

# The Christian Observer.

New Series, No. 102.

FOR THE DIFFUSION OF TRUTH AND SUPPORT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

[S. RELIGIOUS TELEGRAPH.]

A. CONVERSE, Editor—134 CHESTNUT ST.  
F. BARTLETT, Editor.

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1841.

Vol. XX, No. 50.

## RELIGIOUS.

### NECESSITY OF MIRACLES As Proofs of the Divine Origin and Truth of the Scriptures.

We submit a few extracts from the "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation," a new work briefly noticed in our last. The author is evidently an original thinker. Some of his positions are startling—yet, on examination, they appear to be the legitimate conclusions of sound reasoning, based upon the known laws of mind, and the principles of human nature. During some of the first years of his active life, he was a skeptic. The popular works on the Evidences of Christianity, usually recommended to the skeptical, did not remove his doubts, or appear to meet his case. He was afterwards led to examine the Bible, and search for other evidences of its truth than those ordinarily given. His inquiries on the subject led him to sources of evidence which satisfied him. He was enabled, as he thought, to see the reasons of the divine procedure in the whole process of making a revelation, and of the peculiar ceremonies and features of the Mosaic dispensation. His remarks on Miracles are specimens of his manner of lucid reasoning on questions of this kind.

"It would not be possible for God to convince men that a religion was from heaven, unless it was accompanied by the marks of divine power."

This demand of the mind for miracles, as testimony of the divine presence and power, is intuitive with all men; and those very individuals who have doubted the existence or necessity of miracles, should they examine their own convictions on this subject, would see that by an absolute necessity, if they desired to give the world a system of religion, whether truth or imposture, in order to make men receive it as of divine authority, they must work miracles to attest its truth, or make men believe that they did so. Men can produce doubt of a revelation in no way until they have destroyed the evidence of its miracles; nor can faith be produced in the divine origin of a religion until the evidence of miracles is supplied.

All the multitude of false religions that have been believed since the world began, have been introduced by the power of this principle. MIRACLES BELIEVED, lie at the foundation of all religions which men have ever received as of divine origin. No matter how degrading or repulsive to reason in other respects, the fact of its establishment and propagation grows out of the belief of men that miraculous agency lies at the bottom. This belief will give currency to any system, however absurd, and, without it, no system can be established in the minds of men, however high and holy may be its origin and its design.

In view, therefore, of existing circumstances, two things were necessary, on the part of God, in order to give any revelation to the Israelites: First, that he should manifest himself by miracles, and second, that those miracles should be of such a character as evidently to distinguish them from the jugglery of the magician, and to convince all observers of the existence and omnipotence of the true God, in contrary distinction from the objects of idolatrous worship. Unless, these two things were done, it would have been impossible for the Israelites to have recognized Jehovah as the only living and true God.

The only point of inquiry remaining is, were the miracles of such a character, and performed in such a manner, as to remove false views from the minds of the Jews, and introduce right views concerning the true God, and the non-existence of factitious objects of worship.

### THE MIRACLES IN EGYPT.

With this point in view, the design in the management and character of the miracles in Egypt is interesting and obvious. Notice, first, the whole strength of the magicians' skill was brought out and measured with that of the miraculous power exerted through Moses. If this had not been done, the idea would have remained in the minds of the people, that although Moses wielded a mighty miraculous power, it might be derived from the Egyptian gods, or, if it was not so derived, they might have supposed, that if the priests of those idols were summoned, they could contrive or arrest the power vested in Moses by Jehovah. But now, the magicians appearing in the name of their god, the power of Moses was seen to be not only superior to their sources, but hostile to them and their idolatrous worship.

Notice, second, the design and the adaptability of the miracles, not only to distinguish the power of the true God, but to destroy the confidence placed in the protection and power of the idols.

The first miracle, while it authenticated the mission of Moses, destroyed the serpents, which, among the Egyptians, were objects of worship. Thus evincing, in the onset, that their gods could neither help the people, nor save themselves.

The second miracle [of turning the water into blood] was directed against the river Nile, another object which they regarded with religious reverence. This river they held sacred, as the Hindus do the Ganges; and even the fish in its waters they revered as objects of worship. They drank the water with reverence and delight, and supposed that a divine efficacy dwelt in its waves to heal diseases of the body. The water of this their cherished object of idolatrous homage, was transmuted to blood; and its finny idols became a mass of putridity.

