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MARTIN LUTHER.

BY GUSTAV FREYTAG.

THE REFORMER.

MANY well-meaning men still cherish regret that certain great evils of their old Church led to the great schism of the Reformation. Even the enlightened Catholic still looks upon Luther and Zwingli simply as zealous heretics whose wrath caused ecclesiastical dissensions. Such a view should be abandoned. All Christian denominations have good reason to be grateful to Luther, for to him they owe a purified faith which satisfies the heart and soul and enriches their lives. The heretic of Wittenberg is a reformer for the Catholic quite as much as for the Protestant. Not only because in the struggle with him the teachers of the Catholic Church outgrew their ancient scholasticism and fought for their sacraments with new weapons taken from his language, culture, and moral worth; nor only for the reason that he had shattered into fragments the Church of the Middle Ages, and compelled his enemies in the Council of Trent to erect an apparently new and more solid structure within the old forms and dimensions; but still more because he gave such powerful expression to the common foundation of all Christian creeds, to human bravery, piety, sincerity, and heartiness, that in religion and language, in civil order and morality, in the bent of the popular soul, in science and poetry, a great deal of his nature is even now immanent in us and shared by all Teutonic races to-day. Some of those things which in his stubborn fights Luther defended against both Reformed and Catholics, have been condemned by the freer intelligence of the present age. His doctrine, wrung from a passionate, high-strung, reverential soul in convulsive struggles, failed, in some not unimportant particulars, to hit the right point; at times he was harsh, unjust, even cruel towards his adversaries; but such things should no longer perplex us, for all the limitations of his nature and culture are overwhelmed by the wealth of bliss which flowed from his great heart into the life of mankind.

Nevertheless, we are told, he should not have fallen away from the Church; his act divided Christendom into two camps, and, with varying battle-cries, the old quarrel lasts down into our own days. Those

who think thus may assert with equal justice that the holy, mystical apostasy from Judaism was not necessary; why did not the Apostles reform the venerable high-priesthood of Zion? They may maintain that the Englishman Hampden would have done better to pay the ship-money and instruct the Stuarts peaceably; that the Prince of Orange committed a crime when he refused to lay his head and sword, like Egmont, into the hands of Alva; that Washington was a traitor because he did not surrender himself and his army to the English. They may condemn as a crime everything great and new in thought and life that ever broke forth in the struggle against the old.

To few mortals was it given to exercise so great an influence upon both their contemporaries and posterity. But, like every great human life, that of Luther impresses the beholder like an overwhelming tragedy if the chief points of it are placed side by side. It appears tripartite, like the careers of all heroes of history who were permitted to reach the fullness of their lives. In the beginning, the personality of the man is unfolding, and we see him powerfully controlled by the forces of his environments. Even incompatible opposites are sought to be assimilated, but in the inmost core of his nature, thoughts and convictions gradually harden into resolution; a sudden deed flashes forth, the individual enters on the struggle with the world. Then follows another period of vigorous activity, rapid development, great conquests. The influence of the one upon the many extends more and more, his might draws the nation into his course, he becomes her hero, her standard, and the vitality of millions appears concentrated in one man. But the spirit of a nation will not, for any length of time, tolerate the exclusive control of one single individual. However great the force, however lofty the aims, the life, the power, and the wants of the nation are more manifold. The everlasting conflict between the man and the people appears. The soul even of the people is finite, and, in the sight of the infinite, a limited personality, but as compared to the individual it appears boundless. The man is compelled by the logical sequence of his thoughts and actions, all the spirits of his own deeds force him into a rigidly confined course. The soul of the nation, however, requires for its life

incompatible opposites and a ceaseless working in the most divergent directions. Many things which the individual could not receive within his own nature arise to do battle against him. The reaction of the world sets in—feebly at first, from various sides, in different lines of thought, with little justice, then more strongly and with ever-growing success. At last, the spiritual kernel of the individual life is confined within a school—his school; it is crystallised into a particular element of the culture of the nation. Ever is the closing part of a great life filled with secret resignation, bitterness, and silent suffering.

Thus with Luther. The first of these periods extended down to the day when he published the theses, the second to his return from the Wartburg, the third to his death and the beginning of the Smalkald war.

