court, his children, and his very Christian kingdom, in order to obtain eternal life.'

'That just as the will of God is the sole reason for the election of men, so the same will is the cause of the reprobation;'

'That the fall of the children of Adam comes from God; a horrible decree. But no one can call into doubt that God, from all eternity foresaw and sealed beforehand the end which man is to have;'

'That for certain reasons, to us unknown, God wills that man should fall;'

'That the incest of Absalom was the work of God;'

'That God sends the devil with the command to be a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets.'

'Desolating doctrines which the reformation has not entirely abandoned, and would take away from man his liberty, chain him irremediably to evil, and make the crimes of the creature proceed from the Creator! What judge, with Calvin's gospel in his hand, could condemn the criminal who should say to him "it is written in these lines by our apostle, that the incest of Absalom is the work of God. I have not defiled his image, he has himself profaned it; I am innocent!'

Now let Beza place this work upon the brow of the reformation, as a crown of glory and exclaim: "To thee particularly, and to thy doctrine and zeal are France and Scotland indebted for the re-establishment of Christ in their midst; the other churches numerous dispersed through the whole world, confess that they owe much on this account. Let thy books be first witnesses of this, and especially the present work of the *Christian Institutions*, and which all learned and God fearing men admit to be of an understanding so excellent; an erudition so solid, a style so elegant, they should not know where to point out a man, who, up to this time has more dexterously expounded the holy scriptures; and for another band of witnesses, behold the furious maturologues, or vain babblers, sworn enemies of the truth of God, who have frothed with all the rage against thee, before and after thy death. Do they with Jesus Christ, thy master, enjoy in the meantime, the

* R. P. Dez. S. J. in reunious protest. page 450

† Zuing. t. ii. op. contr. lata bap. fol. 10.

‡ Inst. lib. 3. ch. 22. §11.

§ Ib. Sec 7.

¶ Absalom incesto cotu patristorum polluens destabile scepus perpetravit; Deus tamen hoc opus suum esse pronunciat. Inst. Chri. 18, §1.

‡ Inst. Chre. ch. Sec. 1.

rewards with which he recompenses his faithful servants. And do you churches of the Son of God continue to learn from the books of this great doctor, who, although his mouth be closed, nevertheless, in spite of envy, continues to teach us to the present day?'

THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND.

In 1515, a Franciscan friar, by name, Bernardin Samson, came to Zurich, to preach indulgences. Among his auditors was a young priest of Toggenbourg, whose name was Zuinglius, and who found the word of the missionary rather unseemly. Born in a Canton, whose wealth consisted of mountains of snow, glaciers, and precipices, Zuinglius could not forgive Samson for causing the Swiss to discover some alms, amid the slight revenues which they gathered from their fields. When, in justification of the zeal of the brother who made the collection, it was said to Zuinglius that these voluntary alms were destined for the completion of that Basilica, on which Bramante was labouring, Zuinglius shrugged his shoulders, and pointed to the summits of the Alps, bathed in sunlight, and presenting a thousand artistic caprices, more beautiful far, than anything which could either be conceived or produced by human imagination. The name of Bramante awakened in him no emotion; by his instincts, he resembled the vulgar reformers of Germany, and Carlstadt especially. Only his cold soul would never have consented to employ brute force for the suppression of images in the churches. A man of thought, he had made study of the biblical books: seeking in this commerce with the inspired word to satisfy the curiosity of his pride rather than the religious cravings of his soul. He knew nothing of the created world, but the horizons of his Canton, and he thought that Catholicism, with its images made by human hands, did not suit the contemplative soul, which, to meditate upon the works of God, has a sufficiency of natural wonders in the physical world. He had blamed pilgrimages to holy places, to which at this epoch, the Swiss were accustomed to resort for prayer; he discovered that the Christian who wished to journey with advantage, should descend into his heart, to study himself there first, and from this contemplation to rise to the adoration of the Divinity. This was the most beautiful sanctuary, the others were material works. Having once entered upon this mystic way, he soon made for himself a world, wherein God was to be adored according to his spirit, as contracted as the valley where he dwelt, and of whom every emblem must be banished, a world where the priest's voice should have no more authority than it could derive from the divine word, that is from the naked letter of the text.

The declivity was perilous, and led directly to the abyss. What would he have said of the traveller, who, wishing to visit the mountains of Albis, would be content to read the Latin description of some

* Beza, in the preface of his edition of Calvin's opusculas.

old writer, and would have refused the assistance of a guide?

Thus, after having expunged from his symbol, pilgrimages, indulgences, images, purgatory, celibacy, the curate of Einsiedeln, causing ruin after ruin, came to deny the efficacy of the sacraments, and even the real presence. Enlightened by a dream, and some sort of apparition of a being without colour, he had abandoned the secular teaching of his church, for a fantastic interpretation which destroyed the very letter, whose power he came to re-establish.—Universal authority was by him contemned, and sacrificed to a narrow and gross individualism. In place of that beautiful Catholic heaven, peopled with our martyrs, ascetics, doctors, fathers, virgins, he dreamed of an Olympus, in which amid the same glory he placed Samuel, Elias, Moses, Paul, Socrates, Aristides, Hercules, Theseus,* and even Cato, who tore out his own bowels. We comprehend why Luther has damned Zuinglius.†

The reformation has some strange boasts. If we listen to it, the exposition of faith by Zuinglius, is the song of a melodious swan; it is Bullinger who affirms this. Because a mountaineer population, whose gross inclinations are flattered, allows itself to be hurried away, almost without resistance, by the voice of a priest, the reformation triumphs, cries out "a miracle!" and imagines to see the luminous light of the desert enveloping the pulpit where Zuinglius preaches, and the tongues of fire of Jerusalem descending upon the lips of the orator.

Those who are acquainted with the condition of Hevetic society during the middle ages, have no great difficulty in responding to Bullinger. During that period, feudal Switzerland was at the same time governed by her bishops and her barons. To the first she paid tythes, to the last annual rents. Her grain, her fruits did not belong to her: she could only dispose of them according to the good pleasure of her lords. When her sons came forth from her fields, they had to take up the lance and sword, and assume place among the retainers of the Suzerains. Switzerland has, at the price of her blood, conquered her freedom, but it was only to fall back under the yoke of sovereigns, more unmanageable than the Austrian. Those iron hands revenge themselves, by wringing from the mountaineer population the pre ended exactions of the Roman Chancery. Delivered by the arms of their vassals from foreign despotism, they would be glad to be rescued from the yoke of the Roman Court. Who will free them? It will not be the people who have so many reasons to hate their new masters. Nor would the sword be of much use to them, even should the people be willing to unsheath it in their defence. The word is, then, the new Arminius whom the lord waits for in his castle.

TO BE CONTINUED.

* Exposition de la foi Chretienne, dedice, a Francois, 1er.

† Op. Luth. t. viii. Jen. fol. 102, p. 103.