The third miracle [of the frogs] was directed to the accomplishment of the same end—the destruction of faith in the river as an object of worship. The waters of the Nile were caused to send forth legions of frogs, which infested the whole land, and became a nuisance and a torment to the people. Thus their idol by the power of the true God was polluted, and turned into a source of pollution to its worshippers.

By the fourth miracle of a series constantly increasing in power and severity, lice came upon man and beast throughout the land. "Now if it be remembered," says Gleig, "that no one could approach the altars of Egypt, upon whom so impure an insect harbored, and that the priests, to guard

against the slightest risk of contamination, wore only linen garments, and shaved their heads and bodies every day,\* the severity of this miracle, as a judgment upon Egyptian idolatry, may be imagined." Whilst it lasted, no act of worship could be performed, and so keenly was this felt, that the very magicians exclaimed—"This is the finger of God."

The fifth miracle was intended to destroy the trust of the people in Beelzebub, or the Fly-god, who was revered as their protector from visitations of swarms of ravenous flies, which infested the land, generally about the time of the dog-days, and removed only, as they supposed, at the will of this idol. The miracle now wrought by Moses evinced the impotence of Beelzebub, and caused them to look elsewhere for relief from the fearful visitation under which they were suffering.

The sixth miracle, which destroyed the cattle, excepting those of the Israelites, was aimed at the destruction of the entire system of brute worship. This system, degrading and beastly as it was, had become a monster of many heads in Egypt. They had their sacred bull, and ram, and heifer, and goat, and many others, all which were destroyed by the agency of the God of Moses. Thus, by one act of power, Jehovah manifested his supremacy, and destroyed the very existence of their gods.

[The seventh miracle, the author shows, was also directed against an idolatrous ceremony intended to avert evil—and which is now made the means of a curse.]

The eighth and tenth miracles were directed against the worship of Isis and Orisis to whom and to the river Nile, they awarded the first place in the long catalogue of their idolatry. These idols were originally the representatives of the sun and moon; they were believed to control the light and the elements, and their worship prevailed in some form among all the early nations. The miracles directed against the worship of Isis and Orisis must have made a deep impression on the minds both of the Israelites and the Egyptians. In a country where rain seldom falls—where the atmosphere is always calm, and the light of the heavenly bodies always continued, what was the horror pervading all minds during the elemental war described in the Hebrew record! and during the long period of three days and three nights, while the gloom of thick darkness settled, like the out-spread pall of death, over the whole land! Jehovah of hosts summoned nature to proclaim him the true God—the God of Israel asserted his supremacy, and exerted his power to degrade the idols, destroy idolatry, and liberate the descendants of Abraham from the land of bondage.

The Almighty having thus revealed himself as the true God, by miraculous agency, and pursued those measures, in the exercise of his power, which were directly adapted to destroy the various forms of idolatry which existed in Egypt, the eleventh and last miracle was a judgment, in order to manifest to all minds, that Jehovah was the true God who executed judgment in the earth.

The Egyptians had for a long time cruelly oppressed the Israelites, and to put the finishing horror to their atrocities, they had finally slain at their birth, the offspring of their victims; and now God, in the exercise of infinite justice, visits them with righteous retribution. In the mid-watches of the night, the "Angel of the Pestilence" was sent to the dwellings of Egypt, and he "breathed in the face" of all the first-born in the land. In the morning, the hope of every family, from the palace to the cottage, was a corpse. Who can imagine the awful consternation of that scene, when an agonizing wail rose from the stricken hearts of all the parents in Egypt! The cruel taskmasters were taught, by means which entered their souls, that the true God was a God not only of power, but of judgment, and, as such, to be feared by evil doers, and revered by those that do well.

### MISSIONS IN THE ISLANDS OF THE SEA.

The following highly interesting letter from an English missionary in the island of Rarotonga, near the Feejee Islands, to a gentleman in Hartford, is transferred to our columns from the Hartford Observer. The letter is dated March 2d, 1841.