The author of these pages does not intend to describe Luther's life, but only to tell briefly how he grew and what he was. Many things about him appear strange and uncouth, when viewed at a distance, but his picture has the remarkable quality of becoming bigger and more lovable the closer it is approached. And it would, from beginning to end, fill a good biographer with admiration, sympathy, and also some good humor.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

The corruption of the world had waxed huge, the oppression of the poor was beyond endurance, gross sensuality held sway, clergy and laity were dominated by insatiable greed. Who would punish the young squire for ill-treating the peasant? Who protect the poor citizen against the powerful family of the rich councilman? Hard was the toil of the man of the people from morning till night, through winter and summer. There was the plague, failure of crops, and famine. Inscrutable the order of the world, and a dearth of love in the life on earth. Salvation from misery was in God alone. Before Him all the things of the earth were petty and as naught; Emperor and Pope and the wisdom of man were transient as the flowers of the fields. If God was merciful he could save man from the troubles of this life and compensate him by everlasting bliss for his sufferings here below. But how could such grace be won? What virtue of weak humanity durst hope to earn the infinite treasure of divine favor? Man was damned from the time of Adam to will the good and work the evil. Vain was his best virtue; he was cursed with original sin, and it was through no merit of his own if God showed him mercy.

In such wise the human heart wrestled in anguish in those days. But forth from the sacred documents of the Scripture, which were to the people as a dark legend, there sounded from afar the word: "Christ is Love." The ruling Church knew little of such love.

In its creed God stood far removed from the human soul, the image of Him on the Cross was hidden behind countless saints and blessed martyrs, all of whom were needed to intercede with the wrathful God. Yet the nature of the Teuton fervently demanded a cordial relation with the Almighty, he yearned with irrepresible force to win the love of God. He who gave himself to penance, wrestling in ardent prayer and without cessation for the love of God, could feel the highest happiness in merging, yielding himself to God while on earth, and had the hope of bliss in Heaven. But the hierarchy no longer taught individual endeavor for the grace of God. The Pope claimed to be the administrator of the inexhaustible deserts of Christ, and the Church taught that the prayers of the saints for sinful humanity had helped to pile up an infinite treasure of good works, prayers, fasts, and penances for the good of others, all of which treasures were administered by the Pope, who could give of them to whomsoever he wished to free from sin. And, likewise, if a number of the faithful would associate themselves together in a pious society, the Pope could grant to such a brotherhood the dispensation that the deserts of the saints and the surplus of pious devotional works, prayers, masses, pilgrimages, penances, donations, might pass from one to another.

Thus there arose, under the patronage of mediating saints, the pious brotherhoods in which association could effect that which was impossible for the weak individual. Their number was great. As late as 1530 Luther complains that they are innumerable. How crude and wretched was their mechanism may be shown by an example, selecting the brotherhood of the 11,000 virgins, called St. Ursula's Ship, of which Prince-Elector Frederick the Wise was a founder and charter member. According to its constitution, this society had collected in spiritual treasures that were to help the brethren in acquiring eternal bliss, the following articles: 6,455 masses, 3,550 full psalters, 200,000 rosaries, 200,000 *Te Deums*, 1,600 *Gloria in excelsis Deo*; furthermore, 11,000 prayers for the patroness St. Ursula, and 630 times 11,000 *Paternosters* and *Ave-Marias*; also, for the knights, 50 times 10,000 *Paternosters* and *Ave-Marias*, etc. The entire power of this treasure for salvation was for the benefit of the members of the brotherhood. Many spiritual institutions and private individuals had earned especial merit by large contributions to the treasure of prayers. Upon the reorganisation of the society, Prince-Elector Frederick donated a fine silver Ursula. A layman earned membership if, in the course of his life, he once said 11,000 *paternosters* and *Ave-Marias*. If he spoke thirty-two a day he earned it in a year; if sixteen, in two years; if eight, in four years. If one was prevented from absolving this quantity of prayer by marriage,

