

In the year 1531, the utmost severities were inflicted upon the reformers. Eight martyrs were burned alive in Paris; and the King, Francis, I., declared that he would not spare his own children if they should, by any chance, be infected with these "execrable heresies," as he called them. Calvin, grieved at the spirit of intolerance and persecution thus manifested towards his friends, determined to leave France, and accordingly he did so, after having first published, at Orleans, a small work in opposition to the doctrine that the soul sleeps when in a state of separation from the body.

In retiring from France, he proceeded as far as Basle, where he devoted himself to the study of the Hebrew language, and published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, which have long been highly valued as an excellent system of theology. After completing this incomparable work, he set out for Italy to visit Renee, the Duchess of Ferrara, and daughter of Louis XII., King of France. The interview was very pleasing to both parties, and tended to confirm the Duchess still more strongly in her attachment to the reformed principles. During the rest of Calvin's life she continued his sincere and steady friend.

From Italy he passed again into France, where he settled his affairs, and brought along with him Anthony Calvin, his only surviving brother. His intention was to return to Basle or Strasburg, but in consequence of the war which raged in various intervening places, he was led to change his route, and thus was conducted by the mysterious arrangements of Providence to Geneva,—the city which proved the scene of his useful and laborious efforts in the cause of Christ throughout the whole of his future life. The Gospel had before this time been introduced into Geneva by the joint exertions of two very distinguished characters, William Farel and Peter Viret. On reaching the city, Calvin, waited upon these good men, when Farel took the opportunity of urging him to remain with them and share their labors. For some time Calvin was resolute in refusing to comply with the arguments, powerful though they were, which were brought forward, when at length Farel, with a solemnity and pathos sufficient to awe the mind, burst forth in these words: "I denounce unto you, in the name of Almighty God, that if, under the pretext of prosecuting your studies, you refuse to labor with us in this work of the Lord, the Lord will curse you, as seeking yourself rather than Christ." Terrified by this dreadful denunciation, Calvin surrendered himself to the disposal of the Presbytery and Magistrates, who, with the consent of the people, appointed him preacher, and invested him also with the responsible office of Professor of Divinity.

No sooner had Calvin become connected with the church in Geneva, than he devoted his powerful mind to the consideration of its internal condition, which was yet unsettled. Besides publishing a formulary of doctrine, and a catechism, he induced the citizens openly

to abjure the errors of Popery, and on the 20th July 1539, the senate and the people, openly preceded by a public scribe, solemnly avowed their adherence to the doctrine of the Christian religion. For some time a violent opposition was made to the exertions of Calvin by the Anabaptists, but so completely did he silence them in a public disputation, that they almost disappeared from the church of Geneva. Another and a more copious source of discouragement, however, arose from the divided state of the city. Besides the profligacy which prevailed among certain classes of the community, ancient family feuds happened about this time to be revived. In this state of matters, when the minds of the people were agitated with civil broils, Farel, Calvin, and Couraut, openly declared that they could not conscientiously administer the Lord's Supper. This so enraged the chief men of the city, who were themselves opposed to Calvin and his colleagues, that these faithful servants of Christ were ordered to leave the city within two days. When Calvin was informed of the decree which had passed, he calmly said, "Certainly, had I been in the service of men, this would have been a bad reward; but it is well that I have served Him, who never fails to repay his servants whatever he has once promised."

The banishment of these three devoted men produced a great sensation in the Reformed churches throughout Switzerland and Germany. Various attempts were made to prevail upon the governors and people of Geneva to recall them; but in vain. They remained firm to their purpose. Calvin accordingly went first to Basle, then to Strasburg, where, with the sanction of the senate, he was appointed professor of divinity, with a liberal stipend. The ability with which he filled the chair to which he had been chosen, soon raised his fame; and such was his influence over even the civil authorities of the place, that he succeeded in planting a French church, and introduced such discipline as he approved. Nor did he forget his poor persecuted flock at Geneva, but by his letters encouraged and comforted them under all their trials, predicting that brighter days yet awaited them.

While at Strasburg, Calvin published his "*Christian Institutions*" in a more enlarged form, his "commentary on the Epistle to the Romans," and a valuable treatise on the Lord's Supper. At this period also the Reformer married, by the advice of Bucer, Idelette de Bure, the widow of a leader among the Anabaptists.

In 1541 Calvin was appointed by the ministers of Strasburg to represent them in the conferences which Charles V. ordered to be held, first at Worms, then at Ratisbon, for the purpose of attempting a reconciliation between the Protestants and Roman Catholics. His appearances on both these occasions gave great satisfaction, and Melancthon in particular was so highly delighted, that he often honoured him with the name of "the divine."