Respecting the cause of missions in these islands, we are greatly encouraged to persevering efforts; and in many places God is graciously pleased to smile upon our feeble labors. We, here, since I wrote last, have been greatly tried in the afflictions of our poor people. Death, with an unsparring hand has entered our dwellings, and cut down good and bad, old and young. Hundreds have thus been called from time to eternity. My time has been much occupied in administering to the relief both of body and mind; for besides the mission families, we have no foreign residents on this island; consequently, we are obliged to become all things to such a people. You will, as a disciple of Christ, rejoice to hear that of those who have died, by far the greatest part have given most pleasing evidences of their sins being forgiven, "through the blood of the Lamb." Often times when I take a review of the scenes of suffering I have witnessed—the calmness and composure with which they have borne—their entire dependence on the Saviour's merits and death for acceptance with God, and their joy expressed at the prospect of pastor and people spending an eternity together, in the presence of Him whom we love—Oh, my dear sir, it appears to me like a dream; I can hardly think it a reality. But it is so; and all glory to God, for such love vouchsafed to this once benighted and cannibal race. To meet them in heaven, oh, what joy! In reception of members we are very particular. Upwards of 200 have been admitted into the church in the section of the island where I am called to labor. Candidates for divine ordinances are numerous. Our schools are well attended, and the children making progress in the common branches of education.

\* Every third day, according to Herodotus.

† Against the worship of the Nile, two miracles were directed, and two likewise against Isis and Orisis, because they were supposed to be the superior gods. Many placed the Nile first, as they said it had power to water Egypt independently of the action of the elements.

We have a seminary for pious young men who wish to devote themselves to the service of the Lord. Since the death of Williams, the Camden has been kept running, and you will be pleased to hear that two native teachers have been landed on the island of Eremanga, where he was massacred. Several others have been placed on the New Hebrides, and we wish to commence as soon as possible on New Caledonia. O, pray for us; tell your American friends to be intercessors for us at the throne of grace; tell them that it is a cause common to Christians of all countries, and therefore to "lift up their voice and cry aloud; cease not till all the islands which stud the South and North Pacific be made to bow the knee to the Messiah, as King in Zion. The conduct of the French Government, which you mention, at the Sandwich Islands, and also at Tahiti, greatly grieved us. It is our happiness to know that "Jehovah reigns." He can overrule all for his own glory. I am happy to inform you, that with the exception of a few Psalms, the sacred Scriptures are now finished in this dialect. I have just commenced the work of revision.

For the Christian Observer.

### THE MADURA MISSION, INDIA.

This large mission on the continent, embracing several stations and a number of laborers, opens a very wide and cheering field for Tract distribution. The Rev. J. J. Lawrence, at Dindigul, writes to the American Tract Society as follows, Feb., 1841.

"I owe you many thanks for your kind letter, and humbly hope it was not penned in vain. I have felt very down hearted of late, not because the promises are not with us, but because we are *straitened on every side*."

"I doubt whether any mission on earth has greater facilities for doing good than the American mission in South India. But oh, for means! Bad as it is to be without a competent number of missionaries, it is worse for us, (I do not speak of other fields,) to be without funds to meet the growing demand for knowledge in this great mass of benighted minds. Brother Dwight and myself have a field almost, or quite as large as the land of Canaan was when it became the possession of God's chosen people; and a population around us one third as great as there is in Massachusetts; but of this, perhaps, not one tenth part can read. It is still, however, a fact, that every considerable town has one or more schools in it during some part of the year; and when you consider that with this people the notion of being taught is much the same as being religious—that to know what is taught in the schools is to be a theologian; and that our books are beginning to supplant the extravagant stories of heathen mythology, you will at once see that the demand for the issues of the press is to become every year stronger, louder, and more importunate.

Journal of Pulney.

"The town of Pulney (Parharnie, in Pierston's memoir of Swartz,) is one of the sacred places of the peninsula, lying 35 or 40 miles west from Dindigul. We sent six men to read, distribute, and persuade there, during the recent festival. They came home last Monday. Their report is full of interest and encouragement. I could not go myself, as a meeting of the mission called me to Madura. Some from beyond Madras, some from Travancore and the Malabar coast, many from all parts of the Coromandel, go up to these feasts, and a universal regard, if not respect, was shown by the people for the Tracts. The great car, when drawn, had men upon it reading Tracts; and every where there are those who seem to feel called upon to apologize for being found at the festival. An impression is, I doubt not, getting deep hold of the public mind, that their system is all hollow, false, profitless; but so strong is the power of habit and education, that thousands upon thousands will go down to eternal death, I fear, fully aware of the lie in their right hand.

Extent of the Field.—Urgent Appeal.