business concerns, or illness, he could join by having eleven masses read for himself, etc. Still, this fraternity was one of the best, for the members were not required to pay cash; it was meant to be a society of poor people who wanted to help one another to Heaven by praying. And yet, after all is said, it cannot be denied that these pious societies, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, touched the soul more nearly than anything else that the decaying Church of the Middle Ages offered to the people. On the other hand, the traffic in pardons and indulgences was the foulest spot on the sick body of the Church. In their capacity as conservators of the accumulated infinite treasures of Christ's merits, the Popes sold orders on this treasury to the faithful for money. True, the better idea that even the Pope could not really forgive sins, but only remit the penance prescribed by the Church, never quite disappeared in the Church itself. But those who thus taught, isolated men of the universities or candid ministers of scattered congregations, did well to take care not to develop their teachings into open contradiction against the business of the traffickers in pardons. For what was the true doctrine of the Church to the Popes of the fifteenth century, who, almost without exception, were atrocious villains and unbelieving heathens? Woe to him who doubted that the Popes had the right to part him from God, to open or close to him the gates of Heaven! It was money they demanded without end, money for women and boys, for their children and relations, for their princely households. And there prevailed an awful community of self-interest between themselves, the bishops, and the fanatical party in the begging fraternities. Nothing made Huss of Hussinetz so insufferable as his fight against pardons and indulgences. The doctrine of repentance and grace drove the great Wessel from Paris into an unhappy exile, and it was pardon-mongering monks that allowed the venerable Johannes Vesalia to die in the dungeon of the monastery at Mayence, him who first uttered the great words, "Wherefore should I believe that which I know?"

It is well known how rankly the traffic in pardons and indulgences grew early in the sixteenth century and how shamelessly the infamous swindle was carried on. When Tetzl entered a city with his box he rode with a great suite of monks and priests, a well-fed, haughty Dominican. The bells were tolled, clergy and laity went reverently to meet him and conducted him to the church. There, in the nave, his great red cross was erected with the wreath of thorns and the nail holes, and sometimes the faithful people were favored with the sight of the red blood of the crucified Christ moving on the cross. Next to the wreath were the flags of the Church bearing the coat-of-arms of the Pope with the threefold crown; before the cross stood

the notorious chest strongly enforced with iron bands; on one side a pulpit on which the monk with rude eloquence explained the miraculous power of his indulgences and exhibited a great parchment of the Pope from which dangled many seals; on the other side the money table with blank pardons, writing material, and money baskets, and there it was that the clerical assistants sold eternal bliss to the people crowding around.

The evils in the Church were without number; against all of them an outraged moral sense revolted, but the centre of the whole movement was the fight against the means of grace which made a loathsome mockery of the needs of the popular heart. And the appearance of so many reformers will be understood aright only if it is looked upon as a reaction of the heart against insincerity, heartlessness, and continued outrage upon the holiest ideals.

THE TRAFFIC IN INDULGENCES.

Throughout Northern Europe opposition was stirring. But the man was not yet found who was destined to feel in fearful, long-continued struggle within his own soul all the sufferings and all the yearnings of the people, in order to become the leader in whom they saw with enthusiasm the embodiment of their own inmost nature. We know little of the struggles which Luther underwent prior to the time when he entered the monastery. They hardened his convictions until his soul was matured and ready to speak out boldly. But it is probably fair to judge by analogy, and happily we have direct information of an experience which was doubtless similar to that of Luther and typical of what was passing, with greater or less clearness of insight, in the popular mind in general.

Frederick Mecum, latinised Myconius, was the son of a respectable citizen of Lichtenfels, in Upper Franconia, born in 1491. At the age of thirteen years he was sent to the Latin school of the then rising mountain city of Annaberg. He there experienced what is here told in his own words, and, in 1510, a youth of nineteen years, went into a monastery. Being a Franciscan, he was one of the earliest, most zealous and loyal adherents of the professors of Wittenberg. He left the order, became a preacher of the Reformed Church in Thuringia, finally parson and overseer at Gotha, where he carried the Reformation through and died in 1546.

The relation of Myconius to Luther was curious. He not only was a modest and intimate friend of the latter's in many relations of private life, but his friendship with Luther was filled until death with a poetic charm that transfigured his entire life. In the most fateful time of his youth, seven years before Luther began the Reformation, the image of the great man

appeared to him in a dream and calmed the doubts of his agitated heart, and it was in the transfiguration of that dream that the faithful, pious scholar thenceforth saw his great friend at all hours.

Still another circumstance lends peculiar interest to the personality of Myconius. Although the gentle, delicately organised man was totally unlike his daring friend, there is a remarkable similarity in the early lives of the two. And many things that remain unknown in Luther's youth are explained by what Myconius tells of his own early years. Both were poor scholars of a Latin school, both were driven into monasteries by inward struggles and youthful enthusiasm, both failed to find that peace which they fervently sought, but found, instead, fresh doubts, greater struggles, years of torment, of anxious uncertainty. Both were driven to revolt by the insolent Tetzl, who inflamed their souls with indignation and determined the entire direction and activity of their subsequent lives. At last, both died in the same year, Myconius seven weeks later than Luther, after having been, five years before, recalled to life from a deadly illness by a conjuring letter from Luther.

Although he published little, Frederick Myconius left, besides theological writings, a chronicle of his time in which his own activity and the affairs of Gotha are described most minutely. The dream which he had the first night after entering the monastery is well known and has been printed frequently. The Apostle Paul, who then appeared as his guide, had the face and voice of Luther, as Myconius thought in after years. This long dream is told in Latin. The introductory narrative, however, has been preserved in a manuscript of the ducal library of Gotha in a contemporaneous German form. The following has been translated from the manuscript, being shortened only in a few places:

“Johannes Tetzl, of Pirna, in Meissen, a Dominican monk, was a great crier and trader in indulgences or pardons of the Pope of Rome. He remained, with this purpose, for two years in the new city of Annaberg, and so deluded the people that they all believed that there was no other way to gain pardon for their sins and everlasting life than justification by our works, which justification, he said, nevertheless was impossible. But he said there was one way remaining, namely, to buy it for money from the Pope of Rome, that is, to buy the indulgence of the Pope, which, he said, was forgiveness of sins and a sure entry into everlasting life. Here I could tell wonder upon wonder and incredible things about what preachings I heard those two years at Annaberg from Tetzl. For I attended his preaching diligently, and he preached every day. I even could repeat his sermons to others, with all gestures and explanations, not scoffing at

him, but being greatly in earnest. For I held all his utterances to be oracles and divine sayings which must be believed, and that which came from the Pope I held as though it came from Christ himself.

“Finally, about the time of Pentecost, in the year of our Lord, 1510, he threatened to lay down the red cross and close the gate of Heaven and extinguish the sun, and it would never happen again that for so little money could be had forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. Yea, it was not to be hoped that so long as the world stood, such graciousness of the Pope would come there again. He also urged that every one should care well for the salvation of his own soul and those of his friends, both deceased and living, for now had come the day of salvation and the pleasing time. And he said: ‘Let no one neglect his own salvation, for unless you have the letters of the Pope you cannot be absolved and pronounced free by any man from many sins and “reserved cases.”’ On the gates and the walls of the church were publicly posted printed letters in which it was stated that in order to give the people a testimonial of gratitude for its devotion, thenceforth the letters of pardon and complete power should not be sold so high as in the beginning, and at the end of the letter, at the bottom, was written: ‘*Pauperibus dentur gratis*’—to the poor the letters of pardon should be given for nothing, without money, for the sake of God.

“Thereupon I began to bargain with the commissioners of this traffic in pardons, but, in truth, I was moved and impelled thereto by the Holy Ghost, although I knew not, at the time, what I did.

“My dear father taught me in my childhood the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Christian Faith, and compelled me to pray at all times. For he said we had everything from God alone, *gratis*, for nothing, and He would govern and lead us if we prayed diligently. Of the indulgences and Roman pardons, he said they were only nets with which money was filched and taken out of the pockets of the simple-minded, and men could surely not buy or bring about forgiveness of sins and everlasting life with money. But the priests and clergy became angry and scolded when such things were said. Since, then, I heard nothing in the sermons every day but the great glory of the pardons, I remained in doubt which to believe more, my dear father or the priests as teachers of the Church. I stood in doubt, but still I believed more the priests than the instructions of my father. But one thing I would not allow, that the forgiveness of sins could not be obtained except when it was bought with money, particularly by the poor. Hence I was pleased wonderfully with the clause at the end of the Pope's letter, ‘*Pauperibus gratis dentur propter Deum.*’