"Cairnora, a town 45 miles north of this, (mentioned also in Swartz's Memoirs as one of the frontier posts of Hyder Ally's dominions,) has just been visited by one of our number, a catechist; and the general interest of all classes, and their pressing call for us to do something for them, is painfully manifest. Yet these two points, I hesitate not to say, are only two out of one hundred where a missionary and a catechist—or two, five, or ten catechists—under his direction, might spend a week severally, once say in six months, casting seed 'upon the waters,' which should be 'found again after many days.'

"My heart saddens as I put down on paper such a meagre, such an unsatisfactory plan of operations; yet even this cannot be reached. What could two ministers do for one third of Massachusetts, even with all the light, and aid, and power, of her staid Christian population, societies, presses, deacons, Dorothies, Lydias, and the like. Come then here, where the light just dimly breaks on the summits of these dark, dark mountains, and look over this wide waste of moral death, and then say, if you can, what would be your feelings. 'Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!' rather, Oh, that every Sunday School in the United States were a Theological Seminary, and every youth studying the word of God, to become the bearer of his precious treasures in his heart and in his life, as well as by his voice, to every creature in all the world; and every press to tract a Bible, a missionary press, till we shall have no more need of saying, 'know ye the Lord?'"

"More, more must be done, or so far from the work of missions keeping up with the age in its mighty march, it will, it must go back to greater imbecility than when the three or four brethren watched its infant struggles by the haystack in Williamstown! Oh! do press upon the friends of Zion the blessed privilege and safety of investing capital where it shall come back in compound interest through the long ages of eternity. I think that widow's two mites which put a tract into the hands of the disappointed pilgrim as he turns back from his washing in the Ganges, or his offerings at Pulney, since it may point him the true way to heaven, will be better invested than many thousands of dollars have been in the fancied cities of the great west. Oh, when shall we be wise? 'He

that winneth'—not riches, not honors, but 'souls,' is wise. Dear brother, God grant us this wisdom.

"Though I write in this sad way, I am not tired of giving line upon line, Tract upon Tract, or of reading page upon page, here a little, and there a little, 'I glory in the day of these small things, as I compare them with what was done a hundred years ago. I am ready to weep over them as I compare them with what should be done. Oh, for an over-coming faith! Oh, for the fervent effectual prayer of 'thousands of the righteous!'"

### THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

Idolatry patronized by the Directors of the East India Company.—Bishop Wilson's Visit to the Temple of Juggernaut.

At a late meeting of the Directors of the East India Company in London, Mr. Poynder, one of their number, made an unsuccessful motion to abolish the grant of some \$27,000 a year made by the Bengal government for the support of the Temple of Juggernaut. In the course of his remarks, Mr. Poynder read the following extract of a letter from Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, giving an account of his visit to that celebrated Temple:

"I have visited the valley of death. I have seen the den of darkness. Juggernaut has been trodden by these feet, and seen with these eyes, after 30 or 40 years hearing about it. Oh! Buchanan, how well do I remember your pious indignation when you visited this foul and horrible scene! My soul is moved within me even to trembling. The dread pagoda is situated in the vicinity of this village, called Pooree, of which the narrow streets and wretched abodes are only emblems of the moral ruin and misery it diffuses. A town of 50,000 souls is held together by the direst superstition—no trade but sin—no art but delusion and lies—no bond of union but communion in idolatry. Nothing has yet been done to abolish these idolatries. The three cars of Juggernaut are built anew every year. The clothes and mantles are still furnished for the idol pagantry by British servants. The horrors are unutterable. 150,000 pilgrims attend yearly, of whom about 50,000 perish by hunger, fatigue, or cholera, yearly. They come from all parts of India. The larger number are women, who concert their plans for the journey unknown to their husbands and families, and start off at a moment. The abominations consequent may be judged of by this trait. It is a scene of plunder, cruelty, and lust. When the caravans arrive, a perpetual fight takes place among the Pooree inhabitants who shall receive the helpless wretches, who are plundered not only of all they possess or can procure, but of all they can borrow at an immense interest. About five days finish the process; the stripped multitude then proceed on their return. The sick are uniformly left behind, to whiten with their bones the accursed plains. Those plains are barren sands thrown up from the beach by the southeast wind, as it were, to heighten the misery; for instance, June; when the extreme heat is suddenly succeeded by the rains and the cholera among the undefended crowds. The sick still sometimes throw themselves under the wheels of the car; bands of music, troops of dancers, or prostitutes of the vilest order, noisy, intemperate debauchery, with the most filthy and unutterable pollutions in figures, exhibitions, and songs, make up the religious rites of Juggernaut. The pagoda, or circle of the enclosed temple, is a mass of heavy buildings, of which no one is allowed to penetrate the interior, because the cooking is perpetually going on in their inner circuits, and the passing of a Christian would defile the whole culinary establishment! If we had chosen to pay 2,000 rupees for cleansing the sanctuary afterwards, we might have been admitted. Such is Juggernaut! Dr. Buchanan's description is most true. Cruelty, lust, oppression, disease, famine, death, follow in the train; as in the worship of the true God and Saviour there follow light, mercy, purity, justice, peace, domestic happiness, truth, pardon, holiness, and eternal life."

Mr. Poynder's motion was rejected on the ground that the government was bound by the terms on which possession of the country was obtained, to the customary maintenance of the Temple! The territory, it is said, formerly belonged to the priests of the idol. The British hold the land and support the priests by monthly payments!

### BENEVOLENCE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS.

[From Coleman's Christian Antiquities.]

The custom was for every one in turn to bring under public notice the case of a brother or sister of whose necessitous circumstances he had any knowledge, and forthwith a donation was ordered out of the funds of the church, which the voluntary contributions of the faithful supplied. No stronger or more heart-stirring appeals were necessary to reach the hidden source of their sympathies; no cold calculations of prudence regulated the distribution of doubtful propriety suggested delay for the consideration of the claim; no petty jealousies as to the preference of one recommendation to another were allowed to freeze the general current of their charity. By whomsoever the case was recommended, or in whatever circumstances the claim was made, the hand of benevolence had answered the call almost before the heart found words to express its sympathy, and with a unanimity surpassed only by boundless love, they dealt out their supplies from the treasury of the church, whenever there was an object to receive, or a known necessity to require it.

Where the poor in one place was numerous, and the brethren were unable from their limited means to afford them adequate support, they applied to some richer church in the neighborhood, and never was it known in these days of active benevolence, that the appeal was fruitlessly made, or coldly received. Though they had poor of their own to maintain, neighboring and foreign churches were always ready to transmit contributions in aid of the Christians in distant parts, and many and splendid instances are on record of ministers and people, on intelligence of any pressing emergency, hastening with their treasurers for the relief of those whom they had never seen, but with whom they were united by the strongest ties of the same faith and hopes.

### TESTIMONY FROM THE PULPIT.

The Rev. Joel Parker, D. D., in a sermon at the opening of the Third Presbytery of New York, speaking of the encouragement to hope for a general revival of religion, thus notices the wonderful reformation of drunkards:—

"Nor ought we to neglect an observation in this place, of a very remarkable external reformation. The great change that has been produced within the last few months in the reforming of poor lost inebriates, is a wonderful phenomenon. The church had passed them by as hopeless. God raised up reformers from among themselves, and now the multiplied and moving tales of the woes and sins, and recoveries of poor lost drunkards, are telling with amazing power upon hearts that were accounted to be beyond the reach of the gospel. These reformations are bringing thousands of new subjects under the means of grace. Nor are they merely brought to listen to the gospel; but they are brought to listen while under a powerful impulse of self-improvement. Good influences are upon them, as the hand upon the helm, and the breeze upon the sail of a ship under a good headway, to guide and propel it into a good harbor. Nor is their conversion to God the chief good to be hoped for from this remarkable movement. The greater part of them have families, wives, and children, brought out of degrading poverty, to hold a place in the sanctuary, in circumstances adapted to awaken gratitude to the Giver of their mercies.—Then the analogies between such a reformation and a revival of religion are striking; and the impulses of the one imperceptibly draw the public mind towards the other."

### DIVISION AMONG THE JEWS.

It will be interesting to your religious readers to be informed that a movement is now taking place among the Jews, which promises to shake the system of Judaism to its centre. I have of late been much in personal communication with some of the Rabbies, and they view the movement to which I allude with very great alarm. That movement is the secession of a very large number from the general body. The seceders are headed by Sir Isaac Goldsmid, one of the most influential individuals in the Jewish persuasion in London. The great ground of secession is a denial and rejection of the authority with which the general body invest the Rabbinical writings. They place, indeed, the Talmud, just as the Roman Catholics do the traditions of the Fathers, on a footing of equality with the Scriptures themselves. The new sect disclaim the Rabbinical authority. They regard the Talmud as a mass of absurdities, and are to recognise no other authority, either for doctrine or discipline, than the writings of Moses and the Prophets. The seceders are, at the moment I write, in treaty—if, indeed, the treaty be not concluded—for a synagogue for themselves, in one of the places which Roman Catholics have appropriated to the use of their Social principles, when Socialism was in the zenith of its temporary popularity among the working classes.—London Correspondent of Dundee Warder.