“And when, three days later, they wanted to lay down the cross with great pomp and hew down the steps and ladders to Heaven, the spirit moved me that I went to the commissioners and asked them for letters forgiving my sins ‘from mercy for the poor.’ I said I was a sinner and poor and required pardon for my sins given as a matter of grace. The second day, about the time of vespers, I entered the house of Hans Pflock, where Tetzl was, together with the confessors and throngs of priests, and I addressed them in the Latin tongue and asked them to allow me, a pauper, according to the order of the Pope’s letter, to beg absolution of all my sins free of charge and for God’s sake, *etiam nullo casu reservato*, without reservation of a single case, and that they should give me *litteras testimoniales* of the Pope, or testimony in writing. The priests were astonished at my Latin speech, for that was a rare thing in those days, especially among young boys, and they went from the room into the chamber adjoining, where the commissioner, Tetzl, was. They announced my request and also begged for me that he might give me the letters of pardon without charge. At last, after a long consultation, they return and bring me this answer: ‘Dear son, we have submitted your prayer to the commissioner with diligence, and he admits he would gladly grant your prayer, but he cannot, and, though he would, the concession would be null and void. For he showed us that it was written clearly in the Pope’s letter that those will surely share in the ample and gracious indulgences and treasures of the church and the deserts of Christ *qui porrigeret manum adjutricem*, who help with the hand, that is, who give money.’ And they said all that in German words, for there was not one among them who could have spoken three words with me in Latin.

“On the other hand, I prayed again, and proved from the published letter of the Pope that the Holy Father, the Pope, commanded that such letters be given to the poor free of charge, for God’s sake, and especially as there was added *ad mandatem domini papae proprium*, i. e., by the Lord, the Pope’s, own command.

“So they go in again and beg the proud, haughty monk to grant my prayer and dismiss me with the pardon, as I was a prudent and eloquent youth and worthy that something special above others be done for me. But they come out again and once more bring the answer, ‘*de manu auxiliatrice*,’ of the helping hand, which alone was powerful for a holy pardon. But I remain firm, and say that they do me, a pauper, wrong; whom neither God nor the Pope wanted to exclude from grace, him they rejected for the sake of a few pennies which I did not have. Then began a dispute. I was asked to give a small amount, that the helping hand might not be wanting, if it was but

a groat. I said: ‘I have not even that; I am poor.’ Finally, it came down to this, that I should give but six pennies. I again replied that I had not a single penny. They urged me and spoke among themselves. At last I heard that they were anxious about two things: first, they should by no means let me depart without a letter of pardon, for it might be a trick devised by some one else and might lead to evil consequences, since it was written clearly in the Pope’s letter that it should be given to the poor free of charge, Nevertheless, something should be taken from me that the others might not hear that the letters of pardon were given for nothing, so that the whole lot of students and beggars would come and all would want their letters free. They need not have had any care about that, for the poor beggars sought more for bread to still their hunger.

“After having held their council, they come to me again, and one gives me six pennies, that I should give them to the commissioner. By this contribution I would also be a builder of the church of St. Peter at Rome, also a slayer of the Turk, and would have a share in the grace of Christ and the indulgence. But I said freely, being moved by the spirit, if I wanted to buy indulgences and pardons for money, I might sell a book and buy them with my own money. But I wanted to have them given freely, for God’s sake, or the commissioners should account before God for having neglected and trifled away the salvation of my soul on account of six pennies, since both God and the Pope wanted my soul to attain forgiveness of all my sins, freely, out of His grace. This I said, and knew not, in truth, how it stood with the letters of pardon.

“At last, after a long talk, the priests asked me who sent me to them and who trained me to discuss such things with them. So I told them the whole plain truth, how it was that I was admonished or induced by no man nor persuaded by any adviser, but that I had made my prayer alone, without any man’s advice, and only trusting and confiding in the gracious pardon of sins freely given, and that in all my lifetime I never spoke or treated with such great men. For I was by nature timid, and if I had not been compelled by the great thirst for the grace of God I should not have dared such a great thing or mingled with such persons and asked such a thing of them. Then the letters were promised again, but so that I should buy them at six pennies, which were to be given me freely for my person. But I remained steadfast that the letters of pardon should be given to me free of charge by him who had the power to give them; if not, I would commend and commit the matter to God. And thus I was dismissed by them.