### HOW TO PROMOTE RELIGION.

Rev. Dr. Gillett says, in the Christian Mirror: "Whatever the measures, if there is a right spirit, an humble and confiding trust in God, a holy and persevering resolution to give him no rest day nor night till he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth, he will again breathe upon the slain that they may live."

The Vermont Chronicle quotes the saying of another minister: "Follow nature; do as you would in kindling a fire. You rake together the coals that are alive and blow; and do not trouble yourself about the dead coals till you get the fire a-going; they will kindle up in due time."—But you must take care not to blow a mist upon your coals.

### THE SINNER'S REFUGE.

A good clergyman called one day at a cottage which stood by the way-side, and asked the woman of the house if she could read; for, said he, 'I have a very nice little book, called, 'Christ is my only refuge.' It has done me good, and I hope you will like it too.' The woman said, 'Sir, I cannot read, but I have a little boy nine years old, he can read; but he is still in bed.' 'Well,' said the clergyman, 'give him this little book, and bid him read it; and I will call for it another day.'

When he called again, the woman burst into tears. The clergyman said, 'What is the matter?' She answered, 'Sir, my boy is dead, and has left you this half-penny.' 'And did he read the little book?' 'Sir, he always read it, till he could repeat it all. He did not talk of any thing else till he died; and, to the last, he begged that I would not give you the book when you called; but thank you and give you a half penny for it. And he begged that I would learn to read that little book. Just before he died, he cried out, 'Mother, Christ is my only refuge—Christ is my only refuge. Do not part with the book; it will do for my father.'

But what did he mean when he said—'Christ is my only refuge?' Perhaps another story will explain it to you. There was a poor Irish girl who was taught to read in a school where the Bible was learned by heart. A lady who used to take care of her, found her one Sunday reading her Bible; the lady said, 'Where are you reading?' The girl told her she was reading the fifth chapter of Romans. 'Why do you choose that chapter?' said the lady. 'Oh, I delight in it much. It suits me,' she said, 'see, is not this delightful?' and she pointed to the 6th verse: 'For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.' And she said, 'I am indeed a sinner and without strength; but here is a blessed remedy—'Christ died for the ungodly.'

[Youth's Friend.]

The Love of Nature, and the silent apprehension of her beauty, is a freely bestowed and far spreading gift. It lives in the best cultured heart, as the beautiful wild flower in the unploughed heath. It lives often in a pleasant, though unperceived, guest. It spreads the charm of its influence, when its possessor has not even a name for it; yet still it lives—and they who cannot talk of it, yet feel its sweetness and its power.

### Perfectionism.—On the subject of 'Perfec-

tionism,' the Synod of New York and New Jersey, declare that 'they regard its spirit, measures, and tendencies, as evil, and only evil, and that continually—as sophistical in reasoning; unsound in doctrine, insidious and infatigable in their way, disorganizing and destructive in their influences on the Christian community and the churches of God.'

tionism,' the Synod of New York and New Jersey, declare that 'they regard its spirit, measures, and tendencies, as evil, and only evil, and that continually—as sophistical in reasoning; unsound in doctrine, insidious and infatigable in their way, disorganizing and destructive in their influences on the Christian community and the churches of God.'

### REFORMATION IN GENEVA.—No. VIII.

Farel, Viret, Calvin—Discipline of Geneva.

Soon after Luther forsook the Catholic Church, Olaus Petri proclaimed religious liberty in Sweden: he was a disciple of Luther. In 1527, the reformed religion obtained a complete triumph and permanent establishment in that kingdom. In 1521, the reformation commenced in Denmark. (Life of Calvin by McKenzie, p. 20.) Luther, it will be remembered, commenced his career as reformer in 1517, eight years after Calvin was born. Of him, Dr. Miller says, (Life of Rogers, p. 33.) 'It is certain that Luther was not only a strong doctrinal Calvinist, but also a Presbyterian.' Hence, it is evident that the reformation was begun in France, Germany, Sweden, Saxony, and Denmark, before Calvin entered public life. Even in Ireland, George Browne, a monk from England, and Archbishop of Dublin, commenced the reformation in 1535.

In 1529, we find Calvin a Catholic priest in Noyon, in France, his native city. While at Noyon, he was instructed in the true religion by Olivetan, a relative of his, and he afterwards devoted himself to the study of the law at Orleans and Bourges. After divers troubles and dangers from the Catholics, he fled to Piedmont, where he first preached the doctrines of the reformation. This occurred in 1536, the year in which he published his Institutes. Thus John Calvin resided among the Waldenses, and there preached the gospel before his settlement at Geneva. The reformed doctrines had already been preached in Geneva during the four preceding years, by Farel and Viret; and in August 1536, Calvin was received as minister at Geneva, where 'the reformed doctrines had been wonderfully established by Guillaume Farel, and Pierre Viret,' (McKenzie, p. 65.) As Calvin was passing through the city, 'Farel earnestly entreated him to stop and help him in the labor to which God had called him. But perceiving that Calvin was not to be prevailed upon, he said, 'you have not any other pretext to refuse me, except the attachment which you possess to your studies: I warn you, in the name of Almighty God, that, if you do not share with me in the holy work in which I am engaged, he will not bless you in your designs, since you prefer your repose to Jesus Christ.'

Calvin, subdued by this appeal, submitted to the wishes of the Seigneurs and of the Consistory of Geneva, by whose suffrages and the consent of the people he was received to the ministry in August, 1536." (McKenzie, p. 65, 66.) This event was commemorated by an inscription on the outside wall of the town-house of Geneva. Thus we see that the Consistory, which is the original name of a church session in France and Holland, was located there. One year before this, the doctrines of the reformation had been declared the religion of the state by the Senate of Geneva, (Prince's Chronicle.) Farel, as we have already stated, was a native of France, and had been a deputy to the Synod of the Waldenses at Angrogne; Viret was a native of Switzerland; and Calvin found the Consistory already organized by these men, who had been intimately associated with the Waldenses, when he arrived at Geneva; and he was, undoubtedly prepared to adopt Presbyterianism from his own ministrations in Piedmont.

Calvin, then, was not the father of the reformation in Geneva; nor of its ecclesiastical government. Calvin, Farel, and Viret, were soon compelled to leave Geneva. Calvin retired to Strasburg, where he was appointed Professor of Theology and Pastor of the French Church in that city, through the influence of Martin Bucer. Hedio, Capito, and Bucer, had introduced the reformation into Strasburg prior to 1524; and in 1529 the city of Strasburg abolished the mass. Bucer was the intimate friend of Luther, Melancthon, and Zuinglius. Capito was, for many years, a preacher in Basil, (among the Waldenses;) thence he followed Bucer to Strasburg, whither Margaret, Queen of Navarre, sent James Faber and Gerard Rufus to hear him; and thus the Protestant doctrine was introduced into France prior to 1525. Hedio studied, in part, at Basil. As yet, we hear nothing of Calvin's discipline: his banishment from Geneva seems to have continued from 1536 to 1541. During these five years, he was intimate with Bucer, who was the first to introduce the Eldership into England, and resided in a city, from which Protestantism was carried into France, where the Eldership prevailed through the influence of Hedio, and associated with men who had been educated among the Waldenses, with whom he had also resided and preached. He had, moreover, found the Eldership in Geneva, when he came to that city. In 1541, Calvin returned to Geneva; and, during the same year, he revised the ecclesiastical ordinances, with the aid of some of the Magistrates who were appointed to assist him.—These ecclesiastical laws were sanctioned by the general council, Nov. 20th, 1541. Now, if Calvin did introduce lay Elders into these laws, then it is clear, beyond a doubt, that he was originally in favor of Presbyterianism, or subsequently learned it from Bucer and Capito, or at Basil, or Geneva, or somewhere else. But, if he did not recognize the Eldership in these laws, designed for the people who had a Consistory before they were acquainted with Calvin, then is it clear, beyond a doubt, that he was not the father of Presbyterianism even at Geneva.—Heylin says, p. 69, that 'the Genevans were opposed to this government by Consistory. The whole controversy was referred to four Helvetian churches, to whose decrees both parties agreed to submit. The divines of Zurich decided in favor of Calvin's Consistory, with this provision inserted, that LAY ELDERS should be chosen from among themselves; ten of them to be yearly out of the council of two hundred; and the other two out of the council of twenty-five. These Lay Elders were considered as distinct from those which labored

Wm. T. W. Rogers