“The holy thieves were, nevertheless, sad on ac-

count of this bargain. I was partly sad because I failed to get a letter of pardon, and partly I was glad that there was still One in Heaven who would forgive the sins of the penitent sinner without money or loan, according to the passage which I had often sung in church: 'As I live, saith the Lord, I want not the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.' O dear Lord and God, Thou knowest that I do not lie in this matter or invent anything out of myself.

"With all this I was so moved that as I walked home to my lodgings I was fain to melt and dissolve into tears. So I arrive at my lodgings, go to my chamber and take the crucifix, which always lay on the little table in my study, and, setting it on a seat, I drop down on the floor in front of it. I cannot here describe it, but at that time I could feel the spirit of prayer and of grace which Thou, O my Lord and God, didst pour out over me. The sum of it all was this: I prayed that Thou, dear Lord, wouldst be my father, that Thou wouldst forgive my sins, I gave myself up to Thee completely that Thou shouldst make of me whatever might please Thee, and, since the priests would not be merciful to me without money, that Thou wouldst be my gracious God and Father.

"Then I felt that my whole heart was transformed; I felt vexed at all things in the world, and it seemed I was weary of this life. One thing only I wished, to live for God that I might please Him. But who was there then that might have taught me how to go about it? For the Word, the Life, and the Light of men was buried throughout the world in deepest darkness of human laws and the altogether foolish 'good works.' About Christ they were silent; nothing was known of Him, or if He was remembered He was pictured to us as a cruel, terrible judge, whom His mother and all the saints in Heaven could scarcely, with tears of blood, conciliate and make merciful, and even so, He would, for every mortal sin, thrust the men who did penance into the torments of Purgatory for seven years. The torment of Purgatory was in no wise different from the tortures of Hell, except that it would not last forever. But the Holy Ghost gave me hope that God would be merciful to me.

"And then I began and counselled for some days within myself how I might begin a changed condition of my life. For I saw the sin of the world and the entire human race; I saw my manifold sin, which was very great. I had also heard something of the secret great sanctity and the pure, innocent life of the monks, serving God day and night, separated from all the evil life of the world, living soberly, piously, chastely, holding mass, singing psalms, fasting and praying forever. I had seen this apparent life, but did not know or understand that it was the greatest idolatry and hypocrisy.

"I communicated my counsel to my instructor, Master Andreas Staffelstein, the supreme regent of the school, who advised me at once to enter the Franciscan monastery, which was being rebuilt at that time. And, that I might not become changed in purpose by long delay, he at once went with me personally to the monks, praised my ability and character, and boasted that I was the only one among his scholars who he was confident would be a right godly man.

"I wanted to impart my purpose to my parents and hear their opinions, being an only son and heir. But the monks taught me from Jerome I should leave father and mother and not regard them, and run to the Cross of Christ. They also adduced the saying of Christ: 'No one is fit for the Kingdom of God who lays the hand on the plow and looks behind him.' All these things urged and commanded that I turn monk. I will not here speak of many bonds and ties with which they bound and tied my conscience. For they said I could never be saved unless I speedily accepted and used the grace offered by God. Thereupon, being more willing to die than to forego the grace of God and eternal life, I at once took the vow and promised to return to the monastery in three days and begin the year of probation, as they call it in the monastery, i. e., I would become a pious, devout, and God-fearing monk.

"In the year of Christ 1510, July 14, at two o'clock in the afternoon, I entered the monastery, accompanied by my teacher and a few of my schoolmates and some very devout matrons, whom I had partly told the reason why I entered the holy orders. And thus I blessed those who accompanied me to the monastery, all, amid tears, wishing me the grace of God and all blessings. And so I went into the monastery. Dear Lord, Thou knowest that this is all true. I sought not idleness nor care of the belly, nor the semblance of great sanctity, but I wanted to please Thee; it was Thee I wanted to serve.

"Thus, at that time, I groped in great darkness."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

JACQUES GRUET, CALVIN'S ETHICAL VICTIM.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

II.

Obedient to Calvin, the magistrates resolved to proceed with Gruet's trial, and at first they inclined to turn it into a trial for heresy. Raising again the Latin extract, the Council asked Gruet whether, if a man were found to have poisons in his house he should not say why he had them, and Gruet agreed. And are not these blasphemies in your papers worse than all the poisons in the world? Here Gruet was dazed, and agreed again. Probably he saw his fate approach-

ing. But Calvin was resolved that he should be made an example to the moral heretics, and to rebels against the Minister. So there was brought before the Council one Treppereau, an ex-preacher, who had been suspended from his ministry for slander, but found an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the Minister by informing him of a conversation he had with Gruet, on the subject of magisterial interference with individual conduct. The crucial point of sexual sin being pressed by Treppereau against Gruet's theory of liberty, the latter said that, although it was a sin, "it was not such a great sin, provided there was mutual consent, and provided there was no injury done to one's neighbor." Upon this Treppereau had quoted Moses, and Gruet replied "Moses was only a man, and no one knows what God said to him." Treppereau asked how he (Gruet) would regard it if he were married and his own wife were seduced. As Gruet had carefully guarded the legal rights of the "neighbor," he perceived that Treppereau could not understand his position, and closed the conversation by saying: "Pardon, Monsieur, what I have said; it was only for the pleasure of discussion, for which, when people do not give arguments, I sometimes suggest them." Gruet admitted the substantial accuracy of Treppereau's story, but this evidence was not considered sufficient to warrant the execution of a citizen. Gruet had been arraigned for a definite offence—affixing on the church-door a menace of death to the ministerial authorities of Geneva. Though Calvin, as his private letters, now published, prove, knew that Gruet did not write that placard, he also knew that the ethical reformer could not be put to death save for that offence; he therefore allowed the Council to put Gruet to the torture to make him confess to having done what he (Calvin) knew he had not done. That every step of the Council, after its vain effort to release Gruet, was taken at the Minister's dictation, is shown now by his private letters, as for instance, by one to Falais, July 14, 1547, informing him that Gruet will die, this being four days before the sentence.

Gruet, being threatened with torture, said that under the torture he would confess that he wrote the placard, but it would be false. The dreadful cord led him to entreat them to kill him, and, as he had said, he confessed to the placard. Then he was tortured for several days to make him confess that he had accomplices, and to name them. But here he was firm; no agony could induce him to involve another.

On July 18 the Council sentenced Gruet to death. The city was filled with horror: Gruet's relatives, persons of high position, made strenuous efforts to save the young man, whom they induced to send a petition to the Council confessing his fault and asking clemency. Other petitions poured in, but they were from

just those high people with whom the Minister was grappling, and who were to be made aware that there was a god in the Genevan Israel. And now, for a second time, the Council tried to save Gruet; the execution was postponed, and all was advancing towards pardon, when again Calvin intervened (July 24) with a bitter complaint at the hesitation of the authorities to carry out the sentence. On the day following the death sentence was confirmed.

On July 26 Jacques Gruet was carried from his prison (l'Evêche) to the Hotel de Ville, past his own mansion (along the same route that Calvin's theological victim, Servetus, passed six years later). On the way Gruet stated that everything he had said during his trial was true, except the confession of the placard under torture. Of that placard he knew nothing. But it was for that, in point of law, that he was decapitated, though really for his advocacy of personal liberty. Calvin witnessed the execution, and wrote to Viret: "He showed an amazing courage in meeting death."

In examining the wit and elegance of the few sentences preserved of Gruet's writing, M. Henri Fazy, a very learned member of the Institute of Geneva, says that he appears to have been a Voltaire before Voltaire. That Gruet was in religious opinion quite as heretical as Voltaire, was discovered three years after his death. In repairing the Gruet mansion there was discovered a manuscript by him of twenty-six closely written pages, which Calvin declared was enough to bring down the divine wrath on Geneva. What was really in that treatise must remain unknown, as only the Minister and some of the Council saw it. According to the hostile report Gruet's essay spoke of Christ as a fantastic rustic, of the miracles as tricks, of the apostles as vagabonds with little brains, and of the Scriptures as containing less sense than Esop's Fables. Calvin seems to have been grieved that he could not roast Gruet after having decapitated him, and it was at first proposed to make an effigy of him and burn it along with his manuscript. That plan was abandoned, but the book was tried *in camera* and condemned "to be burnt to ashes, so that the memory of such an abominable thing shall be lost, and thus give an example to all accomplices and adherents, should there ever be found a sect so infectious and more than diabolic." Consequently on May 23, 1550, was burnt this treatise on the spot where its author was beheaded July 26, 1547.

There may be read between the lines of the hostile report as to the contents of Gruet's treatise, in the secrecy, the eagerness to burn it without the preservation of a copy even in the archives of the Council, a necessity of heaping some load of infamy on Gruet's memory. It seems probable that the horror of his

murder still remained, and the memory of his high character. The masses might be conciliated by a discovery that he was such a terrible "infidel," but the untruthfulness of Calvin throughout the trial of Gruet forbids perfect confidence in his report concerning the treatise. However, some others also saw the manuscript, and there is no doubt that it was very heretical. It is of much interest, in studying this brilliant man, that, while holding such views, he did not by any publication confuse the real issue between himself and his followers and the despotic Minister. The question was not about dogmas, but about the right of people to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, in their own way, with due respect to the equal rights of others. This was an ethical and social issue, made urgent by the Minister's practical denial of all personal freedom, even in the most private affairs of life, and Gruet showed a just sense of his responsibility as a leader in that momentous cause by not enabling his opponents to raise any theological hue and cry.

Calvin won. The execution of Gruet placed Geneva socially and ethically under the feet of a Minister who at the same time was disparaging "good works." A few years later Jerome Bolsec, a learned and eloquent French preacher who had seceded from the Church of Rome, visited Geneva and urged the importance of good works. Calvin asserted against Bolsec his dogma of predestination, that every man's salvation or perdition was determined before his birth, and his deeds, good or evil, could not affect his future destiny. Bolsec replied that this doctrine would make God the author of sins, these being predestined. Calvin answered by casting Bolsec into prison. It was said he thirsted for Bolsec's blood also, but it was not thought prudent to slay an otherwise orthodox preacher for upholding good works; so Bolsec was merely banished. But it might have been better for Calvin's repute for sincerity had he decapitated Bolsec, for this scholar searched out his personal history, and in 1577 published a book on Calvin's "Life and Morals," from which it would seem that the famous Minister never tried to get to heaven by good works. It is historically known that before he went to Geneva Calvin travelled about Europe under different assumed names. His first change of name was made in youth when, Bolsec declares, he fled from his native town, Noyon, to escape being burnt for Sodomy. Bolsec also gives instances of Calvin's sexual immorality, and says that his conduct in this respect in Geneva was known to various persons who were silent through mere terror, as it was known that any word against the Minister must be retracted under torture. On the title page of Bolsec's (French) book, in the British Museum, some early Calvinist has written in French

that its author (Bolsec) was sent out of hell for the express purpose of injuring the Church of God. But Audin, who has written the only critical Life of Calvin, states that Bolsec has been in a measure confirmed by research.

Bolsec's book was a good deal read in Shakespeare's youth, and I have a suspicion that in "Measure for Measure" the poet drew the portrait of Calvin in the puritanical Duke who sentences a youth to death for immorality, but offers the sister her brother's life as a bribe for her dishonor. The probabilities that Bolsec told the truth appear strong when we consider Calvin's many *aliases*, the lack of any critical investigation into the charges by his friendly biographers, his suppressions of truth in order to compass the death of Gruet, his malicious laughter at the cries of Servetus burning at the stake. The man guilty of these things would be guilty of anything.

And this criminal, with his five *aliases*, his vindictive murders, his alleged secret immoralities, his lies, is the founder of the faith of the majority of Protestant Churches, even the English Church retaining in its Seventeenth Article that horrible dogma of predestination written by Calvin, and illustrated by as vile a character and as cruel a career as ever cursed the earth under the cloak of religion.

NOTES.

H. Dharmapala, of Calcutta, India, arrived a few days ago on American soil; and Virchand R. Gandhi, of Bombay, is expected during the next fortnight. The former, as is probably well known to our readers, represented at the Parliament of Religions Ceylonese Buddhism, the latter the religion of the Jains. We are informed that in addition to these two delegates of Eastern religions Mr. Chatopadhyaya, a Hindu gentleman and a representative of Brahmanism, is expected in Chicago.

Mr. Dharmapala saw on his journey Sir Edwin Arnold, F. Max Müller, and Rhys Davids and brings their greetings and sympathies to the people of America.

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